

Two Onion Farm

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Week of October 16, 2011

Garlic

We are preparing to plant garlic for our 2012 harvest. This is the only vegetable we grow which we plant in the autumn. Each summer we set aside the largest and healthiest garlic bulbs from our harvest to be replanted. The large bulbs will, when planted, develop into the most vigorous garlic plants. In the past several weeks we have separated all of this seed garlic into individual cloves (2859 bulbs and 11938 cloves). This is a good job for us and our crew on a rainy day or two, but it does make the thumbs sore to pry apart so many cloves. This week we will plant the individual cloves four inches apart in the field. The cloves will begin to grow, putting down roots in the cold autumn soil, and then will lay dormant over the winter. In late November, as the ground begins to freeze, we will spread straw mulch over the tops of the garlic to dampen fluctuations in the soil temperature over the winter and keep repeated freezing and thawing from heaving the garlic out of the ground. The mulch will also help to reduce weed growth in the spring. Harvest will occur in the first two or three weeks of July, the hottest weather of the year: we'll mow the tops of the plants off with our tractor, dig up the bulbs, trim the roots off, and bring the harvested bulbs inside to dry and cure.

Garlic is generally one of our most reliable crops, with the chief danger being rot and mold on the bulbs if there is wet weather in early summer as the bulbs mature. We had drier weather this year and little mold, but our yields suffered from the extremely cold spring – the garlic was slow to start growth and never reached its full size potential.

Organic produce in this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Brussels sprouts	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Garlic	No	No	2 wks	
Leeks	Yes	Yes	2 wks	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf
Potato	No	No	2+ wks	
Radish, beauty heart	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Spinach	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Squash, Winter	No	No	2 wks	Butternut

Brussels Sprouts. Cold autumn weather sweetens and moderates the flavor of Brussels sprouts. We're hoping that the cold weather this week will bring out the best in our sprouts.

In general, mustardy and sweet flavors complement Brussels sprouts well. Sometimes we steam the sprouts and marinate them in the refrigerator with a dressing of 6 Tbsp olive oil, 2 Tbsp good mustard, 4 Tbsp red wine vinegar, 2 tsp maple syrup, salt and pepper.

Try cooking the sprouts with chopped onion, crushed garlic, and olive oil over low heat, covered, until they are nearly tender. Then stir in a good generous amount of mustard – enough to coat every sprout. Continue cooking a few more minutes until the sprouts are done. This is simple but very, very good.

And more awesome Brussels sprouts recipes from our website:

[10/21/2007](#) Brussels Sprout and Pine Nut Pasta Sauce

[10/26/2008](#) Brussels Sprouts and Carrots

[10/24/2010](#) Brussels Sprouts with Almonds and Dill

[10/12/2008](#) Brussels Sprouts with Pine Nuts and Balsamic Vinegar

[10/24/2010](#) Lemon Caraway Brussels Sprouts

[10/17/2010](#) Shredded Brussels Sprouts with Bacon

[10/22/2006](#) Walnut Lemon Vinaigrette For Brussels Sprouts

Butternut squash. We're giving out our first butternut squash this week. These are excellent in soups, recipes calling for pureed squash, or just roasted and eaten plain.

Lettuce. Your lettuce may deserve an extra careful washing this week: there are lots of aphids (small plump green insects) on the leaves. Aphids are generalists which feed on lots of different plants. They prefer green, actively growing plant tissue. As autumn descends, our lettuce patch is an island of tender green in a sea of dry brown cropfields and every year it attracts a horde of hungry aphids.

Potato – The organic red potatoes in your box this week were raised at Driftless Organics farm in Crawford County, Wisconsin. The farmers at Driftless Organics raise a large amount of potatoes and they have invested in specialized equipment and facilities for growing, harvesting, and storing the crop. It does not make financial sense for us to buy these items at our scale of production and we have decided to purchase our potatoes instead from another local farm. Potatoes are the only vegetable which we plan to include in your boxes that we do not raise ourselves.

Potato Leek Soup

butter

3 cups cleaned, sliced leeks

1 ½ tsp salt

black pepper

a few sprinkles each of marjoram and thyme

3 medium potatoes, cut in ½ inch cubes

4 cups water

¼ cup half and half

Sauté leeks, salt and pepper in butter until leeks are tender. Add herbs and potatoes and sauté a few minutes more. Add water and simmer until potatoes are soft. Puree the soup in a food processor to desired texture – we prefer to leave it a little chunky. Return soup to pot, add half and half, and warm up. Adjust salt and pepper if needed. Serve with crackers or croutons.

Winter Storage Vegetables: We expect to have a surplus of carrots, winter squash, and several other winter storage vegetables at the end of the season. We are offering these vegetables to our members to purchase and receive with the last delivery of the season. Read www.twoonionfarm.com/WinterVegetables.pdf for prices and information on how to order.