

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire • 19638 Cottage Inn Road, Belmont, WI 53510
farmer@twoonionfarm.com • (608) 762-5335

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The fields at our farm are constantly changing. Do you remember the vegetables you received in the past weeks? The beds we picked those vegetables from have all been mowed down, tilled under, and planted with cover crop seeds. Soon after we planted the cover crop seeds, rain fell. Now buckwheat and soybean shoots can be seen where pac choi, salad turnip, radish, lettuce or spinach grew. Cover crops protect our soil from erosion, add organic matter to it, and smother weeds.

We have also removed and put away most of the light fabric that covered many of our spring vegetables to protect them from the elements and insects. We wrote about this cover in the first newsletter and how it turned our green fields white. Now you can certainly see green!

This is an exciting time to be on the farm. A walk through the field is a real treat: snap peas are rounding out in their pods, rows of summer lettuce of different color and texture crouch close to the ground, bush beans are flowering, garlic and onion leaves stand erect in the breeze. All the heat loving vegetables (tomato, pepper, eggplant, summer squash, sweet potato, cucumber) are growing at a good pace, and Chris's favorite, the winter squash, is stretching its muscle. You can almost see it getting bigger. Although it's not even July, some fall vegetables, such as Brussels sprouts and cauliflower, are already growing outside in neat rows.

Your vegetable box reflects the changes in the field. We are giving out the first bulb onions of the year. Returning members may recall this excellent small red onion, Purplette. The name is perfect. Cucumbers are growing spectacularly in the hoop house, and Amy and Phoebe picked an all time record number on Monday. We harvested our summer cabbage for this week's boxes, and found a small amount of peas. More peas will ripen next week. This week brings the first summer lettuce harvest as well.

I have to mention rain in this newsletter. It has been plentiful lately and more is predicted in the forecast for the near future. The worst storms avoided us so far, and I can happily report that the recent flashfloods in southwest Wisconsin did not affect our farm.

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	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	1-2 wk	
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Curvy green stem
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Summercrisp
Red onion	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	
Snap Pea or Snow Pea	Yes	Yes	<1 wk	Not in all boxes
Swiss Chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Colored stem

Peas. We have just begun to harvest peas this week and we will not have enough for every box. Some of you will receive snap peas, others snow peas. Snow peas do not fill out their pods, so the pods remain more flat than snap pea pods. You can eat snow peas raw, or cook it lightly to add to salads and stir-fries. They generally do not taste as sweet as snap peas. With both snap peas and snow peas, you eat the entire pod after breaking or cutting the cap off from one end.

Although we enjoy both snow peas and snap peas, we generally do not grow snow peas. This year we did not order snow peas from our seed company. However, the commercial seed stocks of some snap pea varieties (including our favorite, the Sugar Snap Pea) are contaminated with snow peas. This means that whenever you order these varieties of snap peas, there are always some snow peas in the packet. This has always been an annoyance, but this year's seed lot was particularly bad, and we have more snow peas than snap peas growing in our field! Needless to say we are providing some very unfavorable feedback to our supplier and considering other options for next year!

Cabbage. This week's cabbage variety is a cone-shaped head with thin, tender leaves. It is excellent lightly cooked or in salads.

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. The scapes have a strong garlic flavor. Generally we use them in cooked dishes. The intense flavor of the raw scapes mellows a lot with cooking. You can substitute 1 thinly sliced scape for 1-2 cloves of minced garlic.

This week's recipes from Local Thyme:



Chinese Cucumber Salad

If you eat this salad the same day you make it you can skip the first step of salting and draining the cucumbers. This step pulls out excess moisture from the cucumber.

2 Cucumbers , peeled, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon Salt (optional)
3 tablespoons Soy Sauce
3 tablespoons Rice Wine Vinegar
1 tablespoon Sugar , or agave nectar
1 teaspoon Sesame Oil
1 -2 small red onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon Ginger , finely chopped

1. Toss cucumbers with salt, set into colander in the sink or over a bowl and let drain for about 30 minutes. Rinse and pat dry.
2. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over cucumbers. Stir thoroughly. Chill in refrigerator until you are ready to serve.

Spicy Soba Noodles with Carrots and Cabbage

On a hot day, nothing cools you down quite like eating a spicy dish. That is why many of the world's hotter locales specialize in spicy cuisine. Now, for those of you who dislike spicy flavors, you can increase the amount of sugar in the dish and that will balance off the burn.

1/3 cup Water
1/3 cup Soy Sauce
1 tablespoon Gochuchang Paste , or other Korean hot-pepper paste
1 tablespoon Brown Sugar
3 tablespoons Sesame Seeds
9 ounces Soba Noodles , or gluten free spaghetti noodles
1/4 cup Canola Oil
1/4 Onion , halved, cut into thin slices
2 tablespoons Ginger , minced
1 tablespoon Garlic , minced
1/3 Cabbage , cored and finely shredded
1/3 pound Carrot , peeled, finely shredded

1. Combine water, soy sauce, pepper paste and brown sugar until fully mixed together. Taste - feel free to add sugar to quiet the spice, or more spice paste if you like it hot. Set sauce aside.
2. Toast sesame seeds in a large, dry non-stick skillet until golden. Pour over sauce and set aside.
3. Bring a large pot of water to the boil and cook soba noodles according to package instructions. Meanwhile, heat oil in skillet until it shimmers. Add garlic and ginger and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add onion and cabbage and sauté until crisp tender, about 6 minutes. Stir in carrots and cook a minute or two longer, then pour sauce over veggies. Simmer about a minute or 2. Toss veggie mixture with cooked and drained soba noodles and serve.