



The Weekly Weeder

A weekly publication for CSA members

DECEMBER 10, 2008—WINTER BOX #3

WWW.RIDGELANDHARVEST.COM CSA@RIDGELANDHARVEST.COM

Box Contents & Tips

Brussels Sprouts: The same delicious frost sweetened morsels! Trim the browned bottom of each sprout prior to cooking or freezing. We cut our sprouts in half to speed their cooking time. Sprouts freeze easily too: wash and sort into small, medium, large sizes. Blanch small size 3 minutes; medium 4 minutes; large size 5 minutes. Cool. Drain. Pack into freezer bags or containers.

Carrots: They'll last for months in the crisper drawer when stored in a plastic bag to maintain humidity. Carrots can also be frozen if you don't have space in your refrigerator: Wash and peel (though we prefer to leave the peel on for their nutrient value) then dice or quarter. Blanch pieces for 3 minutes or whole carrots for 5 minutes. Cool, drain, pack.

Garlic: Store on the countertop or in a cool area. Keep out of the refrigerator. When we notice any cloves going soft or starting to sprout, we stick them on our dehydrator, then grind into fresh garlic powder! It also makes a terrific homemade gift during the holiday's.

Onions, Yellow: Keep on the countertop or in a 50/60-degree space in the mesh bag.

Winter Squash: Butternut (creamy colored, long ones) & Carnival (acorn shaped, festive colors). Both varieties are good keepers (a dry storage of 50-60 degrees is ideal—not in the refrigerator). Squash is excellent for freezing. Place squash upside down in a shallow baking dish; add 1/4 inch water and bake at 375-degrees until tender. Scoop out the pulp. Puree if desired. Cool. Pack into freezer bags or containers. We often bake a few squash at a time when the oven is on, eating one and freezing up the other. The frozen pulp easily defrosts for a quick side dish, makes a great soup, or can be used for quick breads or sweet spice bars.

REMINDER:

**Next Week (December 17) is the
LAST Winter Share Delivery.**

News from the Farm

SNOWED IN! Schools all around us are closed today and the roads are thick with snow. Clean up of the 7+ inches of snow that fell on us Monday night is now underway. Our rural gravel road, at the hour of 9 am, still hasn't been plowed out. We're not completely trapped on the farm since our tractor and blade can dig us out, but the snow keeps falling and the drifting and blowing are expected to continue throughout the day. It's exciting to have large amounts of snow again! The old timers around us say it's going to be another winter like last year's...we'll have to see! We are thankful that the snowstorm came at the beginning of the week so the CSA delivery wasn't affected.

Due to the amount of snow needing to be plowed out, we decided to give you the rest of the winter squash and onions this week. This allowed Mat more time to deal with the snow. It also gives you a week to eat up some of the roots already in your refrigerator. More root crops will be given next week, as part of the last box. So what to do with all the root crops? See the back page for recipe ideas, and also the notes/tips in the column to your left.

Winter is a nice change in pace from the hectic, everyday busyness of the summer season. Mat and his dad have been cutting wood, many of the trees still remnants of last year's straight-line winds that ripped through our area after the dreadful August rains/floods. Wood cutting is one of those endless projects that keeps one physically fit from all the bending, throwing, lugging, tugging and hauling. This winter I haven't helped out yet and I miss the rugged smells that accompany the work - a combination of fresh cut wood, gas and oil, and wet leather gloves - so I inhale deeply as Mat comes in after a day in the woods.

But this wintertime also fits my own need to slow down as baby-to-be is growing well in it's 7th month, and my belly is large enough that it interferes in my usual working positions. Thus, one adapts and finds creative solutions to moving heavy objects, fitting into tight places, and playing with a busy 2-year old. Indeed I find odd muscles that are sore and I'm going to have to start the sideways approach to jobs so I don't hunch forward. Eventually I will do what Mat asks, "Please sit down and take a break!" After next week's CSA box (the last delivery), I'll likely start to do just that, sit down and do projects (except for the rearranging a room or two!).

Have a good week! Cate

Recipes! Recipes! Recipes!

Root Stew

Ingredients

2 tablespoons Olive Oil
1 cup onion chopped
6 cloves garlic chopped
1 cup celery root peeled and finely diced
1/2 cup turnips - peeled and finely diced
1 cup rutabaga peeled and finely diced
1 cup carrots sliced into medallions
1 small beet peeled and finely diced
1/2 cup Wine
4 cups Vegetable Stock (or as needed)
1 teaspoon sage chopped
1 teaspoon thyme chopped
1 teaspoon oregano chopped
1 tablespoon parsley chopped

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil and add the garlic, onions, carrots, celery root, rutabaga, beet, and turnip.

Cook the vegetables over medium- high heat, until they are slightly golden, about 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Deglaze the pan with the red wine and reduce the liquid by half. Add the stock, bring to a simmer, and cover the pan.

Cook at a simmer, covered, for about 8 minutes, or until all the vegetables are tender; add more stock as necessary to keep the vegetables covered.

Add the sage, thyme, oregano, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper, and serve.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP COOKS.COM

extra virgin olive oil
1 stick butter
1 or 2 large sweet onions, chopped
1/2 large fennel bulb with "fern"
1 large butternut squash
2 large carrots
white wine or Zinfandel
fresh sage
4 cans College Inn chicken broth (may use low sodium)

Pour generous amount of olive oil to cover bottom of a stock pot.

Add 1/4-1/2 stick butter. Heat over low-medium heat.

Add chopped onion. Cook until translucent.

Clean fennel bulb and the fern (the fern is the top, finely-leafed portion of the fennel) under cold water and pat dry. Detach some fern from stems, discarding stems (they can be pithy).

Chop bulb, discarding tough outer layer. Add chopped fennel bulb to onion and continue to sauté over low heat, stirring occasionally.

Peel squash and carrots. Cut squash into medium sized cubes; slice carrot. Add approximately 2 teaspoons salt to pan (Kosher salt preferred), and sprinkle with pepper (use white pepper if available).

Turn heat to medium, add 1/4-1 cup wine to onion and fennel; cook until alcohol "burns off", approximately 4 to 5 minutes. Add carrot and squash to pot. Add 4 or 5 cans of chicken stock and remaining butter. Cover and bring to a slow boil. Mince several sage leaves and chop reserved fennel fern. Add to pot.

Reduce to simmer, and cook until vegetables are very tender.

Flavor with a dash of cinnamon, cayenne pepper, curry powder, nutmeg, ginger, if preferred.

Remove soup from heat and puree with hand mixer/blender

Winter Squash Spice Bars

3/4 cup butter
2 cups white sugar
4 eggs, beaten
2 cups cooked and pureed squash
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 (3 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 cups sifted confectioners' Sugar

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Butter and flour a 10x15 inch jellyroll pan.

In a large bowl, cream together 3/4 cup butter and white sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then stir in the squash. Combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg; stir into the pumpkin mixture. Mix in walnuts. Spread evenly into the prepared pan.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes in the preheated oven, or until toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool completely before frosting.

In a medium bowl, mix together the cream cheese, 1/3 cup butter, and vanilla until smooth. Gradually blend in sugar, then beat until smooth. Spread over cooled bars. Cut into squares.