



In Your Box

- Romanesco Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Salad Mix*
- Greenhouse Tomatoes*
- Heirloom Tomatoes
- Paste Tomatoes
- Carrots*
- Beauty Heart Radish*
- Black Spanish Radish*
- Shallots*
- Yellow Onion
- Yukon Gold Potatoes
- Heart of Gold Squash
- Green Pepper
- Celeriac
- Kale
- Sage*

*included in Salad Shares

Bye Bye, Bianca

In the summer of 2001, when we first began marketing our CSA and other products in the Twin Cities, it quickly became obvious that we would need some sort of refrigerated transport if we wanted to provide the quality of vegetables we were accustomed to producing. And so it came to pass that we purchased a refrigerated truck from our friends at Red Cardinal Farm in Stillwater.

Our trip home with the new truck took an exciting twist when the electrical system shut down outside of Canton (Being a diesel, the engine did not rely on a continuing supply of electricity to run). The truck was an Iveco, an Italian brand which had been discontinued in the US; to our dismay, it was not easy to find a new key switch to fix the electrical problems. (The only US source for Iveco parts was Tom's Truck Center in California) The truck sat for two weeks before we got the parts and installed them. We then discovered that one of the brake lines were rusted from having sat for over a year, and had to have those replaced—this was another adventure, not-so-cheerfully taken on by the folks at Valley Truck in Decorah (for the next three years, whenever I called them, I would introduce myself as “Chris Blanchard at Rock Spring Farm, with that Iveco truck you love to hate.”) who struggled through rusted metric fittings to get everything working. By the time the truck finally got on the road, it had been christened Bianca by our employee, Shaun, for her white color and Italian heritage (and for the chicory we grow for salad mix called Bianca Riccia, which is a similarly fickle character).

Bianca performed well and faithfully after that, despite losing a clutch in Rochester in 2002 and an alternator belt in 2003, and I learned to love the weekly trip in the truck, with the boys at my side. This summer, I turned over the delivery responsibilities to Andy, and got to get a lot done on the farm every Thursday, until late in the summer when a series of problems beset her: mushy brakes that developed into two separate repairs and an overheating incident that turned out to be her undoing. She finally gave up the ghost last week on Saturday morning just after Kim and Zane had left for farmers market when a cylinder, scored in the overheating incident, began leaking diesel fuel. At Valley Truck, our mechanic announced her almost-certainly dead-on-arrival; tests confirmed it, and when we went to bring her home on Tuesday so that we could use the refrigeration unit (it having become an important part of our post-harvest handling efforts, although not so critical now that we have rented a refrigerated trailer for winter storage), the engine seized up and now she's pretty well stuck in the back lot at Valley Truck.

But here's the great thing: we have consistently found the most helpful and wonderful people, expressing the best side of human nature, every time we have encountered truck trouble. The diesel mechanic who stopped at the side of the road to help us bleed a fuel line when I ran the truck out of fuel (a very big no-no in a diesel); CSA member Nancy Adams, who spend hours shuffling our delivery driver to the truck and then all the way home when the truck overheated due to a faulty thermostat; orchardist Harry Hoch, who stopped the same night to transport the rest of our shares to the Rochester deliver site *on time*; our chief competitors and best friends at the Rochester Farmers Market, Featherstone Farm, who, along with several other farmers, helped set up the stand in record time when Kim arrived over an hour late after the truck gave up the ghost; and everybody who was ever patient when some little something came up.

We plan to spend a significant portion of the winter seeing what we can salvage from Bianca—she's got lots of new parts, and parts are hard to come by since the brand isn't imported any more—and shopping for a replacement. Ironically, our trip to attend the Terra Madre conference in Turin, Italy, takes us to the city where Iveco trucks are manufactured, and we had intended to load up on spare parts (or at least the headlight we had jury-rigged a replacement for).

Only 1 more box

Don't forget to sign up for your winter shares and bulk orders!

See newsletter issue 16, or our website, www.rsfarm.com.

Please Return Your Boxes

Please return any stored boxes to your delivery site next week, and consider bringing a bag so you can leave your last empty box at the site.

Terra Madre Travel Fund

Thank you to everybody who has donated to the Terra Madre travel fund. Every donation helps make this exciting opportunity and honor a reality for your farmers.

Weather: After an extended stretch of mild weather, we had our first frost on Wednesday morning. The mild frost blanketed everything in white, but harmed very few of the remaining crops, since most of them are geared to fall harvest.

Activities on the Farm: We spent a good portion of the week on winter squash harvest, putting around 100 bushels into the greenhouse to ripen and store, with another 60 bushels yet to pick up as of Wednesday night. We made a huge breakthrough in harvest technique this year, picking into locally-made 20-bushel wooden bins on the tractor's pallet forks, rather than the old drag-a-bushel-box-through-the-field method; much less lifting, and so much faster that we paid for half the cost of the bins (total delivered cost is about \$60) in saved labor. Also harvested several thousand pounds of beets and turnips, now stored in our rented refrigerated trailer.

