

Two Onion Farm

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Beets. The young beet roots are very sweet and juicy. They are wonderful in the beet spinach salad recipe on this page. You'll get more, and larger, beets, in the weeks ahead. You can eat the beet leaves as well. They're not as tender as the young leaves which some of you received last week. If you wish to eat this week's beet leaves, we recommend cooking them. You can use them in stir-fries or sauté them until wilted and toss with olive oil, vinegar or lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Lettuce. Your box contains one butterhead (or Boston) lettuce and one bibb lettuce. We've heard that in colonial times it was common to eat boiled lettuce. However, we don't particularly recommend that. Try it in salad instead!

Spinach. Your spinach will be great in the beet spinach salad recipe on the right.

Green Onions are at a very tender, delicious stage. Trim the tips and eat the rest of the onion. Sliced green onions are super in a lettuce or spinach salad.

Salad Turnip. These are the white, round, vegetables. These turnips have a mixed sweet and spicy taste. Their flavor does not hold up well when cooked, so slice and eat them raw as an appetizer or in salads. Try thin slices on a sandwich – really! No need to peel them – just cut off the green top and eat the rest.

Radishes. This week's radishes are the round, red variety. They do very well thinly sliced in a lettuce salad.

Beet Spinach Salad

3 or 4 small beets
½ can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 green onions, sliced
⅛ cup balsamic vinegar
1 ½ Tbsp olive oil
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
⅛ tsp salt
⅛ tsp pepper
½ lb spinach leaves
walnuts and goat cheese (optional)

Boil beets until fork tender and slice. Mix with the drained chick peas and scallions. Mix together the vinegar, oil, mustard, salt and pepper and pour over the beets and chickpeas. Marinate in the refrigerator for a few hours. Before serving, toss with the greens and garnish with optional nuts and cheese.

A Simple Vinaigrette. We're reprinting this recipe from last week's newsletter for folks who receive biweekly shares. The dressing is great with lettuce. Mix 1 cup olive oil, 5 Tbsp red wine vinegar, ½ tsp salt, and lots of black pepper. If you wish, add dry herbs (try ½ tsp basil, ½ tsp dill, and/or a dash of thyme), or Dijon mustard. Make a quantity and keep it for weeks in your refrigerator.

Storage. Store all of this week's vegetables, bagged, in the refrigerator. If you will not eat the beet leaves, cut them off and discard them – this will prolong the life of the beet roots.

What's happening on Two Onion Farm? June is a very, very busy time of year for us. We are planting seeds and setting out plants of our late season vegetables; we are irrigating and cultivating our earlier plantings; and we are harvesting and washing produce. We are in the midst of transplanting tomato, pepper, eggplant, squash, cucumber, and melon seedlings from our protected cold frames, where we raised them, to the field where they will grow for the rest of the year. These plants all require heat, so we wait for warm, settled weather before planting them outdoors. They've enjoyed the recent hot weather, although the windstorms over the weekend battered some of the young plants in the field.

The recent warm weather and rain has boosted the weeds as well. We have been hoeing the weeds in some of our early vegetables - onions, cabbage, carrots, beets, and others. We keep a nice collection of hoes - about 10 or 12 in all, varying in the shape, angle, and size of the blade, and all intended for a specific use, slicing, chopping, or uprooting weeds. Hoeing isn't quite the mind-numbing drudgery it's often made out to be. It goes quickly and easily when we're using the right hoe, the blade is well-sharpened, and the weeds are small and easy to kill. Lack of time occasionally forces us to delay hoeing until the weeds have grown large, when they are hard to kill and the work can become onerous. We're working particularly hard now on keeping our large onion planting weed free. Onions grow slowly and don't cast much shade, so they can be quickly overrun by aggressive weeds at this time of year. We have about 20 varieties of onions planted, including the green onions you're receiving this week, small pearl or baby onions, sweet onions, red onions, and long-storing yellow varieties.

Harvesting and washing produce is another large task. Early each week we spend part of an afternoon surveying our fields, checking on the progress of the different vegetables, sampling them, and deciding what to include in your boxes for the week. We harvest the vegetables early in the morning, when the vegetables are cool - vegetables harvested in the heat wilt easily, are difficult to cool down, and don't store as well. After harvest we dunk the vegetables in cold water to cool them down further before washing, trimming, and bunching them. Then we store them for a short time in our walk-in cooler so they will be thoroughly chilled when we deliver them. Harvest and washing are always fast paced, as we try to pick, wash, and cool the produce quickly to preserve its quality. Earlier in the spring we overhauled a barn on our property for washing and storing produce - after gutting the interior and power washing the barn, we installed water lines, wash basins, and a walk-in cooler. As time permits, we're improving the layout of the building to make our washing and packing more effective and efficient.

Please remember to carefully break down and flatten your waxed produce box and bring it with you when you return to pick up your next delivery. Thank you.

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