

# Two Onion Farm

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Week of June 21, 2009

Lots of warm weather and rain last week, which made the vegetables (and the weeds) grow. Now we're hoping for some dry weather! Late June and early July are one of our busiest planting seasons, as we sow broccoli, carrots, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, beets, cauliflower, and other vegetables for fall harvest. Prolonged wet weather keeps us from tilling our fields and making these plantings on schedule.

**Garlic scapes:** These are the long green items, often curly, and with a bulge in the middle. Garlic scapes are actually the top of the stem on the garlic plant. If allowed to continue developing, the bulge in the middle of the scape would become the flower of the garlic plant. We break the scapes off now so that the flower will not continue developing, and instead the garlic plant will put its energy into forming an underground garlic bulb, which we will harvest in the next month and a half.

The garlic scapes have a strong garlic flavor. Generally we cook with the scapes. The intense flavor of the raw scapes mellows a lot with cooking. You can substitute sliced scapes for minced garlic cloves in any recipe where the garlic is cooked. Generally we substitute about 1 thinly sliced scape for 1-2 cloves of minced garlic.

You can also use the scapes raw. We add a finely sliced scape when we are making a bottle of salad dressing. The raw scapes do have an intense flavor, so use them in moderation.

**Swiss Chard.** The large green leafy vegetable with bright colored stems. It is generally cooked. Both the stems and leaves can be eaten; the stems require longer cooking. Generally you should cut the leaf away from the stem and prominent midrib before cooking.

You can sauté the chard: Separate the leaves and stems. Slice the stems, and cut the leaves into ½" wide strips. Start the stems sautéing

in olive oil with salt and pepper, and, optionally, onions, garlic and/or thinly sliced fennel bulb. When the stems begin to become tender, add the leaves. Continue cooking until the leaves are just tender. Serve over pasta with parmesan cheese. Or dress with lemon juice or vinegar and serve as a side dish.

Another possibility is to cook the leaves in their own juice: After cutting the leaves away from the stems and midribs, slice the leaves into ½" wide strips. With the leaves still wet from washing, place them in a large pot. Salt lightly. Cook covered, stirring occasionally, until the leaves wilt. Remove the cover and continue cooking until excess water evaporates. You can dress with olive oil and lemon juice/vinegar, season with pepper, and serve warm.

**Kohlrabi.** This is the alien looking vegetable: white and round with protruding stalks. It has a crisp, juicy texture and a slightly mustardy, slightly fruity taste. Before eating, peel off the tough skin.

You can eat kohlrabi raw and unaccompanied, or you can add grated or thinly sliced kohlrabi to a salad or coleslaw. Or sauté kohlrabi in butter or oil with salt and pepper.

**Fennel.** This is the flat white vegetable with overlapping layers. It has a licorice like flavor. Fennel can be eaten raw in salads, where it contributes a pronounced flavor. If you're eating it raw, we recommend that you slice it very thinly so the fennel's stringiness won't be objectionable. When cooked, fennel's flavor moderates to a gentle sweetness. It is very nice in stir-fries, sautees, and pasta sauces.

To cut up a fennel bulb, wash it, then slice in half lengthwise. Slice each half in half again lengthwise. With a small sharp knife, remove the triangular core from the base of each quarter-bulb piece. Then lay the quarters down flat and slice into thin strips.

**Snap Peas.** We're picking our first snap peas this week; we expect more in the next few weeks. You can eat both the pod and the pea seeds inside. The pod is juicy and crunchy and the seeds sweet. We recommend that you eat your peas soon. Their sugars turn to starch as they remain in storage, so the peas will become less sweet.

You may want to string the pods before cooking them or eating them raw. To do that, snap off the top of the pod toward one side and

pull it downward. Strings should come off both sides of the pod.

Try the peas raw. You can also cook the entire pods. Best is to put the pods in boiling, lightly salted water for about 1½ - 2 minutes and then, to stop the cooking process, blanch them immediately by immersing them briefly in ice water. You can then chill the peas for serving in a salad, or you can cook the boiled peas further by sautéing them in butter or oil.

