



This Week's Word From the Farm

Week of 10/19/09

What's In Your Box?

- Delicata or Sweet Dumpling
- Winter Squash
- Beets
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Eggplant
- Jerusalem Artichokes
- Red Thumb Potatoes
- Shallots
- Onions
- Carrots
- Tatsoi –use this Asian green as you would spinach
- Salad Greens – wash and dry your greens before refrigerating

Dear Friends,

This week's message is from our intern, Melissa Streng. Melissa came to the farm this spring after her graduation from Oberlin College in Ohio. Her enthusiasm and spunk have been a welcome addition to the farm this season. In a few weeks Melissa will make her way to the Portland area (travelling primarily by bicycle!) She hopes to apply her farm experience in the field of education.

The long awaited first rainfall of the season arrived this past week. At Riverhill, we put away our hoes and clippers for the day, and took to the oasis of the indoors, where we replaced our clippers with cups of tea, bean stews, chapters of books, and conversations. As I watched the wind and rain pulling at the trees, I expected a witch or an outhouse to fly by at any moment. I considered that this could be the beginning of the apocalypse.

It was a rite of passage of sorts for the farm. As we took to the indoors, pulling our boots off, leaving the fields behind, I realized that though this was not the apocalypse, it was the beginning of the end; the end of the season and the beginning of a period when we will often leave the fields; our dirt-covered boots will remain near the door rather than on our feet. For myself, as a single season intern, this means leaving these fields for good.

When we do put back on our boots, the work that we do has changed. Rather than spending our hours stringing tomatoes, weeding, or doing other tasks to prepare the fields for crops, we are now preparing the fields to rest, ripping up irrigation tape and squash plants, occasionally reminiscing about the hundreds of hours spent harvesting in the thousands of summer squash plants, and the epic twenty bins that we once brought back from the fields. It is clear that we are reaching the end of a cycle.

The end of the cycle is also apparent in our harvesting, which is now concentrated in gathering the hearty winter squashes, which will last throughout the winter months. Indeed, if I had an animal alter ego at this moment, it would be the squirrel, who is currently hastily gathering nuts to hide for the long winter ahead. At the farm, instead of nuts we gather the squash, preferring to hide them in the cool room than a hollowed out tree.

The squash come in a variety of shapes and sizes, reminding me of the great diversity that exists within each species. We have the acorn squash, which would surely be the squirrel's choice if it had a human alter ego. The massive blue and orange hubbard squash, each teeming with pounds of comfort food, perfect for warming the souls of fifteen stomachs on a cold winter night. The buttercup squash, with their light blue bottoms reminiscent of baboon buttocks. I gaze at the fruits piled high in the cool room in amazement; each one of these squash is full of nourishment, which it offers through stories and food. It is a nourishment that will last us throughout the winter, each bite reminding us of the bright sunshine and the dirty boots of the Riverhill farmers, when the stormy winter rains keep us inside, occasionally forcing us to measure time by cups of tea or by slices of winter squash bread, still warm from the oven.

Recipes of the Week:

Carin's Winter Squash Bread

- 2 cups unbleached white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 4 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 2 ½ cups cooked winter squash
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk (1 cup milk and 1 tsp vinegar, if you are without buttermilk)
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp cloves
- ½ tsp allspice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut winter squash in halves and place into a baking pan with water at the bottom. Bake for 1 hour or until soft. Scoop out squash into a medium sized bowl. Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix the wet ingredients into another bowl. Add the squash to the wet ingredients. Combine the wet and the dry. Spoon the mixture into two 9x9 loaf pans, or muffin tins. Bake 35-40 minutes

Riverhill RootRoast

- 5 or 6 carrots, peeled and trimmed
- 6 to 8 potatoes, scrubbed and cut in quarters
- 1 or 2 medium onions, trimmed, peeled and halved, each 1/2 cut into quarters
- 4 or 5 large beets, peeled and cut into thick wedges
- 5 or 6 Jerusalem Artichokes, cut into 1-inch-thick slices
- 1 whole head garlic, separated into cloves, unpeeled
- 2 or 3 sprigs fresh rosemary, sage, or thyme
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Balsamic vinegar

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Put all the vegetables and the herb sprigs in a large baking dish. Season well with salt and black pepper, drizzle generously with olive oil, and toss them with your hands to coat them evenly. Put the baking dish in the preheated oven and cook, stirring the vegetables occasionally, until they are tender and golden brown, about 40 minutes. Finish with a splash of balsamic vinegar, stir well and return to the oven for 5 more minutes. Serve the vegetables from their baking dish or transfer them to a platter to accompany a roasted main course. You can also add sweet peppers and peeled, chopped winter squash to this nutritious and tasty roast.