Next Week's Box may include: Scarlet turnips, Sugarloaf and Delicata Squash, salad mix, and more...

The Farm Kitchen

Romanesco Cauliflower—the chartreuse, conical cauliflower in your box—has quickly become our favorite new vegetable for its subtle, nutty texture and far out looks. Odessa Piper, of Madison's L'Etoile Restaurant, calls it broccoli on acid. Like cauliflower, the leaves are left on to minimize bruising; remove them and rinse the head well. Overcooking will ruin it, as is true for most of the broccoli-cauliflower-cabbage family.

Romanesco with Dried Tomatoes and Kalamata Olives

1-1/2 lbs Romanesco Broccoli
1 large clove garlic, chopped
1/4 dried tomatoes, rehydrated and chopped
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 tsp capers
10 kalamata olives, pitted and chopped
1 tsp lemon juice
2 pinches cayenne pepper
1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
Break florets off of the romanesco head, and boil until al dente (about 3 minutes) - do not overcook! Drain. Heat olive oil and simmer garlic in oil until it just turns golden. Set aside. In a fresh bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Add garlic, mix well, and toss in the romanesco. Salt and pepper to taste, and serve warm.

Winter Radishes are a traditional storage crop from Eastern Europe; we have included one each of two varieties in your box this week: the **Black Spanish** have a spicier flavor, while the **Beauty Heart's** blasé green and white exterior belies its bright pink, sweet interior. We enjoy both thinly sliced and served lightly salted; add good beer and sharp cheddar cheese for a real fall treat.

Fall brings many great things to eat, and **Kale** is truly one of them. Loaded with vitamins and minerals, this member of the cabbage family shines when steamed or sautéed for long periods of time (think 10 to 20 minutes). The rich, sweet flavor especially shines when paired with bacon or other salty foods, or served alongside plain offerings like brown rice or baked squash.

Austrian Kale

1 bunch kale, washed
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 small onion, chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups chicken stock
4 medium potatoes, sliced thin
1/4 cup celeriac, chopped
sour cream for garnish
Cut the kale leaves into 1/2-inch-wide strips. Blanch them in lightly salted boiling water for one minute. Set aside. Sauté the garlic and onion in the oil until lightly browned. Add the chicken stock, potatoes, celeriac, and blanched kale. Simmer together until potatoes fall apart and lose their shape. Stir; season with salt and pepper, garnish with sour cream and serve.

Sage may be the classic fall herb; I can't pick it without thinking of Thanksgiving, although it has many uses in European and Mediterranean cuisines, especially Italian dishes, such as pizza, foccaccia, gnocchi, and pasta. It blends well with mild cheeses; try a little sage on a grilled cheese sandwich or in scrambled eggs. We especially enjoy pairing it with winter squash, as in the coming recipe.

Heart of Gold Squash is a recently-discovered farm favorite for its consistently sweet flesh. Bake it for the richest squash flavor; we especially enjoy the following preparation:

Baked Herbed Squash

2 lbs winter squash
1 tablespoon butter, melted
4 tsp fresh sage, rosemary, or thyme
1/4 cup apple cider or juice
pepper to taste
Halve squash and remove seeds. Brush each half with melted butter. Place each half cut side down on top of a portion of the rosemary. Pour cider into pan, add enough water to reach 1/4 inch up the sides. Bake at 375 for 45 minutes. Turn squash over and bake for additional 15 minutes, or until tender. Scoop out squash flesh, pile lightly in serving dish, and grind pepper over the top.

Celeriac, the large, knobby root in this week's box, is the same species as celery, but bred for the swollen root rather than the fleshy stems. A more primitive version of the species, celeriac has contributed almost all of the modern pest resistance to celery varieties. It has the same flavor compounds, but they come through more strongly; the flesh is soggy-firm, and works best in cooked dishes. We love it in soups and mashed with potatoes.

Celeriac Salad

2 lbs celeriac, peeled and cut into matchsticks
2 Tbsp olive oil
3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
3 Tbsp mayonnaise
1 clove garlic
1 1/2 tsp stoneground mustard
Blanch celeriac in boiling water for 2 minutes; dunk in cold water to stop cooking, then drain. Place in a bowl and add oil and vinegar. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Refrigerate, covered, for at least two hours. Crush garlic into a paste and combine with the mayonnaise and mustard, and add this mixture to the celeriac and stir well just before serving.

With their delicate flavor and color, **Shallots** are the most elegant member of the onion family. The main reason to use shallots instead of onions is that they not only have a very mild flavor but they are tender and cook quickly, and so are well suited to cooked sauces or raw in salads or salad dressings.

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