

Two Onion Farm

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Week of September 11, 2011

We're nearing the end of summer – the weather forecast calls for a chance of frost on Thursday and Friday mornings, and our field plantings of pepper, cucumber, and tomato may not be alive by this time next week.

We're also busily harvesting all of our ripe winter squash, which can store well but must be protected from freezing temperatures both in the field and in storage. Our farm is on a ridgetop and relatively protected from frost (cold air settles in valleys on still nights), and we hope that this week's frost will miss us. Not all of our butternut squash are fully ripe yet, and a few more frost-free weeks would give the unripe fruits more time to mature. Almost all of our buttercup and acorn squash, however, are ripe and should be safely in storage by dusk on Wednesday. Butternut squash yield very well but require a slightly longer growing season and are always at risk from early frosts in our climate. The squash types differ not only in their susceptibility to frost but also to insects and diseases, so a diversity of varieties reduces risk from weather and pests.

New autumn season members – We welcome biweekly autumn season members who are receiving their first box this week. Some logistical notes:

Newsletters: We email this newsletter instead of including paper copies in each box in order to reduce waste. Anyone who wants a paper newsletter can take one from the clipboard at their delivery site. Anyone who receives email newsletters can opt out now or at any time by contacting us at farmer@twoonionfarm.com; 608-762-5335.

Please return your boxes: We would like to reuse the waxed produce boxes which your vegetables come in. Break them down and return them to your delivery site. And while you're breaking them down, please don't tear them. The two flaps on the bottom of the box have creases. Gently fold the flaps along the crease and the flaps will slide out of the holes into which they are tucked. Don't yank and tear the box flaps. Pictures and instructions are at www.twoonionfarm.com/BoxBreakdown.pdf.

Organic produce in this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Acorn squash	No	No	2 wks	
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2 wks	
Cauliflower	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Garlic	No	No	2 wks	
Green onion	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf
Parsley	Yes	Yes	<1 wk	
Pepper	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Red sweet pepper
Swiss chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Tomato	No	No	<1 wk	

Onions – We are reprinting some information from one of our July newsletters in order to reach a different set of biweekly members and also our new autumn season members:

Those of you who were members in past years know that we usually distribute onion bulbs in almost every box of the season. This year, however, you will receive very few, if any, onion bulbs. In April we transplanted to the field our usual large planting of onions. Unfortunately the planting of bulb onions was almost completely destroyed by an outbreak of seed corn maggot. The maggots devoured the roots of the young onion plants and starved them of water. Twenty-two to twenty-four thousand onion plants wilted and died between May 3 and May 10. This was stunning and unprecedented on our farm. Once the maggots are present in the soil in spring, there's no effective way to control them organically while they complete their 1-2 week feeding cycle.

Daylength governs the development of bulb onions – at our latitude onions must be planted no later than March or early April to develop bulbs. So there was no option to replant after the maggot outbreak in May. Green onions, however, are not affected by daylength. To replace the onion bulbs in your boxes this year, we've made regular succession plantings of green onions and we have been including those in most boxes this year, and we expect to continue delivering them through the first week of October. Our two onion relatives, leeks and garlic, also look healthy and we expect good harvests of both. We've begun researching methods to protect plants in the future and we're reasonably confident that we'll grow bulb onions again.

Onions are one of our favorite vegetables to eat and to grow, and we are extremely disappointed by this year's crop failure. With the added green onions and with the twenty-plus other vegetables that we grow, we expect that you will receive ample vegetables in your boxes. We hope for your understanding and support.

Swiss Chard is the large green leafy vegetable with bright colored stems. It is generally cooked. Both the stems and leaves can be eaten; the stems require longer cooking. Generally you should cut the leaf away from the stem and prominent midrib before cooking.

Chard is excellent in stir-fries with other vegetables. After separating the leaves and stems, slice the stems, and cut the leaves into 1/2" wide strips. Add the leaves near the very end of a stir-fry, and the stems earlier on.

A number of people have also mentioned to us that they really enjoyed our recipe for Swiss Chard cooked with almonds and raisins, which you can find in our [7/6/2008](#) newsletter.

Recipes from past newsletters available on our website:

Baked cauliflower and macaroni [9/30/2007](#)

Cauliflower and feta omelet [8/24/2008](#)

Frittata (with broccoli, green onion, and chard) [6/14/2009](#)

Southwestern stuffed squash [8/21/2011](#)

Carrot-Pear Muffins

1-1/2 cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1/2 tsp cinnamon
6 Tbsp brown sugar
1-1/2 cup grated carrots
1 cup peeled and chopped pears
2 eggs
4 Tbsp vegetable oil
1/4 tsp vanilla
1/4 cup orange juice
1 tsp grated fresh ginger (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine and thoroughly stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ground ginger, cinnamon, and sugar. Stir in carrots and pears. In a separate small bowl, combine eggs, oil, vanilla, orange juice, and optional fresh ginger. Pour liquid mixture into dry mixture and stir together until just combined. Place batter into muffin pan, filling cups half full. Bake 20-25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into a muffin comes out clean.