

Two Onion Farm

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Week of May 30th, 2005

Welcome. We hope you enjoy your vegetables. This is the first of the newsletters which will accompany each week's box, with a description of the week's vegetables, recipes, and other news and tips. We are always glad to hear from you – please call or email with your comments.

Lettuce. Your box contains one butterhead (or Boston) lettuce and one bibb lettuce. The two types are difficult to distinguish at this stage, but the butterhead lettuce has a larger core of soft folded leaves at the center of the head. Lettuce thrives in spring's cool weather. Enjoy it now, since it will appear less often in your boxes as the weather warms. Toss the lettuce leaves in a salad or place a leaf or two on a sandwich or hamburger. We have a simple recipe for a vinaigrette salad dressing on the other side of this page

Spinach. Another vegetable which loves cool weather. Eat spinach cooked or raw in salads. We have a recipe for a spinach cheese pasta sauce on the back of this page. In a salad, we find that spinach goes well with sweet ingredients, such as fresh or dried fruit, and nuts. Try orange sections. We also recommend a sweeter salad dressing, such as one with balsamic vinegar or honey.

Salad Turnip. These are the white, round, items in your box. These turnips have a mixed sweet and spicy taste. Their flavor does not hold up well when cooked, so eat them sliced as an appetizer or in salads. No need to peel them – just cut off the green top. The turnipatti eat salad turnips out of hand, like apples.

Radishes are the long red vegetables in your box. They're more or less pungent in taste; so if you're not a radish fiend, sample in moderation before chomping down on an enormous mouthful. Try them thinly sliced in a salad with your lettuce and beet greens.

Beet Greens. Your box has a bag of young beet leaves. Mix them with your lettuce in a salad. You can also sauté them very lightly or include them in a stir-fry. We enjoy beet leaves at this stage, while they are small.

Garlic Greens. Your box has a small handful of young green garlic plants, which resemble green onions. These have a nice garlic flavor and substitute well for normal garlic cloves at this time of year when garlic bulbs are often unavailable or of poor quality. Chop the garlic plants and use moderately in salad dressings, sauces, or wherever you would normally use garlic cloves. We recommend that use 1 – 1.5 times the volume of chopped garlic greens as you would normally use minced garlic cloves. You can include the greens in the vinaigrette recipe on the back of this page.

What's coming? There will be more lettuce and spinach in the coming weeks, as well as green onions, beets, peas, kohlrabi, and possibly broccoli and cauliflower. Carrots and cabbage are a few weeks away.

Washing produce. We wash your vegetables as best we can before we deliver them to you. Like all fresh produce, however, you should wash the veggies yourself before eating them. Sometimes we simply can't get items clean without damaging their integrity. In this week's head lettuce, for example, hard rains sometimes splashed dirt within the heads, where we can't wash it out without tearing the head apart. We prefer to leave the head intact so it will store for as long as possible in your refrigerator.

Storing produce. All of this week's vegetables should be stored bagged in the fridge. Bagging is important so that leaves don't wilt and radishes and turnips don't turn soft & rubbery. We'll advise you of the best storage conditions for each vegetable as the season progresses.

Another use for your turnips:

In England of old, it was common for an eligible maid to present a suitor with a turnip when rejecting him.

Share availability. We are still offering our flower share, with deliveries from July 4 thro Sept 11, and our winter vegetable share with deliveries in November and December. We've reached our capacity and we can no longer offer new members the full season vegetable share which you are receiving, with deliveries from May 30 through October 30. In lieu of our original vegetable share, however, we are still offering new members a "late season" vegetable share with deliveries from July 11 thro Oct 30.

A Simple Vinaigrette. This will go well with lettuce or beet greens. Mix these ingredients:

1 cup olive oil
5 Tbsp red wine vinegar
½ tsp salt
Lots of black pepper.

If you wish, add 2-3 tsp of our chopped garlic greens or dry herbs (try ½ tsp basil, ½ tsp dill, and/or a dash of thyme). Or add a dollop of Dijon mustard. For a spinach salad dressing, we recommend substituting balsamic vinegar for half or all of the red wine vinegar. Make a quantity of dressing and keep it for weeks in a jar in your refrigerator.

Spinach & Cheese Pasta Sauce

A favorite of our daughter, who relishes the sauce without any pasta at all.

1 Tbsp olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
3-4 tsp minced garlic greens
1 lb fresh spinach (or, in winter, 1 lb. frozen spinach)
16 oz. ricotta cheese
juice of ½ lemon (about 1 Tbsp bottled juice)
1 tsp dried basil
½ cup chopped parsley (optional)
¼ tsp nutmeg
salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, sauté the onions and garlic in the oil until onions are translucent. Add spinach leaves and cook until they wilt. Turn heat off. Add rest of the ingredients and mix. Puree mixture in a food processor in batches. Serve it on spaghetti with parmesan cheese. Makes about 6 servings. This sauce keeps well in the freezer or refrigerator.

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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