

# Two Onion Farm

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Week of October 23, 2011

## Late Autumn

Although the inexorable descent into winter has certainly begun, we are very grateful that it has not been too, too cold. We've had a few light frosts but no hard freeze. Fall harvest has proceeded at a measured pace, and we have not needed to race against the weather. This week we should harvest the last of our carrots, leeks, beauty heart radishes, and beets. Weather permitting, we'll also proceed with mowing and tilling under crop residue from this year and chisel plowing our fields for early planting next spring.

Although we've been fortunate to receive mild temperatures during October, we did suffer a brief but hard thunderstorm on Sunday night which tore up many of the beautiful spinach leaves which we were planning to pick this week. The storm reduced our spinach yields for the coming week by about fifty percent, so your bags will be smaller than they otherwise would have been. On the bright side, we're having an excellent Brussels sprouts harvest this year – better than we have had for the last several years. The drier weather this summer kept the downy mildew in check, a disease which can decimate the sprouts in a wet year.

We've also been able to extend our fall broccoli harvest through the end of October this year. This is our goal every year, but not one we are always able to achieve. The broccoli plantings are difficult to time precisely with regard to the weather. If we plant our last broccoli planting slightly too early (even four or five days difference in planting date is important), or if the fall weather is too warm, then the broccoli matures early and is overripe and unpickable by the end of October. If we plant our last planting too late, or if the autumn weather is too cold, then the broccoli never matures before the onset of brutal November cold. Broccoli requires a lot of land and labor to raise, so we can't hedge our bets by plantings lots of extra broccoli plantings. This year, however, things have fallen into place well.

This is the last week of deliveries for those of you who receive boxes on Fridays in Platteville, Dubuque, and Galena: thank you very much for eating with us through the seasons! In last year's survey, members expressed interest in receiving boxes for a longer delivery season, so we are experimenting with an extended season this year for our Madison area members, and our season there will continue for two more weeks, through November 8<sup>th</sup>. We decided to ease into the longer season. In 2012 we'll consider extending the season for Friday deliveries, as well as perhaps beginning the season earlier in June. A longer delivery season requires us experiment and adjust our planting schedules to ensure that we have a sufficient harvest in each week. We're also learning how to best use our new plastic covered hoopouses for protected harvests of early and late season crops.

**Winter Storage Vegetables:** Madison area members still have time to order extra carrots, winter squash, and several other storage vegetables. Read [www.twoonionfarm.com/WinterVegetables.pdf](http://www.twoonionfarm.com/WinterVegetables.pdf) for prices and information on how to order.

## Organic produce in this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Beet	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
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.

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

**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.

### Pea Soup with Carrots and Leeks

2 cups dried green split peas

9 cups water

1 tsp dried tarragon

1 bay leaf

¼ cup olive oil

4-6 carrots, peeled and chopped

3 leeks, thinly sliced

1 ½ tsp salt

Black pepper

Bring peas, water, tarragon, and bay leaf to boil in a large pot. Simmer briskly until peas are soft and begin to dissolve. This can take 30 minutes to well over an hour, depending on your peas.

While the peas are cooking, sauté the carrots and leeks in oil until soft and beginning to brown.

Add the leeks, carrots, salt, and pepper to peas and continue simmering until soup is quite thick. Serve warm.