



Fall Weather Outlook

We are only a week away from the autumnal equinox on September 23rd when the sun shines directly on the equator and the length of day and night are equal. The fall equinox coincides with many cultural celebrations all over the world. This is the time of year in Greek mythology when Persephone returns to the underworld to be with her husband Hades and it is seen as good time for security and protection rituals. In the Buddhist tradition this is a time when many visit and decorate the graves of their ancestors and spirits are the closest to reaching nirvana. While the equinox signals autumn in the northern hemisphere, it represents spring in the southern hemisphere which goes to show that our amazing and beautiful planet is in a constant state of rebirth and balance. This week has been the perfect grand finale to the bountiful summer that I get to remember as my second season farming full time, and a great kick off to the fall garden. Weather should cool down to ideal, cool fall weather for cool season crops. Highs in the 60s and shorter day lengths mean tomatoes will be slowing down soon.

The Fall Garden

As I was picking beans this week I started to contemplate how a crop that has provided so much nutrition to us (they are high in fiber and antioxidants) has also enriched the soil by capturing nitrogen from the air and fixing it into the soil. This is why many farmers use a rotation with corn and soybeans to help build nutrients without as much fertilizer application. I also planted the fall lettuce in the place of beans to give the leaves a nitrogen boost. Beans are not the only crop that improve soil. For example this fall I planted oats to help compete with weeds and hold energy in the soil after harvesting summer crops. The oats will also add biomass and help prevent erosion and moisture loss. Growing oats for these purposes is called

cover cropping and it is becoming more and more popular as a long term solution to the challenges farmers face (such as weeds, pests, erosion, moisture issues, unpredictable weather, and soil fertility). Farmers can use other cover crops like rye, vetch, peas, and buckwheat depending on the time of year and to target specific issues. Typically cover crops are not harvested for consumption but are returned back to the soil in some way. Experimenting with cover crops was one of my goals for this season and after seeing the oats germinate within days of seeding, I cannot wait to see the results and incorporate more next year. Cover crops can even be implemented in the home garden with great results.

It is exciting to see new veggies coming up when other crops like tomatoes and summer squash are reaching the end of their season. Cold loving plants like carrots, beets, radish, lettuce, cabbage, peas and bok choy beautify the garden in the straight and almost weed free rows. The fall garden is also exciting for me because I get to harvest and process different crops and get a rest with the shorter days. In the Greek equinox tradition, I am finding that it is a good time to reflect on the successes and failures of the previous months, and to savor every last minute of digging in the dirt before the winter. What were your successes and failures this season? What things are you trying to savor before the freeze?

Winter Storage Boxes

The last box of the season will be here soon and if you would like to extend the bounty please consider purchasing one of the limited number of winter storage boxes. The box will include extra storage items included in the regular boxes like red onions, potatoes, winter squash, and carrots and some special items like dry beans and pickles. You will also get information on how to store items to best extend their shelf life. Let me know if you are interested and I will reserve your spot.

Box 15 Items

Beans: This is the perfect bag of beans to lightly steam or sauté with butter and showcase their flavor and crunch.

Tomatoes: Red and heirloom slicers. What an amazing tomato season.

White, Yellow and Red Onion: Sliced red onion works well in a salad. White onion keeps but the yellow onions are fresh and should be used now.

Mixed Greens: Spicy mix with romaine, red curly lettuce, red Russian kale, mustard greens, mizuna, and arugula

Potatoes: Red Potatoes

Black Radish: Slice the radish thinly for a salad and sprinkle with salt and pepper to tame the heat.

Beets: The greens are delicious to eat. If you still haven't gotten a salad spinner you will get a lot of use out of it in the last boxes for beet and salad greens. Assorted varieties of beets.

Delicata Squash: This Italian variety has thin skin and a creamy interior. The skin is edible (and delicious). Cube and roast the squash on a sheet pan at 375 until tender and toss with beet greens and maple syrup or honey. Return to the oven to cook beet greens. Season with salt and pepper.

