

Two Onion Farm

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We are approaching the end of the season for many of the green vegetables. This week we will finish harvesting our plantings of broccoli, head lettuce, and Brussels sprouts. That's good, because this week's forecasted temperatures in the low twenties would kill most of those moderately tender vegetables.

It's been a cold fall, and we had a lot of worries about whether the freezing October weather would kill our vegetables before we could harvest and distribute them. However we've actually survived so far with minimal damage. We've also been busy for the past few weeks harvesting, washing, and storing our fall plantings of storage vegetables – rutabagas, carrots, beets, cabbage, and so forth.

As we said last week, cold weather sweetens and improves the flavor of some vegetables such as broccoli and Brussels sprouts.

However, when these vegetables are exposed to frost in the field it can reduce their storage life after harvest. We particularly recommend that you don't let the broccoli stay around too long before eating it.

However, topped root vegetables, such as the carrots and beets we are distributing this week, can store very well. Carrots, e.g., can store for 4-6 months. Just be sure to keep the roots in a sealed bag in your fridge so they do not dry out.

Where's the winter squash?

Winter squash is generally one of our most important vegetables. About one-third of the land we cultivated this year was dedicated to winter squash – primarily acorn, buttercup, kabocha, and Sugarloaf types of squash. We intended to give squash out to you many times in the last 8-10 weeks of the season.

Unfortunately, however, we suffered almost a complete crop failure. We experienced a number of problems - severe attack from cucumber beetles on the buttercup and kabocha types early in the spring, an unforeseen labor shortage in spring and early summer which prevented us from planting and cultivating part of the planting in a timely fashion, and finally an outbreak of Fusarium mold which caused a lot of fruit rot in the acorn and sugarloaf varieties in late summer. This is all extremely disappointing to us.

We do have some squash in storage which we plan to distribute in the coming weeks. With only a limited supply, we decided to hold most of it back towards the end of the season when there are fewer other vegetables available for us.

We are also trying to purchase extra squash from a local organic vegetable farmer who had a better crop than we did. We ordinarily do not buy vegetables to give out in our boxes, and we've never done this in the past.

However squash are an important vegetable and we had nearly a complete crop failure, so we are trying to purchase extra in this case. It's been difficult to find a local organic grower who has good quality squash for sale in the quantity which we need. However we think we have now found a good source and we hope to pick up the extra squash next week.

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

Beets, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Carrots, Garlic, Kale, Lettuce, Onions.

Storage

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Approximate Storage Life	Comments
Beets	Yes	Long	Keep in sealed bag.
Broccoli	Yes	<1 week	Keep bagged.
Brussels Sprouts	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged
Carrot	Yes	Long	Keep in sealed bag.
Garlic	No	Weeks	
Kale	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Lettuce	Yes	1 week	Keep bagged.
Onion	No	Long	Yellow onions store longer than red.

Beets with Orange and Lemon Juice

About 1 lb beet roots
 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
 ¼ cup orange juice
 1 Tbsp lemon juice
 Salt and pepper

Roast the beets on a covered pan at 400 degrees until they are fork tender but not absolutely mushy. When the beets are cool enough to handle, rub the skins off and cube them.

Melt the butter in a pan, add the beets and cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until the beets are coated with butter. Add the citrus juices and cook for several minutes until the juice thickens and reduces. Season with salt and pepper.

