

# Two Onion Farm

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## Week of June 30, 2013

What grows well in warm weather with plenty of rain? Weeds! We spend countless hours during the growing season keeping the vegetable beds weed free. Weeds are anything that grows in and around the vegetables planted in a bed. So, when fennel is growing in last year's eggplant patch, and eggplant seedlings pop up all around it, those young eggplants become weeds. Most often, though, we have to deal with annual weeds like lambsquarters, pigweed, ragweed and velvet leaf, and perennial weeds like quack grass and Canadian thistle. Weeds grow fast and furiously, and would overtake most vegetables without our help.

At Two Onion Farm we rely on good people and an assortment of hoes to battle weeds. We use short-handled hoes for weeding on hands and knees close to the vegetables, and when weeds

are small. Stirrup hoes and diamond hoes (diamond hoe pictured on the left) have long handles allowing us to hoe in an upright position. This keeps our backs happy. We use them within the beds between rows of vegetables, and can still hoe very close to the crop.

Finally, we attack weeds growing in the paths between vegetable beds with wheel hoes. A wheel hoe (shown on the right) has a wide blade, two handles and a sturdy rubber wheel. When the weeds get the upper hand or the soil is too wet for hoeing, we each line up at the end of a vegetable bed, take a

deep breath, and start pulling those weeds by hand. We talk, laugh, grunt, and the weeds are flying everywhere. There are few things as satisfying as looking back at a weeded bed of vegetables and seeing the neat rows of carrots, lettuce, onions or fennel without a single weed.



## In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Bean, green	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes – harvest just beginning
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2 wks	
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1-2 wk	
Fennel bulb	Yes	Yes	1 wk	White flattened bulb with overlapping semi-circular rings
Garlic scape	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Curvy green stem
Kale	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Dark blueish-green leaves
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romaine
Radish	Yes	Yes	2 wks	Long, pinkish-red, cylindrical
Red onion	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	
Snap or snow pea	Yes	Yes	<1 wk	
Summer squash	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	
Tomato, cherry	Yes or No	No	<1 wk	Not in all boxes – we're just starting to pick from our protected hoophouse plantings.

**Fennel.** This is the flat white vegetable with overlapping layers. It has a licorice flavor. Fennel can be eaten raw if you enjoy its pronounced flavor. 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.

**Peas.** 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!

**Summer Squash.** We started harvesting summer squash last Thursday. This week everyone will receive it in their share. The plants look healthy and are producing very well. Early morning the opening squash blossoms are full of eager bees. They fly happily from flower to flower, and emerge covered with so much yellow squash pollen that you can't make out the stripes on the bee's abdomen. We are giving out yellow summer squash. Our family loves to eat it the following way: slice the squash, salt and pepper it, then either grill, broil, or pan fry it in a little oil until well browned on each side. We put the browned squash circles on sandwiches, salads, fried rice or eat it plain. Check out our Facebook page where we posted a photo of a salad we made with the fried squash.

## This week's recipes from Local Thyme:



### Fennel Carrot Slaw

Warm weather always make me think "slaw". It is the perfect summer weather potluck dish, and is great as a side to barbecue, fish tacos or just on its own as a crisp treat.

1 1/2 tsp Fennel Seed  
1 1/2 tsp Anise Seed  
1/4 cup Mayonnaise  
3 Tbsp Red Wine Vinegar  
Salt and Pepper  
1 Fennel  
1 1/2 tsp Lemon Juice  
1/3 bunch Carrot , about 2 cups  
1/3 bunch Parsley , minced, optional

1. Dry toast the anise and fennel seeds in a frying pan over moderate heat until lightly browned. Cool slightly. Grind in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Stir ground seeds, mayonnaise, vinegar and salt and pepper to taste together in a small bowl.
2. Remove stalks from fennel, and discard or save for use in a homemade stock. Quarter the fennel and remove cores. Using a mandolin or very sharp knife, very thinly sliver the fennel, and place in a bowl, toss with lemon juice, set aside.
3. Trim the ends and shred the carrots with the shredding disk of a food processor, or shred with a box grater. Add this to the fennel slivers.
4. Stir in parsley and dressing, adjust seasoning to taste.

### Chocolate and Zucchini Cake

I'm not a big dessert eater. Basically, if something is just sweet without something really flavorful or interesting texture wise, I take one bite and I am bored. THIS cake, however, is not overly sweet, and is intensely chocolate flavored and very moist and tender. I made it last week, and absolutely loved it. It is the signature recipe of the eponymous blog and cookbook, Chocolate and Zucchini.

1 stick + 1 pat Unsalted Butter , room temperature, divided use  
2 cups Flour  
1/2 cup Dutch Process Cocoa  
1 tsp Baking Soda  
1/2 tsp Baking Powder  
1/2 tsp Salt  
1 cup, packed Light Brown Sugar  
1 tsp Pure Vanilla Extract  
1 tsp Instant Espresso Granules  
3 large Egg  
2 cup Zucchini or Squash , finely shredded  
1 cup Chocolate Chip  
Whipped Cream

1. Preheat oven to 350° and grease a 10 inch spring form pan with the pat of butter.
2. In one bowl, mix together the flour, cocoa, baking soda and powder and the salt. Using a hand-held or stand mixer, beat the stick of butter with the brown sugar until creamy and light. Add in the vanilla and espresso granules, stir to combine. Then, beat in eggs one at a time until well mixed in.
3. Scoop out one cup of flour mixture, reserve. Fold flour into egg batter until just combined. Toss shredded zucchini and chocolate chips with reserved flour mixture, fold into batter until JUST combined.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan, smooth top with a spatula, and bake for about 40-45 minutes, until a knife inserted in center comes out clean.
5. Place pan on a rack to cool for 10 minutes, then run a knife along the edge of pan, and release the sides. Allow cake to cool to just about room temperature. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream.