



Farm Updates

As the seasons change slowly and gradually I continue to be astounded at the generosity of Mother Nature. Cooler weather with much needed rain last week (as if to say, “take a break!”) gives way to sunny warmer weather this week just in time to prep and finish harvesting for the storage shares.

Field clean up continues little by little. I am happy to report that the irrigation system is out of the gardens and I will be recycling most of the components and drip tape to redesign a custom system next season. I can’t wait to research and try out ideas like better defined “zones,” calibrating the water pressure to determine timing for watering, more flexibility and adaptability throughout spring, summer, and fall, and new options for the mainline tubing. Fall garden bed preparation has been somewhat complicated by the late veggie bounty— garden beds still have cold hardy crops that keep producing and the recent rain makes the gardens too muddy for the tractor anyway. It is wonderful to still have fresh vegetables and more time to try and organize outside for next year.

Storing the Harvest

The storage share is an exciting offering of some of my favorite items that will store for the holiday season and early winter months. As with gardening, you will never get the same answer twice on how to store the harvest but I have tried to provide some helpful information below about how to preserve the items and which will keep longer. As a general rule of thumb, check the items regularly and use first (or throw) anything showing signs of spoilage. Any damage or cutting into will greatly reduce the shelf life. For each item I am including the approximate picked month and storage potential so you can determine the longest possible storage potential. Some items require different temperatures and humidity but generally a cool basement, the refrigerator and a pantry are all you will need to store the items. Monitor the humidity with a hygrometer and adjust by placing a pan of water in a cold room or root cellar. You can also pack veggies in damp materials like sand, sawdust, peat moss, or leaves to retain moisture. Storing items in the dark will help prevent sprouting.

I suggest unpacking the bag soon after you get home and organizing the veggies based on storage needs. Feel free to keep the burlap sack and red onion bag for storing your veggies in. Have a great winter and feel free to provide any feedback on the storage life of these items.

Storage Share Items

Carrots: Store in cold, moist conditions—about 32-40 degrees with 90-95% humidity. A few frosts make carrots sweeter, especially with cooking. One carrot is enough for chicken soup, beef stew. 4-6 month storage potential when packed in moist material; 2-4 weeks in vegetable crisper in plastic bag; picked Nov.

Beets: Remove greens ½ inch from root and use in recipes. Greens are high in vitamin C, calcium and iron. Roots enjoy same storage conditions as carrots and are high in vitamin A and C. 1-3 month storage potential; picked Nov.

Cabbage: Store in cool, moist conditions. 38-40 degrees with 80-90% humidity is ideal. Leave outer leaves on cabbage as wrapping until use. Cabbage is very low in calories and high in vitamins and minerals. It has been used medicinally for the digestive system for centuries. 3 weeks-2 month in refrigerator; 3-4 month storage potential ideal conditions; picked Nov.

Red and White Onions: Store in cool dry conditions, 32-50 degrees and 60-70% humidity with ventilation. Store onions in refrigerator once cut into and use shortly. Onions are the world’s most cultivated crop originating in Asia back to 3200 B.C. Egyptians thought the concentric circles of an onion represented the universe and used it as an object of worship. 4-5 month storage potential; picked Sept.

Russet Potatoes: Store in a dark environment in cool, moist conditions same as cabbage. Do not store with apples or this will cause potatoes to sprout. Russets are great for baked or even twice baked potatoes 5-8 month storage potential; picked Oct.

Butternut Squash: Ideal conditions are moderately warm and dry: 50-60 degrees with 60-75% humidity. Squash puree can also be frozen for later use. One squash is more than enough for several recipes- bread, pie, bars, gnocchi, mashed, in a casserole, or soup. High in potassium, fiber and vitamin A. Tangy flavor and high nutrition do not deteriorate substantially with time. Store for 1 month on counter or 5 month storage potential in ideal conditions; picked Sept.

Small Blue Hubbard Squash: Mild, orange flesh similar to butternut squash but slightly longer storage potential in ideal conditions. Various winter squash types can be substituted in most recipes. 6 month storage potential; store the same as butternut squash; picked Sept.

Dry Beans: High in protein and a perfect complement to many herbs and seasonings for the cooking season. Included is a 3 bean combo with a recipe for each: Kidney bean (red), black bean, and Cannellini Bean (white). Dry beans need to be soaked overnight so make sure to plan in advance for any recipes. 6months to 1 year shelf life; picked Sept.

Italian Herb Blend: Dried basil, parsley, oregano, thyme, and red pepper will add flavor to pasta, pizza, soup, casseroles or any recipe needing a flavor boost. For best flavor use within 1 year.

