



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter Nov. 7-8, 2017

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

It has been a productive week and we're in good shape with end-of-season clean-up work. All irrigation supplies are collected, row cover and plastic mulch pulled out of the fields, and three caterpillar tunnels deconstructed and stowed away for next year.

With some 15 degree nights approaching, it appears this is our last chance to harvest anything out of the field. All we have left are a few leeks, some broccoli, kale, carrots, and parsley, so most of the produce for the final two boxes will come either from the high tunnel (salad mix, spinach) or the cooler.

I'm picking up some straw today to put down as mulch on strawberries and garlic. Both of these crops are quite cold-hardy and don't generally need mulch to survive winter lows. However, they are susceptible to injury during late winter/early spring freeze-thaw cycles. I've seen garlic cloves that were planted 2-3 inches deep in the fall get heaved up during spring freeze-thaw and end up rotting on the soil surface in March. Not what we're hoping for with our crop... Mulching buffers the soil from fluctuating with air temperature, resulting in a slow and steady warm-up in spring.

Strawberry crowns can also be injured by frost heaving, so mulching these provides a similar benefit to that described for garlic. In addition, mulching delays the breaking of dormancy, which leads to a delay in flowering. While farmers are often looking for earliness to be the first to market with a particular crop, it also puts those frost-tender blossoms at risk for damage during a late-spring frost. For all these reasons, we'll be putting down straw mulch on these two crops within the next week.

The last thing on my late fall to-do list is soil sampling. I'll be using a soil probe to remove "cores" of soil (picture a 3/4-inch-wide x 6-inch-long cylinder of soil) to analyze for nutrients, pH, organic matter, and other metrics that give me a sense of the soil's health and potential input needs during the 2018 season. It's important to take *composite* samples, meaning samples derived from multiple subsamples taken throughout a given field. This accounts for variability throughout the field. I'll be taking at least two dozen different samples to

What's in the box?

Green kale: This will be the last kale of the season. You can use it many different ways, in sautés and stir-fries, soups, green smoothies, or baked to make kale chips. Keep in a plastic bag in your fridge, and it should stay good for a week or more.

Brussels sprouts: After an early fall invasion of pest caterpillars damaged most of the sprouts out in the field, I worried we wouldn't have any for fall CSA shares. Well, I'm happy we do. Some of you are receiving fairly large sprouts, which grew rapidly after our typical practice of topping the plants in early September. We ate some of these dinner last night, and while they aren't quite as dense as the smaller ones, they're just as delicious. You'll probably want to halve these before roasting or steaming.

Salad mix: This salad mix came out of our high tunnel, and we've found it to be more tender than the stuff harvested from the field during the season. Multiple layers of row cover should keep this lettuce alive into the winter. It is washed and ready to eat.

Sweet potatoes: This week's sweet potatoes are a mixture of 'Orleans' and 'Covington' varieties, with a handful of purple-skinned 'Bayou Belle' mixed in. Some of you received larger ones, some smaller. All can be roasted whole or chopped. I have still been eating these with the skin on, but you may prefer to peel them. Just don't let them sit on the counter long after peeling, as they oxidize rapidly, leading to some blackening on the cut surface..

White potatoes: Where we are abundant with sweet potatoes, we are more scarce with regular potatoes. This variety, in particular, fared quite poorly, causing us to sort out well over half of the harvest as culls during the washing process (insect damage, greening due to light exposure). We decided to lightly trim the occasional potato with a surface defect, so you may notice a slice on a potato here and there. Even so, we're disappointed we couldn't give you more volume. With that said, we have been hanging onto a few crates of gold potatoes, which seem to be in much better shape, for the final Thanksgiving box.

'Winter Sweet' kabocha squash: Kabocha winter squash are hard-rinded, long-storing, and have some of the best flavor of any variety, in my opinion. They tend to be a bit on the dry side, so butter is a good companion to these :) Or puree into a soup so moisture is not an issue. Use in this week's recipe.

Leeks: Leeks can be used much like onions or scallions, but bring their own unique flavor. It's important to rinse them, as soil invariably gets caught in between some of the outer layers during growth. To prepare them for cooking, trim off the dark green leafy top (which can be used for making stock, but not much else) and roots. Cut these sections in half lengthwise and submerge in a bowl of water to allow soil to be removed from inner layers. Alternatively, just chop them up and then rinse in a bowl of water — the soil should sink to the bottom and leeks will float. A good companion to potatoes in potato-leek soup.

Yellow onions: Use 'em now or store 'em for later.

Garlic

On Deck

Each week, we'll give some hints about what new items may show up CSA shares in the next 1-2 weeks. Please note, this is not a guarantee, but our attempt to give you an idea of what's coming up.

Sweet potatoes — Beets — Delicata squash — Sweet onions — Spinach —
Daikon radish — Carrots

get separate analyses depending on location on the farm, landscape features such as slope, and prior crop. This level of precision should give me the information I need to make decisions about crop rotation and inputs next season. It's also useful to catalog change over time in a particular field, which can tell me whether my management is having a positive or negative impact on soil health. I'm hoping my organic matter levels are higher in 10 years than they were when we started farming, which would indicate that our soil building practices, such as cover cropping and use of straw mulch, are sufficient to offset the impact of tillage and removal of organic matter through harvest.

At the end of the week, we'll be saying goodbye to three employees, Darren, Michael, and Kira, in addition to Brynna, who wrapped up work two weeks ago. David and Rebecca will continue to work 1-2 days a week for the next two weeks to help prepare for this year's final CSA shares and farmers' markets. Many thanks to these folks for helping to make this season a success!

As a reminder, there will be two more CSA share deliveries after this week, with the final boxes being delivered on Nov. 21-22.

Have a good week,

—Dana

Roasted Kabocha Squash

This is a very simple way to prepare kabocha squash. Despite its hard shell, the skin of this squash actually becomes edible when cooked! I didn't know that until this week. While I don't like smothering squash with butter and sugar—it should stand alone, right?—this one does benefit from the moisture provided by the butter.

Ingredients

1 gray kabocha squash, cut in half lengthwise, seeds removed, then each half cut into 3 pieces lengthwise
2 Tbsp virgin, unrefined coconut oil
Cinnamon
Butter

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet in foil. Start with the tip of your knives in the center of the squash and cut in half lengthwise, using a rocking motion on the knife to get it through (don't try to yank out the knife though). If it won't go through, gently remove knife, rotate half and cut through the other side the same way. Push the halves apart with your hands. Using a sturdy spoon, scoop out the seeds and stringy flesh and discard. Cut each half into 3 wedges (lengthwise).
2. Melt coconut oil in microwave and brush on all sides of squash wedges. Season lightly with salt, then sprinkle generously with cinnamon. Bake for 45-60 minutes or until fork tender and browned in places.
3. Mash in a tab of butter to each wedge and eat right away.

Adapted from <http://www.nutritiouseats.com/how-to-roast-kabocha-squash/>