

Johnson's Backyard Garden, Fall Session Week #8
November 25th, 2007

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- 1) In your box this week:

Red Butterhead Lettuce
Green Cabbage
Broccoli
Cauliflower (a few boxes got double broccoli)
Laciniato and also known as Nero Di Toscano Kale
Green Garlic (not all boxes...sorry we did not harvest enough)
Green and Red Tomatoes
Peppers (sweet banana, spicy green and red poblano, green and yellow bell, and cubanelle)
Eggplant

Mei Qing Choi
Kohlrabi
Basil

** **next week we will harvest more red butter head lettuce, red Russian and Siberian dwarf kale, red poblanos (spicy), various sweet peppers, a kohlrabi, bok choy, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and various other surprises.

How to store this week's bounty: all - except the tomatoes go in the fridge as soon as you arrive home. Fresh basil should be stored in the refrigerator wrapped in a slightly damp paper towel. It may also be frozen, either whole or chopped, in airtight containers. Alternatively, you can freeze the basil in ice cube trays covered with either water or stock that can be added when preparing soups or stews. Check out our [storage tips](#) on our website.

2) Winter Session Sign-up Reminder

Now is the time to send in payment for Winter Session 10 week CSA membership (December 15 through February 23rd). In addition to membership for yourself, you may want to consider giving a CSA membership to a friend or family member for Christmas.

For the winter session we will be limiting our membership and may have to start a waiting list. **To allow us time to process memberships before the start of the session, please send in a sign-up form and payment for the winter session by December 8th.**

Remember membership in a prior session guarantees your membership in the next session as long as your payment is received by the due date for the sign-up period. The last newsletter I put December 1st as the due date...but I decided to extend it another week as the 8th should give us enough time to do our bookkeeping prior to starting the winter session.

For new or current members, each session please print out a [Sign-up Form](#) from our web page and send it in with your payment. The form is located on our web page under the "[join tab](#)";. Once we receive your payment we will follow-up to confirm your membership and provide additional details regarding pickup. Also last week I developed a new calendar for the rest of the year...click [CSA Calendar](#) to check it out. It may be helpful to post on the refrigerator to help remember when to pickup your box. Our Fall Session ends on December 8th, but we grow and sell vegetables year round through five separate 10 week CSA membership sessions. We take vacation for a week at Christmas and a week in August.

3) Farm News

CSA Members Make the Harvest

This Saturday's harvest was difficult to say the least...but our thanks goes out to all the CSA members who braved the rain and cold to help with the harvest...although I have to admit that I was a little worried the farm crew was about to abandon ship when the lightening and thunder started! Since many of our regular work share members were out of

town for the Holiday weekend, a number of regular CSA members volunteered to work this weekend to help with the harvest. Everyone cooperated to make sure your boxes were filled with tasty produce and delivered on time. This weekend we finished with the harvest in record time, I am not sure if the cold weather and heavy rain encouraged the crew to work harder to get the job finished or what. We were so busy working that I did not even have time to take any photos. We slogged down the rows in mud up to 6 inches deep harvesting kale and kohlrabi and we kept our fingers warm with big pots of hot water. Thanks again to everyone who helped out this weekend.

Pouring Concrete in the Packing Shed

Next week we are pouring concrete in the packing shed. If you have the tools or know of someone that can help us finish the slab in our packing shed next week, please email me. We are on a budget but we have all of the foundation and form and almost all of the rebar work done. We just need a few experienced concrete finishers with tools. The slab is about 1200 square feet.

4) Cauliflower

The milk, sweet, almost nutty flavor of cauliflower is at its best Mid November through March when it is in season. Cauliflower lacks the green chlorophyll found in other members of the cruciferous family of vegetables like broccoli, cabbage and kale, because the leaves of the plant shield the florets from the sun as they grow. It has a compact head (called a "curd"), usually about six inches in diameter that is composed of undeveloped flower buds. The flowers are attached to a central stalk. When broken apart into separate buds, cauliflower looks like a little tree, something that many kids are fascinated by.

History

Cauliflower traces its ancestry to the wild cabbage, a plant thought to have originated in ancient Asia Minor, which resembled kale or collards more than the vegetable that we now know it to be.

The cauliflower went through many transformations and reappeared in the Mediterranean region, where it has been an important vegetable in Turkey and Italy since at least 600 B.C. It gained popularity in France in the mid-16th century and was subsequently cultivated in Northern Europe and the British Isles. The United States, France, Italy, India and China are countries that produce significant amounts of cauliflower.

How to Store

Store uncooked cauliflower in a paper or plastic bag in the refrigerator where it will keep for up to a week. To prevent moisture from developing in the floret clusters, store it with the stem side down.

Tips for preparing cauliflower

Cauliflower florets are the part of the plant that most people eat. However, the stem and leaves are edible too and are especially good for adding to soup stocks. To cut cauliflower, first remove the outer leaves and then slice the florets at the base where they meet the stalks. You can further cut them, if you desire pieces that are smaller or of uniform size. Trim any brown coloration that may exist on the edges.