Tomato Sauce: This tomato sauce was made with tomatoes, veggies and herbs simmered for hours to preserve the flavors from the garden. Use for pasta or pizza sauce, add to the crockpot with a roast, use as a soup base or in chili. Ingredients: Tomatoes, carrot, celery, onion, garlic, rosemary, thyme, oregano, sage, olive oil, salt, pepper, lemon juice. 1 year shelf life. Refrigerate after opening and use within one week.

Garlic Dill Pickles: If you did not get a chance to make pickles with any cukes this here is a jar. Ingredients: Cucumbers, dill, garlic, white vinegar, cider vinegar, water, salt, sugar. 1 year shelf life. Store in fridge for 3 months after opening.

Raspberry Jam: Homemade raspberry jam is a reminder of summer during the cold winter months and is a nice sugary boost in the morning on toast or crepes. 1 year shelf life

Bunch of Parsley: For one last fresh thing from the garden here is a bunch of parsley that will compliment any of the veggies here. Store in the fridge in a glass of water for fresh use or hang to dry in a cool, dark, dry location.

Recipes

Classic Pumpkin Pie

1 3/4 cups butternut squash puree	1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1 pie dough crust (if store bought I use Pappy's)	1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 cup brown sugar	1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/4 cup light maple syrup	2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 cup heavy cream plus extra for whipped cream
1 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. To prepare the butternut squash puree, wash and cut in half the butternut squash. Scoop out seeds and place cut side down in a glass baking dish with a small amount of water. Cover and bake until tender, about 1 hour. Scrape out meat and mash removing any stringy chunks. Line 10- inch pie plate with pastry. In a small bowl combine sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and allspice. In a large bowl, beat eggs. Stir in pumpkin and sugar mixture. Gradually stir in milk and maple syrup. For a creamier texture, strain through mesh strainer. Pre bake pie crust with pie weights or beans at 375 for 10 minutes. Remove pie from oven and remove pie weights. Pour in pumpkin mixture. Bake at 350 for 40-50 minutes or until center is just still slightly jiggle. Cool completely and serve with whipped cream.

Scalloped Potatoes with Carrots

2 tablespoons butter
 ½ onion, minced
 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 Dash of black pepper

1 ½ cups warm milk
 3 Russet potatoes (about 1 ¼ lbs.), peeled and thinly sliced
 2 carrots thinly sliced
 Paprika for garnish

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In 2-quart saucepan, heat butter. Add onion and sauté over low-medium heat until soft. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in milk, stirring constantly until mixture thickens. In a greased 2-quart casserole, arrange half the potatoes and carrots in a layer overlapping and alternating directions. Pour half of the sauce on top and repeat. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake covered for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake 15 minutes more or until tender. Makes 6 servings.

Beet Borscht

5 cups water
 1 ½ cups beets, peeled and diced
 1 cup potatoes, peeled and diced
 1 cup carrots, peeled and diced
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons butter or oil
 1 onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup green cabbage shredded
 ½ cup tomato, chopped
 ½ cup beet, peeled and grated
 1 teaspoon dried dill
 1 teaspoon honey
 ½ teaspoon Worcestershire
 Salt and pepper

Bring 5 cups water to boil and add diced beets, potato, carrot and salt. Reduce heat and cook covered over medium heat for 30 minutes or until vegetables are soft.

In a saucepan, heat butter or oil and sauté onion and garlic until soft. Add the cabbage and sauté for 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, grated beet and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Add sauté mixture to boiled vegetables. Simmer for 10 to 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste. Makes 6-8 servings.

Tuscan White Beans

1 bag of cannellini beans
 Water
 Bay leaf
 Pinch of salt
 1 clove of garlic, chopped
 ¼ teaspoon seasoning blend

2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 plum tomato, chopped
 1 sprig rosemary
 Parsley
 Parmesan cheese

Rinse beans and place in dutch oven. Cover beans with water plus a little bit more and add a pinch of salt and bay leaf. Simmer on low until beans are tender, adding more water if the beans become too dry while cooking. Remove bay leaf.

Cook garlic and seasonings in olive oil in a large skillet on medium heat for 1 minute. Add 1 chopped plum tomato and sprig of rosemary and cook for 2 minutes. Add cooked cannellini beans and cook, partially smashing some of the beans with a spoon, about 5 minutes. Remove rosemary. Stir in 1/3 cup water and some chopped parsley. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with parmesan, drizzle with olive oil and broil until golden, about 5 minutes.