



The Off Season Gardener

There is only one more CSA delivery after today and I still cannot tell if the weeks flew by or stood still. Lately it seems like I do something to prepare for the off season every day and with a hard frost predicted for the weekend I will have to wrap everything up (literally, in the case of drip tape) by Friday. These tasks are made slightly more monotonous by the fact that I am already planning for the winter and next season. I will attend one of the Midwest farm conferences related to sustainable and/or organic farming and, based on my experience from last year, it will be a chance to connect with other local producers and to generate creative ideas for next season. There are many topics I plan to research independently along with my own planning for next year for planting, administrative tasks, new markets and expansion, infrastructure, logistics and more. I will send you a survey within about two weeks after the last delivery—thank you in advance for your honest remarks! Another goal for the winter is to visit other sustainable farms, possibly abroad in a warm

climate, to learn first-hand about food and farming in another culture. I am also looking forward to doing more cultural things in my own community—visiting new exhibits at the Minnesota History Center, preparing for the holidays including the Rockford Holiday Market on November 21st, spending time with my niece and looking forward to a new nephew in January, cooking, and rejoining the Golden Valley Orchestra in the viola section. You can come see us at one of our concerts this winter and spring. Out of everything I am most excited to receive seed catalogs and see what favorites are available from this year and what new options and heirlooms there are to try next season. Some of my favorite seed catalogs are Johnny's, Seed Savers Exchange, Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company, and this winter I look forward to any new ones including the local Albert Lea Seed Company. Let me know if you have any favorite seed catalogs or vegetables you would like to see next year in the CSA.

Box 19 Items

Mixed Greens: All this lettuce needs is a splash of lemon juice olive oil, and salt and pepper.

Bok Choi: High in calcium and other vitamins and minerals. Keep moist in the salad crisper and this will keep for up to one week. Add to a vegetable broth soup with ginger and garlic for an alternative to a stir fry.

Scallions: These fresh onions are a great compliment to Asian cooking and also pair well with eggs or brunch items.

Radish: The greens are edible and nutritious. Remove tops and store with beet greens.

White Onion: Add to a stir fry or roast with the butternut squash

Butternut Squash: Cut in half, scrape out seeds and roast in the oven in a glass baking dish with ½ inch of water for 1 hour. Scrape out the interior to eat as a side dish or the puree can be added to pumpkin bread, bars, pie, biscuits, soup, or stuffing. Also pairs with curry, turmeric, orange, balsamic vinegar, allspice and ginger. Butternut squash has a long storage potential if there are no open spots on the skin and an intact stem.

Beets: Remove tops and keep moist in the crisper. Sauté the greens and add to sliced boiled beets along with blue cheese and a lemon honey mustard vinaigrette.

Recipes

Stir-Fried Bok Choy with Cashew Sauce

½ cup raw cashews (or roasted)	1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
¼ cup white wine vinegar	Pinch of red pepper flakes
¼ cup sugar	1 head of bok choy
¼ cup soy sauce	¼ cup peanut oil

Toast cashews in a dry skillet, tossing frequently, until lightly brown and fragrant (or at this point substitute the roasted cashews). Combine cashews, vinegar, sugar, soy sauce, ginger, red pepper flakes, and 2-4 tablespoons water in a blender or food processor; puree until smooth. Set aside. Wash bok choy stems and leaves well, making sure to rinse away dirt in the ribs. Separate the bok choy leaves from the stalks. Cut stalks into 1-inch pieces and roughly chop the leaves. Heat peanut oil in a large skillet over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add bok choy stems and cook, stirring often, until crisp-tender, 2-3 minutes. Add the leaves and cook until they wilt and turn bright green, another minute or so. Remove to a platter and cover with cashew sauce or serve sauce on the side. Makes 4 servings.

Beet Cake

2 cups sugar	3-4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
2 cups flour	4 eggs
½ teaspoon salt	¼ cup oil
2 teaspoons baking powder	3 cups shredded beets
1 teaspoon baking soda	

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease two 9-inch cake pans. Whisk dry ingredients together. Melt chocolate very slowly over low heat or in double boiler. Cool chocolate; blend thoroughly with eggs and oil. Combine flour mixture with chocolate mixture, alternating with the beets. Pour into pans. Bake until fork can be removed from center cleanly, 40-50 minutes. Makes 10 servings. Optional- frost with cream cheese frosting.

Parmesan Onion Squash Bake

4 tbsp. vegetable oil	2 lbs. butternut or other orange flesh squash seeded, peeled, and thinly sliced
4 tbsp. unsalted butter	Salt and black pepper to taste
1-3 onions, thinly sliced	3 tbsp. grated parmesan
2 tbsp. brown sugar	
4 tbsp. balsamic vinegar	

Melt butter and oil in sauté pan. Add onion, sauté 10 minutes. Add brown sugar and stir until sugar melts. Add balsamic vinegar; mix to combine.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Transfer onion mixture to 9x13 baking dish; arrange sliced squash on top. Season with salt and pepper. Cover pan with foil. Bake until squash is almost tender, about 30 minutes. Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Uncover squash; make until tender, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle with parmesan; bake until cheese melts; about 10 minutes. Makes 4 servings.