



In Your Box

Broccoli
Sweet Corn
Dill Leaf*
Greenhouse Cucumber*
Sungold Tomatoes*
Red Tomatoes*
Gold Wax Beans –or– an Heirloom Tomato
Carrots*
Yellow Onions
Eggplant
Gold Zucchini
New Yukon Gold Potatoes

*included in Salad Shares

How It's Done: Carrot Harvest

After our first carrot harvest of this year, an employee expressed his surprise at the short time it had taken to harvest 500 pounds of carrots: "I thought we were going to be out here all day!"

We know from long experience that standing at one end of a 150-foot long, 4-row wide bed of carrots will make you grateful for any bit of technology to get them out of the ground—especially when there are five more beds right next to the first one! Our first year, we dug carrots with a spading fork, and Kim and I often found ourselves out washing those same carrots well after dark as a result.

If the carrots are relatively weed-free, we begin the harvest process by breaking all the tops off while the carrots remain in the ground, moving the tops into an empty adjacent bed. With the

ground holding the carrots in place, we can top the carrots far more efficiently than we could once they are out of the ground. If the carrots are weedy, we have found it faster to do it after the carrots are pulled.

Next, we use a special digger attached to tractor to undercut the carrots, and slightly raise them in the soil. The undercutter, made from 3/4-inch steel, has a sharpened horizontal edge that runs just below carrot depth; at the back of this edge, several wide "tines" lift the soil and loosen it as the digger passes underneath. In perfect soil conditions, this results in the carrots sticking slightly out of the soil; usually we still end up scrabbling around to find them.

After a bed of carrots is dug, a crew follows behind with wooden crates to pick up the carrots, sort off the cracked, the small, and the misshapen (all the while enjoying the occasional humorous, unlikely, or suggestive shape). The crates, each holding about 50 pounds of carrots, are loaded onto a pallet carried on the tractor's pallet forks, hauled to the packing shed, and put in the walk-in cooler to await washing. It takes about an hour for four people to top and pick up 500 pounds of carrots.

We use a barrel washer to clean our carrots and other root crops. This contraption consists of an eight foot-long wooden barrel mounted horizontally with a water pipe running through it. The barrel spins and holes in the pipe allow water to spray onto the carrots, washing away most of the dirt. Carrots are put in one end and gradually emerge from the other, where we spray them with a pressure washer for a final touch up before they are loaded into crates and boxes to await their final destiny.

Weather: Early Saturday morning the weather went from simply unusually cold to downright outrageous as a very mild frost settled over the farm! When we arrived home from farmers market in the afternoon, we noted clear signs of frost damage on our ridge-planted squash crop and outdoor tomatoes (which are just beginning to bear fruit).

Activities on the Farm: Many hours were spent on stilts in the greenhouse this past week, trying to untangle the Sungold jungle that has developed high in the air; we are now picking about 20% of each harvest using stilts. Sungold vines in the greenhouse regularly grow to lengths in excess of sixteen feet. We took advantage of great soil conditions to harvest over a ton of carrots (that's 2,200 pounds!) and a quarter ton of potatoes on Monday, and on Tuesday completed the harvest of our mid-season onion crop, including early yellows and reds, cippolini, and shallots.

Comings and Goings: Zane and Oliver left with grandma for a trip to Colorado; they'll be back early next week. Adam, an employee from last year's crew, returned to help us finish out the fall season while he works towards finishing his senior project at Luther College.

Next Week's Box may include: Leaf lettuce, carrots, beets, broccoli, and more...

The Farm Kitchen

We bulked up on **Carrots** this week so that we could give you Chris' recipe for carrot soup. After our first date (with Kim's parents, at the Nitty Gritty Birthday Bar in Madison, Wisconsin), I invited Kim over for dinner. She agreed to come, and I made carrot soup, fresh bread, and lemon poppy seed cake. She called to cancel, and I ended up sharing it with a study partner. I invited her over again, again she agreed, again I made this soup, and again she called at the last minute to cancel. I invited her over again, again she agreed, again I made this soup, and again she called at the last minute to cancel. (Yes, that's three times she stood me up—but she was the only woman I met at the University of Wisconsin who wanted to farm, so I persisted). Finally, the fourth time, I made carrot soup and she actually showed up at my door. We ate soup, we kissed, and the rest is horticultural history. Since we will be celebrating our 9th wedding anniversary while you are picking up your box, we thought we would offer you our recipe for...

Carrot Soup for Lovers

2 lbs carrots
1 medium potato
4 cups water or chicken stock
1 Tbsp butter
1 cup chopped onion
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tsp fresh herbs (dill, or a mixture of parsley, thyme, basil, and parsley)
2 Tbsp lemon juice

Chop the carrots and potato and place in a medium saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil and simmer until carrots are tender, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat oil in a small skillet. Add onions and salt and sauté until they just soften. Add the herbs and garlic and cook for about five minutes more, until the onions are translucent. Stir in the lemon juice. Puree everything together in a blender or food processor, then transfer to a soup pot. Simmer gently for about ten minutes. Serve hot, topped with sour cream and a sprinkling of fresh herbs.

This week's **Sweet Corn** tasted great to us. The harvest is late, and so are the bugs, and the ears, while small, are by and large free of the worms that plague organic sweet corn growers. Small ears seem to be the rule for sweet corn this year, again to be blamed on the cool, relatively gray weather.

We didn't have enough of either the **Gold Wax Beans** —or— an **Heirloom Tomato** to put them in

every box, so we split it. Because we try to harvest our heirloom tomatoes when they are fully ripe, they frequently have a difficult time shipping, and you should use them within a day or two.

Grilled Sweet Corn

Sweet corn in its husks
Cayenne Pepper
Salt

In our opinion, this is the ultimate way to eat sweet corn. We love this method of cooking sweet corn for its combination of sweet and smoky flavors. First, shuck the outer layers of husk, but leave about three layers on the ear. Put the ears on the grill as soon as the initial flames from the charcoal die down and the coals are still red hot. If a few flames char the husks, don't worry.

Turn the ears often until the first layer of husk is completely charred. Expect it to take around five or ten minutes. By now the flames will have died down and you can grill the rest of your meal. When you are ready to serve, you can peel back a bit of the husk and brown the kernels just slightly, if you desire.

Remove the husks completely before serving to avoid a mess, brush away any burnt silks (or not) and serve with butter and cayenne salt (a mixture of 1 part cayenne powder with three parts salt. We keep a shaker full in corn season.)

This week also saw our first **Broccoli** harvest of the year. It kind of snuck up on us or we would have said something about it being on the way last week. As with the corn, we saw signs of a couple of worms, but extremely few relative to the number of heads we harvested. Spraying anything—even an organic spray—for such a small infestation would upset the ecological balance that helps keep pests under control naturally; we will almost certainly have to spray later in the season for the fall crops of broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. If worms are of great concern to you, soak the heads in saltwater for a few minutes before using them; this irritates the caterpillars and causes them to let go of the broccoli stalk.

The **New Yukon Gold Potatoes** are delicious, and we are having the nicest crop of potatoes we have ever had on this farm. Because the skins have not thickened yet—the vines are still very much alive—these should still be stored in the refrigerator.

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