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PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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Autumn Already?

It's hard to believe the first day of fall was last weekend and October 1st is next Monday. Color on the trees has come out in abundance. Cool weather showed up when we had our first frost on Sunday morning. The days are getting shorter and things are slowing down at the farm. It makes us want to hibernate. But there are still many things to do. With the tomatoes and peppers done in the field it means there is some clean up to do. We like to till up those areas in the fall and incorporate any crop residue that is left after we mow down the plants. The squash areas are all mowed and need to be tilled also. Fences need to be taken down, the greenhouse needs to be closed up every night. Garlic planting will occur soon. That's a fall ritual that occurs during the first week of October every year. The bee keeper who has hives at the farm was out today extracting honey from the hives. It was a nice warm day which helps the honey flow. We'll miss the bees and their daily activity. Other animal activity starts to pick up though. There have been a lot of new deer tracks surrounding the garden. The young fawns are looking for easy food and the garden is always a target. The lettuce, beets and greens will need to stay behind the fences for a while yet. Skunks and raccoons are on the move too. We met a skunk walking to the greenhouse tonight. Luckily we were able to turn around before it got too close. There have been a lot of carcasses on the roadways lately so they are definitely active. We will remain active too at least during the daylight hours and until the boxes are done and the gardens are put to rest. We've had another great year this year. Unfortunately the change in weather is inevitable and the season will soon end. Enjoy!

WEEK 16 BOX CONTENTS

Potatoes: French fingerling. Their pinkish red skin doesn't need peeling. Try roasted with a splash of olive oil and herbs.

Carrots: Slice, grate, chop or juice. Eat raw or cooked.

Romanesco: This crazy green vegetable is an Italian creation and it is a cross between broccoli and cauliflower. Use it as you would cauliflower - raw or cooked.

Winter Squash: Delicata and pie pumpkin. Pie pumpkins can be eaten like any winter squash or use it instead of canned pumpkin for your fall baked goods. Look for recipes that ask for fresh pumpkin or squash.

Tomatoes: Mix of heirloom and round red. This would be a good week to freeze a few for a winter treat.

Leeks: Leeks are a part of the onion family and have a sweet delicate flavor when cooked. Clean them well as dirt can collect between the layers. Time for potato leek soup?

Sweet Peppers: Bell peppers or red 'Carmen' peppers.

Hot Peppers: Medium Hot Pablano. When dried this pepper is called Ancho. Ancho powder is the main ingredient in most chili powders. Use fresh or dried in chili.

Spinach: Spinach likes this cooler weather and gets a thicker leaf with a sweeter taste.

Garlic: Garlic stores well in a cool, dry and well ventilated place for several months.

Kale: Wash kale leaves well. Remove stems from mature kale leaves by folding the leaf in half lengthwise and stripping or slicing away thick stems.

Farm News

It's mild this week but last week was cool and we had our first hard freeze. We still have tomatoes and peppers in the greenhouse but the sensitive field crops are done. No more basil or eggplant. It's that time of the year. It's also that time of the year when we usually have member pot luck at the farm. Unfortunately we will not be having a get together this year. We are in the process of completing the construction on our new house and will be moving soon. It's been a busy year. Not only have we been supplying large boxes this season coming from an abundant harvest we have been watching a house go up on our farm property. We're going to be really glad when all the construction workers are gone and we can enjoy the comforts of a new home. We'll also be much closer to the fields and can monitor the farm even more, including all the wildlife that roams about the place. We will have great views of the fields and the wetland that borders the farm. We hope you enjoy your fall also. It looks like we've got a nice stretch of weather ahead for projects before the cold weather really hits so get out there and have fun.

From the Kitchen

Roasted Delicata Squash

<http://summertomato.com/better-than-butternut-roasted-delicata-squash-recipe/>

Ingredients:

2-4 delicata squash
2 tbsp olive oil
salt to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Clean the delicata squash by running under warm water and scrubbing away dirt with your hands. If there are any hard spots on the squash, you can scrape them off with a butter knife. With a sharp knife, cut delicata in half lengthwise. This should be easy and not require any crazy hacking. With a spoon scoop out the seeds and discard (you can save these and prepare them like pumpkin seeds if you wish). Cut each delicata half into 1/2 inch segments, creating moon-shaped pieces that have slight bumps around the curve.

Arrange the pieces in a single layer in a metal baking pan and coat in 2 tbsp olive oil. Too much oil can make the squash soggy. Salt gently. It's okay if the pieces are a little crowded, but try to maximize the surface area of the squash touching the pan. The browning only occurs where the squash and pan meet.

Place in oven and roast 10 minutes. Using a spatula (I use tongs for most veggies, but delicata squash are easily squished and hold up better if you don't pinch them) turn the squash in the pan so that the light sides are now touching the pan and the brown sides are facing upward.

Continue roasting, turning every 7-10 minutes until both sides of the squash pieces are golden brown and the texture is creamy to the teeth all the way through, about 25-30 minutes. Adjust salt.