

Two Onion Farm

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Week of October 1st, 2006

We're very happy about the warm weather forecasted for this week. A cool September has set back our fall plantings of vegetables, and we need some warm weather to help these crops reach maturity before severe cold sets in.

The last two Septembers were considerably warmer. In 2004 and 2005, our cauliflower plantings for fall harvest were mostly harvested in 93-102 days, whereas this year it is taking at least 120 days. For example, when we planted cauliflower on June 25th last year, it matured around September 28th, whereas this year's June 6th planting is only now maturing.

Similarly, 2004 and 2005 plantings of fall broccoli were ready for harvest in about 85-90 days, whereas we expect this year's plantings to require at least 105 days.

Plantings which mature more slowly than we expected make it difficult for us to fill our boxes each week with a good selection of vegetables. Vegetables which we expected to harvest in late September were not mature then. Another effect of cool weather is that it tends to prolong the harvest period for an individual planting: instead of harvesting an entire cauliflower planting in two weeks, e.g., we are harvesting it over three to four weeks, with small amounts mature each week. This means that we have only been able to give cauliflower to a small group of you each of the past two weeks.

Our biggest fear, however, is that some of the fall plantings will never mature before they are killed by cold weather. Broccoli and cauliflower can withstand some freezing weather but the plants will be killed by substantial frosts in late October or perhaps early November. It would be very disheartening to us if much of our fall broccoli

planting (about 1600 plants) was killed by cold weather before we could harvest it.

Of our fall crops, broccoli and cauliflower were the most affected by the cool September. Others, such as carrots, beets, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, rutabagas and others, were somewhat delayed by the weather but we still expect a good harvest, especially with the upcoming warm spell.

These are the vegetables we're distributing this week. You'll receive a selection of them in your box, but not all of them.

Broccoli. We hope to begin harvesting broccoli for the Thursday deliveries this week.

Lacinato Kale. A kale variety with ruffled, blistered skin; sweeter and more tender than most other kales.

Winter Squash. We are distributing Acorn or Sugarloaf squash to some of you. (Sugarloaf is a cylindrical squash with green-black stripes on a tan, ivory, or pale yellow background). Both varieties have yellow, generally sweet flesh.

The simplest way to prepare these squash is baking (or roasting). To bake: wash the squash and cut it in half from top to bottom. Then scoop out the seeds and stringy pulp from the center of the squash. Place the squash halves face down on a dish or tray and cook in a microwave or 350 degree oven until the flesh is very tender but not dried or charred. If baking in an oven, you can pour a little water in the bottom of the dish to keep the squash from drying out. Baked squash can be topped with butter and/or syrup and eaten straight from the shell with a fork.

Carrot. As a trial, we sowed a small planting of a new carrot variety this year. The variety proved very prone to develop forked, misshapen, and unsightly roots. Those roots which did develop straight and long were often too long for us and our tools to lift from the ground without breaking them. This is not a variety we will grow again. We think the flavor is good, however, so we are distributing some of the less flawed carrots this week. Please pardon any imperfections in your carrots. Our large fall planting of a tried and true fall carrot variety should be ready shortly.

Russet Potatoes – excellent for baking or roasting.

Garlic, Fennel, Onions, Leeks, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Cauliflower.

Our cherry tomato season has ended. If you've saved the plastic containers which we used to distribute the cherry tomatoes, you can return them. Please stack them neatly at the pickup site and we will take them and reuse them.

Storage

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Approximate Storage Life	Comments
Broccoli	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Carrot	Yes	2 weeks	Keep bagged.
Cauliflower	Yes	1-2 wks	Keep bagged.
Fennel	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Garlic	No	2 wks	
Kale	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Kohlrabi	Yes	1-2 wks	Keep bagged.
Leek	Yes	2 weeks	Keep bagged.
Lettuce	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Onion	No	Long	
Potatoes	No	Weeks	Keep in dark.
Squash	No	Weeks	

Lentil Kale Soup

1 1/2 Tblsp butter
 2 medium onions, minced
 1-2 carrots, chopped (optional)
 2 cups lentils
 1 cup chopped frozen tomatoes or canned diced tomatoes
 1 tsp thyme
 1 1/2 to 2 tsp salt
 black pepper
 2 bay leaves
 1 cup cubed potato
 2 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
 8-10 Lacinato kale leaves, cut in half lengthwise and sliced into 1/2 inch slices. (Can also substitute about 4-6 leaves of a larger kale variety, such as Red Russian kale)

Sauté onions and carrots in butter. Add lentils, tomato, thyme, salt, pepper, bay leaves, and about 10 cups of water. (This will make a thick soup, add an additional 2-4 cups water for a thinner soup). Simmer until lentils begin to soften, adding more water if needed. When lentils begin to soften, stir in potatoes and garlic. Add kale after 10 more minutes and continue cooking until potatoes and kale are soft. Serve warm, or refrigerate and reheat.

Hashed Potato Pancake

1 lb potatoes
 1/2 tsp salt
 1 Tblsp unsalted butter

Peel the potatoes and shred them using a food processor or box grater. Toss potatoes with salt. Heat half of the butter in a large skillet. Spread the potatoes evenly over the skillet. Press down on the potatoes with a spatula to compact them. Cook over medium heat until underside is crisp and a bit browned (12 mins).

Now invert the pancake from the skillet onto a large plate, then invert the pancake from that plate onto a second plate. Add the remaining half of the butter to the pan and heat briefly. Invert the cake from the second plate into the pan, so the uncooked side will be down. Cook about ten more minutes, until second side is browned. Serve warm.