

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire • 19638 Cottage Inn Road, Belmont, WI 53510
farmer@twoonionfarm.com • (608) 762-5335

Week of October 26th, 2008

Cold weather finally descends in this the last week of the delivery season. Very low temperatures are forecast for Monday and Tuesday nights, and over the weekend we have been busy covering our last planting of lettuce to protect it from frost and moving our stored winter squash into a heated portion of our packing shed.

At the end of this week we expect to have delivered about 3,894 boxes this year. If all the rows of vegetables which we planted and tended in 2008 were placed end to end in a line, the line would stretch 14 miles. This was a good growing season. Overall, yields were excellent and we think that almost every week's boxes contained a good quantity and selection of delicious vegetables. We were particularly pleased by the steady supply of lettuce throughout the year and our excellent yields of tomatoes, carrots, acorn squash, broccoli, peppers, spinach, and cauliflower (a difficult crop to grow). As always, there were some disappointments: a cold wet spring delayed our early spring crops and we only had fair yields of green beans, onions, garlic, and buttercup and confection winter squash.

We spend much of our time over the winter planning for next year. We review our notes from our plantings, think about our growing, harvesting, packing, and delivery process and decide where and how we will improve. We purchase seeds, supplies, and tools; repair equipment and facilities; interview and hire employees; and recruit new farm members. And in early March 2009, we expect to sow our first seeds of onions, beets, and cabbage.

We will soon be sending you a link to a brief internet survey. (Those of you without email will receive a paper survey). Please fill out the survey. We're always trying to improve and we take your comments very seriously. Comments from members in past years have lead us to substantially change the vegetables we grow, the quantities we include in boxes, and our delivery schedule and pickup locations.

Thank you for joining us this year! It is a privilege and a joy to raise fresh vegetables for you. We hope that our produce has nourished you and enlivened your table.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Brussels Sprouts	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Leeks	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Green/red oakleaf
Onion	Yes or No	No	2+ wks	Dry and cold is ideal, but will store well at room temperature.
Rutabaga	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Spinach	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Winter squash	No	No	2+ wks	Acorn and/or Confection squash

Spinach. Spinach salads can be delicious. Try a salad of spinach leaves, sliced pears or apples, creamy goat cheese, and chopped walnuts. It's wonderful. If you have any beets left from previous boxes, they are also a good addition to spinach salads. A good simple dressing for spinach salad is 1 cup olive oil, 5 Tbsp balsamic vinegar, 1/2 tsp salt. That makes a lot of dressing – store it in the fridge or reduce the recipe.

Rutabaga. These turnip relatives reach their peak sweetness and taste in the cool weather of late fall. Their flavor is assertive, but rutabagas can be excellent when prepared well:

- We enjoy the mashed rutabaga recipe in this newsletter.
- Rutabagas are excellent in stews and soups – the rutabaga should be added early in the cooking, so that it has time to completely soften, and almost dissolve. It contributes a wonderful silky texture.
- Grated rutabaga can be cooked with onions in butter – see the recipe in our 11/12/2006 newsletter.
- Roasted rutabaga: peel and slice the 'bagas thinly. Spread the slices in a single layer on large baking sheets, each oiled with about 2 Tbsp olive oil. As you lay the slices on the sheet, first lay one side on the sheet and then turn the slice over – this ensures that both sides are oiled. Roast in a hot, 400-450 degree oven. We use the highest and lowest shelves in our oven, where the temperatures are hottest. Roast until the bottoms of the slices begin to brown, about 10-20 minutes. Turn each slice with tongs, and continue roasting until the bottoms begin to brown. Collect the slices in a bowl and toss them with salt and balsamic vinegar. Somewhat time-consuming, but an excellent recipe.

Squash. Confection squash are flattish and gray colored. The dark orange flesh is generally dark, dense, and sweet. You can roast and eat them plain like any squash. They are also very well suited for breads, pies, and muffins – roast the squash, then scoop out the

cooked flesh and use it in place of canned pumpkin pie filling.

If you're scooping the seeds out of the confection squash before cooking, be sure to remove all traces of the stringy material around the seeds – it has a bitter taste.

Simple Carrot Soup

This recipe came to us from a member who likes it.

2 medium onions, sliced
Butter
2 lbs carrots, chopped (about 6 cups)
6 cups vegetable broth
1 Tbsp dried thyme, or one sprig fresh thyme
1 tsp salt

Sauté the onions in butter, then add carrots and cook for five more minutes. Add vegetable broth and thyme, bring to boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Season with salt. The soup can be served as is or pureed.

Brussels Sprouts and Carrots

2 Tbsp minced onion
2 Tbsp unsalted butter
1 lb carrots, cut into 1/2" thick pieces
1 lb Brussels sprouts, halved lengthwise
3/4 tsp salt
Black pepper to taste
1/3 cup water
1 Tbsp cider vinegar

Cook onion in butter in a large skillet over medium high heat until softened. Add carrots, Brussels sprouts, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to brown, about 3-4 minutes. Add water, cover, and cook over medium high heat until vegetables are tender, about 5-8 minutes. Stir in vinegar, adjust salt and pepper, and serve warm.