



LOON ORGANICS

www.loonorganics.com

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This Week's Box:

Potatoes: Yukons from a neighboring organic farm.

Beets: Bulk, without tops.

Sweet Peppers: Jimmy Nardello Peppers, Mini Bells, Colored Bells or Italian – Nardello peppers are long, skinny, reddish and very sweet. **They look like a cayenne, but they are not hot at all!** Mini bells are red/green or orange and very thick and juicy. Larger Italian peppers are elongated, orangish or reddish. Then there are orange Gypsy peppers that look kind of like an Italian pepper and are very sweet. All are sweet peppers and good raw or cooked.

Onions: Red variety

Leeks: Sauté with sweet peppers.

Carrots: extremely sweet, crunchy. Purple/orange

Assorted Tomatoes:

Winding down.

Assorted Herbs: Sage, thyme, and parsley

Hot Peppers: Assorted. De-seeding and deveining the pepper can reduce the heat imparted to a recipe. Careful when handling; they can be a skin irritant so gloves are recommended.

Kale/Chard: recipe on pg 2

Garlic: stores for a long time.

Next week:

More Potatoes...

Week 14: Seeds Part I

Still frost-free here, and looks like it will stay that way for the next week at least. We finally have potatoes! As I mentioned last week, the potatoes are from L & R Poultry and Produce in Kenyon, MN. Rae and her 6-year old son, Leo, have a truly diversified and vibrant farm: they grow organic root crops, have laying hens and broilers, raise free-range turkeys for Thanksgiving, collect and bottle maple syrup, and practice sustainable timber harvesting on their beautiful woodland 80-acre farm. If you're interested in a heritage free-range bird for your thanksgiving feast, contact Rae soon to reserve one for your family. She sells out fast every year! Their farm is listed at <http://www.localharvest.org/farms/M11819>.

I've been meaning to write about vegetable seeds for awhile now. We grow a combination of open-pollinated and hybrid seed varieties. Open-pollinated (O.P.) varieties are true to its parent plant; if you saved the seed from the Jimmy Nardello peppers for example, and planted them next year you would get the same pepper. In contrast, a hybrid seed is a cross of two open-pollinated varieties that usually create a more vigorous offspring cross of its parents. However, if you save the seed from that hybrid plant, it will not be true, and when planted it will often not have many of the characteristics of the original hybrid. Hybrid varieties have increased yields and disease-resistance over some O.P plants, thus in most production-focused operations, hybrids are used. There are many great hybrid vegetable varieties that we grow and use, however the downfall of the development of hybrids is that they produced a monoculture and loss of seed diversity. By 1970, over 70% of the U.S. corn crop consisted of just 6 hybrid varieties, and the National Academy of Sciences warned of the genetic vulnerability of our major grain crops. The same thing happened in the vegetable world. Less and less diversity of varieties were being offered in seed catalogs. One study reported that in 1900, 544 varieties of cabbage were readily available versus 28 varieties in 1980. Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah, IA sprung out of this rapidly decreasing diversity to save O.P. varieties left by the wayside and connect seed-saving gardeners, some of whom had the few remaining seeds of certain varieties. Now, heirloom and heritage varieties are making a resurgence, mainly due to restaurants and chefs that recognized heirlooms' excellent flavors and amazing stories, which trickled down to consumers asking farmers to grow more heirloom varieties. Organic growers still struggle with the lack of seed diversity though.

All of the seed we buy must be certified organic, if it is available, for our organic certification. This means that the plant that the seed came from was grown with certified organic methods, and it also ensures that the seed is not a genetically modified organism (GMO). GMO seeds have had genetic material from another organism that isn't sexually compatible with the plant inserted by a breeder into its genes. Many GMO varieties have been spliced with genes completely out of the plant kingdom. Salmon genes in tomatoes, for instance. BT corn has the soil bacteria, BT, which is toxic to corn earworms, inserted into the corn so that the earworms die. Next week I'll continue with seed stories, but moving into how GMOs affect organic farmers and what we are doing to redevelop and select seeds.

What we would do with your box:

Everything should still be refrigerated, except for the tomatoes, potatoes, garlic, and onions. Keep refrigerated things in plastic to prevent dehydration and if you aren't using your carrots/beets right away, you'll want to remove the tops so that the roots store longer.

