

Two Onion Farm

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Week of October 30, 2011

Fall plowing

The weather forecast predicts that Wednesday will be rainy, and the long-range forecast calls for wetter than average conditions throughout the next two weeks. Early this week we'll try to complete as much as possible of our late fall fieldwork while the soil is still dry. It's key to prepare soil now, in autumn, for early spring planting in 2012. When ground is plowed in the fall, freezing and thawing over the winter will break up hard clods and the soil will be mellow and workable in spring. By contrast, soil plowed in spring tends to remain cloddy, which interferes with seed germination and makes planting and hoeing frustrating.

Before plowing, we will mow our autumn oat cover crops. We planted the autumn oats two months ago in areas where we had raised summer vegetables such as beans and cucumbers, and the oats have now grown up to two feet tall. The oats will add life-giving organic matter to the soil when their leaves and roots are mixed into the ground. After mowing we'll use the chisel plow, a tractor implement that drags long thin metal shanks through the ground. This breaks up any hard layers that have formed below the surface of the soil and allows future crops roots to easily work their way downwards. The deep fracturing done by the chisel plow also improves water infiltration and allows the soil surface to dry out more quickly after rains. The chisel plow is also good because it does not turn the soil over and completely bury whatever is on the top of the ground. Instead, it leaves some of residue from the oat cover crop on the surface of the soil where it will help to prevent soil from washing away over the winter. In early spring, we will then prepare the ground with a quick pass of a rototiller and the ground will be ready to plant to peas, carrots, onions and other spring delights.

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	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Celeriac	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	Gnarly, tan colored root
Garlic	No	No	2 wks	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf
Onions	No	No	2+ wks	
Potato	No	No	2+ wks	
Spinach	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Squash, Winter	No	No	2 wks	Buttercup
Turnip	Yes	Yes	1 wk	White, round, smooth root

Celeriac (Celery root). This is the vegetable with a gnarly, swollen root. Celeriac is closely related to celery and has a similar flavor. However, the plant is much better suited to our climate than celery.

You can use celeriac in place of celery in most recipes. Add grated or finely minced raw celeriac to salads, or eat celeriac sticks with dip. In our house we generally eat celeriac cooked, in soups, sauces, stir-fries, or other dishes. It's really very easy to use – the flavor is not overwhelming and blends in easily with many cooked dishes. Here are some celeriac recipes from past newsletters, all available on our website:

Carrot Celeriac Soup ([11/12/2006](#))

Chili ([9/2/2007](#))

Hungarian Gulyas Soup ([11/28/2005](#))

Pea Soup with Carrots and Leeks ([9/16/2007](#))

Potato Leek Soup ([9/26/2005](#))

Spaghetti Sauce ([10/28/2007](#))

You should peel the rough skin off the root before eating it. An easy way to peel celeriac root (and other roundish vegetables) is to trim off the top and bottom ends, slice the celeriac in half horizontally, place each half with the cut end down on a cutting board, and trim off the skin by slicing down with a knife.

Store celeriac bagged in the fridge. It keeps very well and you can use a little at a time. Note that if you cut open the celeriac root, use part of it, and return the rest to the fridge, then the cut surface will darken with exposure to air, just like a cut apple. Spreading a little lemon juice on the celeriac will slow the darkening.

Broccoli. Most of you will receive smaller broccoli “side shoots” this week. These are miniature heads of broccoli which we’ve harvested from broccoli plants where we already harvested the main head earlier in the autumn.

Spinach. We harvested this week’s spinach from our new plastic-covered hoopouses, where the spinach grew protected from cold temperatures and damaging rains.

Turnip. This is a white salad turnip, excellent for eating fresh as a finger food or in salads. You don’t need to peel them. For a simple cooked side dish, try slicing the turnips thin and sautéing them in a little butter until they are just turning brown and crispy.

Potato – The organic potatoes in your box this week were raised at Driftless Organics farm in Crawford County, Wisconsin. Potatoes are the only vegetable which we plan to include in your boxes that we do not raise ourselves.

Orange Spiced Squash

1 winter squash, about 3 lbs

2 Tbsp unsalted butter

2 Tbsp orange juice

1/2 tsp grated orange zest

1/4 tsp ground allspice

Cut the squash in half, scoop out strings and seeds, place halves face down on a baking sheet with a bit of water in the bottom and roast at 350 degrees until the flesh is very tender. Scoop out the squash and place in a food processor. Add the butter in thin slivers along with orange juice, orange zest, and allspice. Puree until smooth and serve warm. If the squash is dry textured you may need to add water while pureeing to achieve a smooth consistency.

Winter Storage Vegetables: Members who receive their last delivery on November 8th still have time to order extra carrots, winter squash, and several other storage vegetables. Read www.twoonionfarm.com/WinterVegetables.pdf for prices and information on how to order.