

Two Onion Farm

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Week of October 28th, 2007

This is the final delivery of the 2007 season. A lot has happened since we sowed our first onion seeds on March 9th. Generally we enjoyed excellent weather. Early April was cold and snowy, and August was exceptionally wet, but the rest of the season was sunny, seasonably warm, and adequately rainy. On the whole, we believe we kept a good diverse supply of vegetables in your boxes for most of the season. Many vegetables, including lettuce, broccoli, squash, carrots, and green beans, yielded abundantly. Flavor was generally excellent. We see some vegetables where we'd like to improve –cucumber yields were lower than we liked, our tomatoes yielded well but then died prematurely from disease, and we had a complete failure of our fall spinach planting.

We had excellent help with farmwork this season. This was a great improvement over 2006, when we lost some vegetables because we did not have enough labor at critical times. This year we were greatly helped by two hard-working, motivated, careful employees. Member workers also worked over 200 hours, particularly during spring planting and transplanting. The member worker program was a great success, both in helping us accomplish important work and in helping us to meet members. We plan to continue and expand the member worker program in 2008.

As the growing season ends, we're looking forward to some vacation time where we can visit friends and family. During much of the winter, we're also hard at work preparing for next year. We will review the records of our 2007 plantings to see what worked and what didn't and plan how we can change and improve. We'll prepare our field equipment, packing shed, and irrigation system for the next season. We'll also purchase a greenhouse and additional tractor implements to help us

produce vegetables more reliably and efficiently.

Next year we expect to keep the major parts of our membership program the same. Delivery dates, box sizes, the mix of vegetables, and prices will not change greatly. We plan to increase our number of members next year, and we would like to add a few new pickup locations in the greater Madison and Dubuque areas. We welcome suggestions for new locations.

We may also move our delivery days back one day, from Monday and Thursday to Tuesday and Friday. In our current schedule, our employees need to work Sundays to harvest for Monday deliveries. But if we delivered on Tuesdays and Fridays, employees would not need to work weekends. We've come to realize that high quality employees are a vital to our farm. If our employees do not work Sundays, we believe it will increase our ability to attract and retain the best workers.

We've included a survey and stamped addressed envelope in this week's box. Please take the time to fill out and return the survey. These surveys are genuinely important to us. We consider your survey responses very seriously. We also appreciate the praise and helpful suggestions we've received from many of you over the course of the season.

We will send you our 2008 season brochure in late January. Since we will add members next year, we appreciate if you mention us to your friends. Please tell us if you'd like us to send our 2008 brochure to other folks you know.

Thank you for joining us this year and supporting a local vegetable farm! It was an honor to grow vegetables for you, and we wish you a healthy and joyous winter.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Brussels Sprouts	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Cabbage	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	Not in all boxes
Carrots	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Celeriac	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Chinese Cabbage	Yes	Yes	2 wks	Not in all boxes. Pale green, upright head.
Leeks	Yes	Yes	2 wks	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf
Winter Squash	No	No	2+ wks	Buttercup or Kabocha. Cooked flesh stores well in freezer.
Yellow Onion	Yes/No	No	2+ wks	

Chinese (Napa) Cabbage can be eaten raw or cooked. For a salad, dress the leaves with a dressing based on sesame oil, rice vinegar, and soy sauce. If your dressing contains salt (including soy sauce), we recommend that you dress it immediately before eating. Chinese cabbage has a lot of water in the leaves, and if you let the sliced leaves sit in a salty dressing, the salt will leach the water from the leaves and you will be left with a very watery dressing. In cooked dishes, cook the leaves very briefly, until they are wilted but maintain some texture and crispness. They're well suited to stir frying. For a simple side dish of stir-fried Chinese cabbage, begin by sautéing minced onion in peanut oil over medium heat. Then add sliced Chinese cabbage and crushed garlic, raise heat to high, and stir-fry until the leaves are cooked. Add salt and/or soy sauce, and rice vinegar; serve immediately. We have several other Chinese cabbage recipes on our website.

Cream of Carrot Soup

We haven't had a chance to try this recipe ourselves, but a member recommended it to us.

- 2 Tblsp olive oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 2 1/2 lbs carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1/4 cup basmati rice
- Salt
- 1 cup plain yogurt

In a stock pot, sauté onions and thyme in olive oil until tender. Add carrots and basmati rice, season with salt, and cook for 5 minutes more. Pour in 6 cups of water, bring to a boil, and simmer until carrots are tender, approx 30 minutes. Mix in yogurt. Working in batches, puree soup in a blender until smooth. Garnish each serving with sweet paprika.

Spaghetti Sauce

A dense hearty spaghetti sauce. Freezes very well. Excellent with spaghetti or in lasagna.

- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 2 cups chopped celeriac
- 3 medium onions, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 lb mushrooms, sliced
- Olive oil
- 2 lbs ground beef
- Black pepper to taste; and 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp each basil and oregano
- 28 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 2 15 oz cans tomato sauce
- 1 6 oz can tomato paste
- 1 cup red wine

In a stock pot, sauté vegetables and mushrooms in olive oil until tender. In another skillet, brown beef (and skim off fat if desired). Add beef and seasonings to vegetables, stir, and cook for several minutes. Then add wine and tomato products. Cook uncovered over low heat for 1.5 - 2 hours.