## In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Cabbage	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Not in all boxes
Fennel bulb	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Flat bulb like vegetable with overlapping layers
Garlic scapes	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Curly green stem
Kohlrabi	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Flattish round item with protuberances
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Red or green summercrisp
Red Onions	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Small onions; both bulbs and tops can be eaten
Snap pea	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Swiss chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Colorful large leaves. Not in all boxes

**Coming soon! Electronic newsletters.** Last autumn we surveyed members about a potential switch from paper newsletters like this one to email newsletters. Most members encouraged us to switch to email newsletters and said they would like to see us save more paper. But some said they appreciated the convenience of a paper newsletter which they could carry into the kitchen while cooking. We plan to begin emailing the newsletter in the third week of the delivery season (June 28-July 4). At that time we will no longer include a paper newsletter in each box. We will, however, leave paper newsletters each week on the clipboard at each delivery site. Anyone who wants a paper newsletter can take one from there. If you find that your site is running short of paper newsletters, let us know and we will bring more. (Please understand that we cannot pack a paper newsletter in the box for individual specific members, because we do not pack boxes for specific members. Each "Weekly Large Box" we pack, for example, could end up going to one of many members.) We plan to email the newsletters each week to anyone for whom we have an email address. Anyone who wishes to not receive the email newsletters can opt out now or at any time by contacting us at [farmer@tweenionfarm.com](mailto:farmer@tweenionfarm.com); 608-762-5335.

## Swiss Chard with Almonds and Raisins

¼ cup coarsely chopped almonds  
1 bu green onions, thinly sliced, or 1 cup  
minced onion bulb  
Salt to taste  
1½ Tbsp olive oil, divided  
1/8 tsp paprika  
1 large bunch Swiss chard (about 1 lb), center  
ribs discarded and leaves coarsely chopped  
¼ cup raisins

Cook almonds in ½ Tbsp oil in a heavy skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently until golden, about 3-5 minutes. Set aside.

In a large pot, cook onion with salt in 1 Tbsp oil until soft. Add paprika and cook, stirring, for one more minute. Add chard and stir until wilted. (If the chard does not fit in your pot, add it in batches – the chard will condense greatly as it wilts.) Add raisins and ¼ cup water and cook covered, stirring occasionally, until chard is tender, about 7 minutes.

Combine chard with almonds. Serve warm or chilled.

## Roasted Fennel & Red Onions

1 large fennel bulb  
2 small (or 1 large) red onion, cut into large  
pieces  
1-2 Tbsp olive oil  
Salt  
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Slice a thin slice from the base of the fennel bulb. Remove the outer layer or two if they are tough or stringy. Cut the bulb in half, through the base, and with a sharp knife cut out the triangular core which you will see in each half. Then lay the flat side of each half down and slice into large pieces (½ “ wide). With the core removed, the pieces will fall apart easily as you slice them. Mix the fennel, onions, and oil in a roasting pan. Salt to taste. Roast for about 30 minutes, stirring the vegetables after 20 minutes. Drizzle the vinegar over the vegetables and roast for a few minutes more, until the vegetables are brown and very tender. Serve hot.

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**Welcome to our biweekly members** who are picking up their first box. We are happy to be growing for you. We hope you enjoy this year's vegetables.

**Box sizes.** Our large box is a ¾ bushel box. The small box is ½ or 5/9 bushel. We deliberately use boxes which are larger than needed, and in most weeks there will be some empty space at the tops of the boxes. Please don't think you're being cheated if there is some empty space at the tops of the boxes. In the past we have tried some smaller boxes which required us to cram the vegetables in, resulting in bruised tomatoes, torn lettuce, etc. The larger boxes are much easier for us to work with and keep your produce in better condition.

**Return your boxes.** Your first delivery includes a sheet with instructions for breaking down your box. The instructions are also available on [www.twoonionfarm.com](http://www.twoonionfarm.com). Please take care breaking down the box and remember to return it to the pickup location when you pick up your next box.