Cauliflower contains phytonutrients that release odorous sulfur compounds when heated. These odors become stronger with increased cooking time. If you want to minimize odor, retain the vegetable's crisp texture, and reduce nutrient loss, cook the cauliflower for only a short time.

Some phytonutrients may react with iron in cookware and cause the cauliflower to take on a brownish hue. To prevent this, add a bit of lemon juice to the water in which you blanch the cauliflower.

A few quick serving ideas:

Saute cauliflower with garlic, minced ginger and tamari.

For cauliflower with a vivid yellow color, saute it briefly with a spoonful of turmeric or generous pinch of saffron.

Puree cooked cauliflower, add fennel seeds and your other favorite herbs and spices and serve as soup. Beth made a tasty cauliflower soup last week.

Because of its shape and taste, cauliflower florets make wonderful crudite for dipping in sauces.

5) Recipes

Recipes each week are provided by CSA member and cookbook author, Elaine DiRico.

You might be wondering what that strange, lumpy vegetable in your box this week might be. It's a kohlrabi, one of the most versatile vegetables you'll ever find. Sweeter than broccoli but with a similar flavor, plus a bit of radish snap to it, it is delicious. Peeled and sliced raw, it is juicy and sweet, very low calorie and moderately low in carbs, and an unexpected addition to crudite platter. It can be shredded into salads or coleslaw to boost the iron and vitamin C levels, and to add texture and flavor. Steamed and mashed, kohlrabi is a nice change from mashed potatoes, or use half kohlrabi for a wonderful hot casserole of scalloped potatoes. It is wonderful deep fried as a garnish or appetizer, and is reminiscent of water chestnuts in a stir fry. My favorite way to use kohlrabi is roasting. The flavors intensify, and with this recipe, it makes a great background for curry.

Kohlrabi Roast

2 cups peeled kohlrabi, cut into bite sized cubes

2 medium onions, quartered

2 Tablespoons olive oil

salt and pepper

1 Tablespoon honey

1 teaspoon or more curry powder, to taste

Preheat your oven to 400°. Toss the onion and kohlrabi with the olive oil, salt and pepper, then spread out in a single layer in a roasting pan. Place in the oven and cook for 35-45 minutes, until they begin to brown, stirring them at the 20 minute mark. In a small bowl, mix the honey and curry powder. Pull the roasting pan out of the oven, pour the honey-curry mix over and toss to coat evenly. Return to the oven and roast another ten minutes.

This recipe is also wonderful with cauliflower, butternut squash, or potatoes. Reheated with a little coconut milk and more curry powder, it is a light meal, served over rice.

Stir-Fried Mei Qing Choi with Garlic

Recipe by Prairieland CSA

1 1/2 lb. bok choy, cut off bottom of head where majority of leaves join stem and cut remaining stems and leaves into 2-inch pieces
2 c water
2 T. peanut oil or canola oil
1 tsp. salt
2-4 garlic cloves minced

Plunge bok choy in boiling water in a large skillet or wok until tender crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Drain and reserve on serving platter. Return pan to heat. Add oil. When oil is hot, add garlic (it should sizzle). Stir it around. Add salt and reserved bok choy. until it is very hot - look for a wisp of smoke. Add the salt, garlic and bok choy. Stir until coated. Serve.

Note: Mei Qing Choi is often served with slice or whole shitake mushrooms in a clear garlic sauce made with stock thickened with cornstarch.

Asian Noodle Salad

Alternatively, toss cooked ricenoodles with prepared Thai noodle sauce or your own favorite recipe. Place over torn lettuce leaves. Garnish with thinly sliced green onions and basil.

Green Onion and Black Bean Sauce for Stir-Fry

This sauce is adapted from Ming Tsai's Simply Ming will keep in the fridge for two weeks and can turn a what am I going to fix for dinner night into something special in a flash. You also can use this sauce on steamed fish or tofu. It is great cooked with equal amounts of cubed silken tofu and ground pork over rice.

2 T canola oil
2 1/2 – 3 T dry, fermented black beans, coarsely chopped
4 – 5 T minced garlic
4 – 4 1/2 T peeled, minced ginger
1 bunch scallions (grocery store size, not farm size) sliced 1/8 inch thick
1 1/2 to 2 t sambal oelek or hot pepper sauce
1/4 c dry sherry or rice wine (not sweet wine like Mirin)
1 t kosher salt

1/ 2 t ground black pepper
1/ 4 c plus 2 T canola oil

Chop all ingredients and have them ready. Heat a heavy skillet or wok over high heat. Add 2 T of the oil and swirl to coat the pan. When you can throw in a green onion ring and the oil bubbles around it, add black beans, garlic, ginger, and scallions. Stir fry until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the pepper sauce and wine and reduce heat to medium. Cook 2 to 3 minutes as liquid is absorbed. Add salt and pepper. Remove from heat and cool for a bit. Add half the mixture to a blender. Puree until smooth, adding the remaining oil. Stir in remaining mixture and allow to cool completely. Transfer to a jar or container for immediate use or refrigerate for later. Makes 1 1/ 2 cups. Use 2 1/ 2 T per pound of stir fry ingredients. Add at the end of cooking.

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7) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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