

Two Onion Farm

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Late fall has definitely arrived. Most of this year's crops have been mowed down and the ground will soon be seeded to winter rye. A few isolated patches of green and red remain standing: carrots, rutabagas, broccoli, spinach, leeks, lettuce, beets, chard, Brussels sprouts, and kale. One problem that emerges at this time of year is that when most of our crops and our neighbors' crops are dying down, all of the plant-eating insects concentrate on the few standing crops which remain. So, for example, when we mowed our squash and cucumber plantings, cucumber beetles migrated from there to our chard and lettuce, which are not their usual food plants.

The potatoes in this week's box were not grown here on Two Onion Farm. We've purchased them from Vermont Valley Community Farm, an organic vegetable farm west of Madison which is owned by friends of ours. They grow a lot of potatoes at Vermont Valley, and they've invested in specialized equipment for planting, hilling, digging, washing, and storing their potatoes. It would not make sense financially for us to invest in the same equipment because we do not need to grow many potatoes. It's always been a real struggle for us to raise potatoes reliably and efficiently, and this year we decided to buy some of your potatoes from Vermont Valley. We know and trust the farmers there and hope you will enjoy the potatoes they have grown. This week we are distributing yellow potatoes, and later in the season we plan to distribute baking potatoes from them as well.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Acorn squash	No	No	2+ wks	Dry and cool (50-55 degrees) is ideal for storage
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Carrot	Yes	Yes	2+ wks	
Garlic	No	No	2 wks	
Leek	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Oakleaf, Boston or a Red Romaine/Bibb type
Onion	Yes or No	No	2+ wks	Dry and cold is ideal, but will store well at room temperature.
Potatoes	No	No	2+ wks	Store in dry, dark place
Swiss Chard	Yes	Yes	1 wk	

Potatoes. Potatoes should be stored in a dark, dry place: light will turn the tubers green, and moisture will make them mold. Cool storage is better, but not below 40 degrees. Temperatures between 32 and 40 degrees (e.g., your refrigerator) will make the potatoes sweet. This week's potato variety is Carola, well suited for boiling or roasting.

Swiss Chard. Some of you are receiving this for the first time –the leafy vegetable with brightly colored midribs. It is eaten 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 and allow more cooking time for the stems.

Sautéed chard is simple and easy: Separate the leaves and stems. Slice the stems, and cut the leaves into 1/2" wide strips. Start the stems sautéing in olive oil with salt and pepper, and, optionally, onions and garlic. When the stems begin to become tender, add the leaves. Continue cooking until the leaves are just tender. Serve over pasta with parmesan cheese. Or dress with lemon juice or vinegar and serve as a side dish.

You can look on our website for several excellent recipes from past newsletters using Swiss chard:

- Swiss Chard with almonds and raisins (July 6, 2008 newsletter): A fairly quick side dish which several members have said they liked.
- Lentil Soup with Greens (7/29/2007).
- Chicken and Chickpeas with Swiss Chard (9/24/2006). A main dish to serve over rice or couscous.

Potato Leek Soup

This is a recipe which we have printed in past years and which has been a favorite of many members.

Butter
3 cups cleaned, sliced leeks
1/4 of a celeriac root, minced (optional)
1 1/2 tsp salt
black pepper
a few sprinkles each of marjoram and thyme
3 medium potatoes, cut in 1/2 inch cubes
4 cups water
1/4 cup half and half

Sauté leeks, celeriac, salt and pepper in butter until leeks are tender. Add herbs and potatoes and sauté a few minutes more. Add water and simmer until potatoes are soft. Puree the soup in a food processor to desired texture – we prefer to leave it a little chunky. Return soup to pot, add half and half, and warm up. Adjust salt and pepper if needed. Serve with crackers or croutons.

Roasted Potatoes

3/4 lb potatoes, cut into 3/4" pieces
1 1/2 Tblsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced or smashed
1/2 tsp salt
1 1/2 tsp rosemary

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Mix the potatoes with half the olive oil and spread them out on a baking sheet. Roast the potatoes, turning once, until they have just turned golden brown, about 35-45 minutes. While the potatoes are roasting, combine the remaining oil with the garlic, salt, and rosemary. Remove potatoes from oven, drizzle the oil garlic mixture over the potatoes, stir them briefly, and return them to the oven, Bake about 5 minutes longer. Serve immediately.