The tomatoes are ripening up slowly but surely. You may need to give some of your tomatoes a couple days on the counter to ripen. When ripe, they should give slightly to the touch. If still firm, they won't be as good. When one or two of those tomatoes ripen up, how about fajitas with peppers, a tomato, and red onion with a green salad. Potatoes and kale go nicely together, whether in a mashed potato variation such as colcannon (to your right) or in potato leek kale soup. Our favorite meal of last week was sautéed leeks and peppers in a quiche. Or you can use whatever combination of vegetables you like. Just make sure to cook the veggies first and drain them, so that you get the excess water out. Otherwise your quiche will turn out soggy. With the cooler fall weather, we have been craving soups, and lasagna is on the brain as well. In a couple weeks we will have spinach for a great lasagna, but cooked kale or chard would work great in spinach's place. The kale is getting sweeter with cooler temps. Make sure you cook your kale until tender! 8-10 min.

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Recipe corner

Kale is the most nutritious cultivated vegetable, but do you know the number 1 buyer of kale? Pizza Hut. As a garnish for their salad bar. Slowly but surely, Adam and I are trying to edge Pizza Hut out one mouth at a time. Gardens of Eagan's kale sales have been increasing by over 20% the last few years—people are catching on! The kale has gotten sweeter now that the temps have dropped. Just make sure to cook it long enough, otherwise it will be tough, bitter, and hard to digest. You should be able to tear the cooked leaf very easily. To use both your cabbage, kale, and leeks, try this traditional Irish dish served on Halloween. Coins or charms are usually slipped in the mixture for prizes. It is out of this world comfort food.

Colcannon

6 large potatoes, boiled
4 Tablespoons Butter
¼ pint cream
Salt and pepper to taste

2 leeks, white and light green parts chopped
½ bunch kale, destemmed, chopped, and cooked
2 cups cabbage, chopped and cooked

Mash the potatoes. Melt the butter in a large heavy-bottomed pan and sauté leeks in butter until soft and tender. Add in potatoes to pan and mix together. Add cooked cabbage, kale, and cream to potato mixture. Mash or whip until fluffy. Serve warm with more butter, and season with salt and pepper to taste.

The following recipe is from the food blog: www.alwayseatdessert.com and if your beets are already roasted, then it is relatively quick. Eat it with sour cream.

Beet & Goat Cheese Gnocchi

1/2 cup goat cheese
1 cup roasted beet puree (approximately 3-4 large beets, roasted, peeled, and pureed)
2 cups flour (sifted), plus additional for flouring work surface
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup fresh ricotta

2 whole eggs

1 teaspoon pepper

- 1.) In a large bowl, combine the goat cheese and ricotta until smooth. Add the beet puree and mix until evenly combined.
- 2.) Add the eggs, one at a time, followed by the nutmeg, salt, and pepper.
- 3.) Slowly add the flour, 1/2 cup at a time until it is all incorporated into the dough. If your dough seems a bit too wet, feel free to add an extra 1/4 cup of flour.
- 4.) Turn the dough out onto a heavily floured work surface and knead for a few minutes. The dough will still be fairly wet, but you should be able to handle it.
- 5.) Working with about a handful of dough at a time, roll out a long snake about an inch thick. Use a floured knife to cut out the gnocchi every inch and a half or so. Roll each gnocchi along the tines of a fork (or simply indent by gently pressing the back of the fork into the side of each nugget).
- 6.) Place the formed gnocchi on a floured baking sheet.
- 7.) When ready to cook, bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil and add the gnocchi in batches. Let cook until they bob to the surface and then cook for an additional 2 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to pull out of the pot and serve with your favorite sauce. TIP: For extra crisp, finish in a skillet with a bit of butter and torn sage. Let toast on one side (the contrast makes for an interesting texture) then serve with a sprinkle of nutmeg and additional torn fresh sage.

Crispy Potato Wedges with Mustard

(Adapted from Waldy Malouf, Beacon Restaurant)

4 large potatoes
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme, or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt or kosher salt

1/2 cup Dijon mustard

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Pierce potatoes with a fork and bake them until almost cooked, about 30 to 40 minutes. (Alternatively, microwave them on high for 6 minutes, turning them halfway through.) Leave oven on. In a large bowl, stir together mustard, olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper. When cool enough to handle, cut potatoes lengthwise into 4 wedges each. Toss wedges in mustard mixture until thoroughly coated. Raise oven temperature to 500 degrees. Lay potato wedges, with one cut side down, on a rimmed baking sheet and roast for 20 minutes, turning them onto other cut side after 10 minutes. Transfer to a warmed platter, and serve. Enjoy! Your farmers, Laura and Adam