

# Two Onion Farm

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## Week of September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007

The forecast calls for warm weather this week. We are glad of that, since it will move some of our late fall plantings towards maturity. We still have late plantings of carrots, broccoli, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, radish, leek, beets, kohlrabi, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, rutabaga, and cauliflower which are immature. These crops were planted in July or early August, and their growth was delayed by cloudy rainy weather in August, but we are optimistic that with 1-2 more weeks of good growing weather they will mature.

We had a slight frost on Friday night, but our plants suffered no damage. Our high location affords us some frost protection on still nights, when cold air settles into valleys. In any case, the only frost sensitive crops which still remain in our field are peppers. Our other remaining crops can all withstand some frost (although they won't grow in very cold weather).

In many Septembers, we are afraid of early frost because it can damage winter squash which are still maturing in the field. In this year, however, the winter squash grew exceedingly well in the warm weather of June and July. It matured somewhat earlier than usual, and we finished harvesting it in the first week of September. All the squash are now safely in storage.

### In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Carrots	Yes	Yes	2-3 wks	
Garlic	No	No	2-3 wks	
Leek	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romaine, leaf, or oakleaf
Peppers	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Red / yellow bell peppers, and/or long red Italian frying peppers. All are sweet, not hot.
Swiss Chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Green leaf with colored midveins
Winter Squash	No	No	2-3 wks	Buttercup squash
Yellow onion	Yes or No	No	2-3 wks	
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Not in all boxes
Fennel	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Biweekly boxes only. White, flattened, bulbous vegetable with overlapping layers. Anise-licorice flavor
Kohlrabi	Yes	Yes	1-2 wks	Biweekly boxes only. White or pale green, with flattened round shape and small protuberances on the sides. Peel skin, and eat raw or cooked.
Red Cabbage	Yes	Yes	2-3 wks	Not in all boxes

**Buttercup Winter Squash** has deep orange, sweet flesh. Early in the autumn, the texture of the flesh is very dry; it becomes increasingly moist and creamy as the squash is stored.

Prior to roasting, when you cut the squash in half and scoop out the seeds, be very careful to remove all traces of the stringy material around the seeds; in buttercup squash the strings have an unpleasant taste.

Buttercup squash are well suited for soups and other cooked recipes. We also use the flesh of roasted buttercup squash in “pumpkin” pie, bread, or muffin recipes, in place of canned pumpkin puree. You may want to puree the flesh before mixing it into the batter, and you may also need to adjust the amount of liquid in the batter slightly.

Store all squash in a dry place, outside the refrigerator. The ideal temperature for storing squash is cool: 50-55 degrees. But don't store uncooked squash where they could freeze. Once roasted, squash meat can be stored in the fridge and it also freezes well.

**Swiss Chard** is generally cooked. You can eat both the green leaves and the colored midveins. A simple way to cook chard: Separate the midveins from the remainder of the leaves. Slice the midveins and sauté with onions, leeks, fennel, and/or garlic. Meanwhile, coarsely chop the leaves into pieces about 1” large. When the vegetables in the pan are soft, add the leaves and continue cooking until the leaves are wilted. Season with salt and pepper. We also like to dress cooked chard with balsamic vinegar.

**Leek.** Leeks resemble onions in flavor, but have a subtler, more refined taste. Leeks can be eaten raw or cooked. Like onions, they will sweeten when cooked. You can substitute leeks for onions in most recipes for a slight change in the taste.

Generally the white portion of the leeks and the lower portion of the green leaves are eaten. Cleaning leeks can be tricky, because soil particles are often trapped within the bases of the leaves. Start by peeling off the outer layer if it has turned slimy or brown, which happens naturally as the leeks mature. Now slice the

leeks and place them in a colander. Rinse the leeks under running water to wash the dirt away.

**Fennel.** Fennel can be eaten raw in salads, where it contributes a pronounced flavor. If you're eating it raw, we recommend that you slice it very thinly so the fennel's stringiness won't be objectionable. When cooked, fennel's flavor moderates to a gentle sweetness.

To cut up a fennel bulb, wash it, then slice in half lengthwise. Slice each half in half again lengthwise. With a small sharp knife, remove the triangular core from the base of each of quarter-bulb piece. Then lay the quarters down flat and slice into thin strips.

**Recipes** from previous newsletters, available on [www.twoonionfarm.com](http://www.twoonionfarm.com):

Grated Kohlrabi with parmesan cheese  
(7/9/2006 newsletter)

Sauteed Kohlrabi and Leeks (9/24/2006)

Leeks in White Wine Pasta Sauce (9/3/2006)

Fennel Sauce for Pasta (9/9/2007)

Chicken and Chickpeas with Swiss Chard  
(9/24/2006)

## Pea Soup with Carrots and Leeks

2 cups dried green split peas  
9 cups water  
1 tsp dried tarragon  
1 bay leaf  
¼ celeriac root, minced (optional)  
¼ cup olive oil  
4-6 carrots, peeled and chopped  
3 leeks, thinly sliced  
1 ½ tsp salt  
Black pepper

Bring peas, water, tarragon, bay leaf, and celeriac to boil in a large pot. Simmer briskly until peas are soft and begin to dissolve. This can take 30 minutes to well over an hour, depending on your peas.

While the peas are cooking, sauté the carrots and leeks in oil until soft and beginning to brown.

Add the leeks, carrots, salt, and pepper to peas and continue simmering until soup is quite thick. Serve warm.