

# Two Onion Farm

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## Week of September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**Acorn Squash.** This is the first of our winter squash. We plan to include several varieties in your boxes this fall.

This simplest way to prepare Acorn, or any other squash is baking (or roasting). Baking condenses and conserves flavor and yields a tastier squash than boiling or steaming. To bake: wash the squash and cut it in half from top to bottom. Then scoop out the seeds and stringy pulp from the center of the squash. Try to scrape out all traces of the stringy pulp because in some squash it has an unpleasant flavor. Place the squash halves face down on a dish or tray and cook in a microwave or 350 degree oven until the flesh is very tender but not dried or charred. We prefer microwaving because oven-cooking tends to dry and char the squash. If baking in an oven, you can pour a little water in the bottom of the dish to keep the squash from drying out. Baked squash can be eaten straight from the shell with a fork.

In addition to being baked face down, Acorn squash is sometimes baked face up in an oven with butter and brown sugar or maple syrup on top. We've also included a recipe for stuffed Acorn Squash.

Squash are often used in soups, casseroles, breads, muffins, and pies. Acorn Squash, however, has a fairly mild flavor which is easily overwhelmed and we don't think it does well when mixed into these dishes. We'll have other squash, with stronger flavor, which do well mixed into soups, pies, and so forth.

Squash should be stored in a dry place outside the refrigerator. The ideal temperature for squash storage is 50-55 degrees. However, room temperature is okay. Some squash store well for months. Acorn squash, however, only stores well for short periods. Our variety tends to soften and eventually mold on its orange

spot after a few weeks or months. We grow this variety because it is sweeter than most other Acorns. However we suggest you eat it in the next few weeks.

**Beauty Heart Radish.** This is the round item with white and pale green skin and no leaves attached. The flesh inside is pinkish red, similar to the color of watermelon flesh. This is a spectacular radish. It has a slightly hot, sweet flavor with buttery tones. Store your radishes bagged in the fridge.

The center portion of the radish, with the watermelon colored flesh, has a better flavor than the pale green outer layer. The outer layer, which is only about a millimeter thick, is hotter and can be slightly bitter. We prefer to peel off the outer layer, although some people eat it along with the interior. You can peel the radish easily: first slice off the top and bottom. Then make a shallow slit down the side of the radish just deep enough to cut through the pale outer layer. Starting at the slit, use your thumb to pop off the outer layer. It separates readily from the interior. Discard the outer layer and eat the good part.

Try slicing Beauty Heart Radish into salads or laying thin slices on a sandwich. Chris is particularly fond of placing slices of this radish, along with an onion slice, on a grilled cheese sandwich.

**Scarlet Turnip.** This is the red skinned root with green leaves attached. The turnip is soft, sweet, and mild enough to be eaten raw in salads or as a finger food. It is also pleasant when thinly sliced, seasoned with salt and pepper, and sautéed in butter until it starts to turn brown and crispy.

We've provided the greens because some folks are fond of turnip greens. The greens tend to

be slightly hot. They can be steamed and dressed with salt and pepper and either butter or oil and vinegar, or they can be cooked in a stir-fry.

If you won't eat the greens, you should cut them off and discard them. Turnips, like most other roots, will store better without the greens. Both roots and greens should be stored bagged in the fridge.

**Lettuce.** Two to three heads of Bibb and/or small Romaine lettuce.

We had a heavy rain storm early Monday morning. This was wonderful for our parched soil, and it means that we can stop irrigating our fall crops for a while. However, it splashed a lot of soil onto our lettuce heads, particularly the small, low growing heads of Bibb lettuce. We've washed these as best we can; however you will still find some dirt in the heads.

On another note, many of the heads have a young earthworm or two nestled in the lower leaves. You'll have to dispose of them as you wash the lettuce; they're not harmful. We don't know any practical way to remove the earthworms as we harvest and clean the lettuce.

We're not particularly happy that the earthworms are living in your lettuce. However, we're extremely happy to have the earthworms on our farm. As they burrow and eat their way through the ground, they play an important role in improving the soil: their channels aerate the soil, they mix nutrients and dead plant matter through the soil layers, and their castings contain glues which contribute to a spongy, well-textured soil that resists erosion and aids plant growth.

It's not uncommon for modern agricultural soils which are farmed with heavy use of pesticides and herbicides to have very few earthworms – as few as 10 or 100 per acre (an acre is 43,560 square feet – picture a square which is 208 feet on each side). A healthy soil can have over a million per acre.

**Carrot or Spinach.** We expect that everyone will receive carrots and spinach in the weeks ahead.

**Tomatoes.** Your box may include cherry tomatoes, red slicing tomatoes, and/or Roma (paste) tomatoes.

**Peppers.** One or two sweet bell peppers.

**Eggplant.** The recent warm weather provoked our eggplants into a frenzy of flowering and fruiting. Eggplants are among the most heat loving of all vegetables, and it's unusual for them to yield heavily so late in the year. Your box includes purple and/or black eggplant.

Some serving suggestions: grill them, sauté in olive oil with onions and garlic until lightly browned and serve over pasta, or dip them in eggs and bread crumbs and fry in oil.

**Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, or Kale.** Biweekly folks are receiving recipes for broccoli rice pilaf and cauliflower tomato sauce. Weekly boxes had these recipes last week.

**Onion.** Your box has both Ailsa Craig (larger onion with a gradually tapering top) and yellow cooking onions (smaller, stockier onions). The onions do not need to be refrigerated.

**Garlic.** The garlic also does not need to be refrigerated.

**Special offers.** We plan to include a few onions in each box for the remainder of the season. If you would like extra onions, you may order them. The prices are: \$3.75 for a 5 lb bag of yellow, pungent, cooking onions, and \$2.25 for a 3 lb bag of Ailsa Craig onions or a 3 lb bag of red onions. The yellow cooking onions will store for several months; the red and Ailsa Craig onions should store for at least a month.

Call 608-762-5335 or email [farmer@twoonionfarm.com](mailto:farmer@twoonionfarm.com) to place an order.

## Stuffed Squash

- 1 Acorn or Sweet Dumpling squash
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1/4 lb mushrooms, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup minced celeriac
- 1/4 tsp salt
- black pepper to taste
- 1/4 tsp each sage and thyme
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp chopped pecans or walnuts
- 2 Tbsp sunflower seeds
- 2 Tbsp each raisins and slivered dry apricots
- 1 cup bread crumbs - you can make excellent bread crumbs by cubing cinnamon raisin bread or any good bread
- 1/2 cup packed grated cheddar cheese

Cut squash in half, scoop out seeds, place cut side down on a tray and microwave or roast in a 350 degree oven until the squash flesh is tender.

Sauté onions in butter until translucent. Add mushrooms, garlic, celeriac and seasonings and sauté until all are tender.

Stir in remaining ingredients. Fill the roasted squash with the stuffing, and bake covered in a 350 degree oven until heated through (about 20-30 minutes).

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