

Schreiber & Sons CSA

It's a Culinary Adventure

Schreiberandsons.com

May 11, 2009

Week II

In this weeks's box

- Asparagus
- Yellow split peas
- Lentils
- Spinach salad (spinach, mustard greens, lettuce and arugula)
- Sage (as in the herb)
- Green onion or dry bulb onion

The Weather. Let me start by saying the high for tomorrow is 60 and the low is to be 37. With weather like this, we cannot win. We have had basil ready to transplant for 10 days but we cannot transplant it until we have consistently warmer weather. You will note that the paucity of items in your boxes. This is completely due to the weather. We had twice this many items by this time two years ago during a normal weather. Things will be pick up by next week. I see the radishes and bok choy will be ready to pick by then, and we will have leafy greens galore. It is hard to see it now, but in a month you will have forgot all about the cold weather and the slow start to the CSA. Be patient.

The Kid's Tour. We had our first event of the year at the farm, the Kids/Boy Scout/Girl Scout tour of the farm. We had 120 people on the tour. It was a great fun and other than a couple of bee stings, everyone had a good time.

Pick Up Location. If you need additional information where your pick up location is go to our website and click on the tab called CSA Deleivery schedule or check select <http://schreiberandsons.com/harvestschedule.html> This has the location, address and time of each pick up. If you click on the hypertext it will provide you a map of each location.

The pick up times are posted and they range from 2 to 3 hours. We have asked the pick up site volunteer to allow a 1 hour grace period following the pick interval. Do not contact the pick up site volunteer outside these hours. (There should be minimal need to contact them during these hours.) Your box should be there and if it is not there, they will not be able to help you with it. If you have a question please contact Tracy at 727 7527 or me (Alan) at 539 4537.

What to do if you forgot your box. I do not want to sound hard hearted about this.... but if you snooze your lose. You have the two to three hour interval, plus the one hour grace period to pick up your box. If you do not get it during this interval, you have lost the opportunity to get your box. This may sound mean spirited, but after some experience we have learned that you have to put your foot down sometime and this is where we draw the line. Members should not be trying to get their box from the pick up site late at night or the next day.

Having finally been firm about those who forget their boxes, let me add..... if this just does not work for you, call the office and we will try to fix up another box for you. You can either pick it up at the farm or at the the Kennewick Famer's Market on Thursday (starting June 4 (9 to 1)), Richland Farmer's Market on Fridays (starting June 5 (9 to 1)) or on Saturday's at the Pasco Farmer's Market between 8 and noon. This only works if you make contact with us and we can do it.

Purple Asparagus. One thing we have plenty of is asparagus. Everyone is familiar with asparagus. It is always the first crop to be harvested in Washington and it is the well known agricultural harbinger of spring. What you may be less familiar with is a special purple variety we have called Purple Passion. Most of our purple variety is organic, but we have a very small amount in the conventional side. We put the purple and green asparagus in boxes randomly so you may or may not get it. Purple asparagus originates from an isolated mountain valley in northern Italy and several years ago the some seed was distributed to breeders and there are now a few sources of the purple seed. It has a slightly milder flavor and is a little sweeter than green asparagus. If you like a strong green or grassy flavor, you would prefer green asparagus. If you are not so fond of asparagus or like your vegetables sweet, purple asparagus is your kind of asparagus. Additionally, purple asparagus generally has larger spears. One catch to purple asparagus is that the coloring comes from the antioxidants, anthocyanins, on the surface of the spear. Anthocyanins are heat labile and break down when cooking, so if you thoroughly cook the asparagus, the spears turn green.

Asparagus

Botanical name: *Asparagus officinalis*
Group:

Asparagus has been prized by epicures since Roman times. The name asparagus comes from the Greek language meaning "sprout" or "shoot" and is a member of the Lily family. Widely cultivated for its tender, succulent, edible shoots, asparagus cultivation began more than 2,000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region. Greeks and Romans prized asparagus for its unique flavor, texture and alleged medicinal qualities. They ate it fresh when in season and dried the vegetable for use in winter. Asparagus is depicted in ancient Egyptian writings. Asparagus has also been grown in Syria and Spain since ancient times. In the 16th Century, asparagus gained popularity in France and England. From there, the early colonists brought it to America. Asparagus is often called the *Food of Kings*. King Louis XIV of France was so fond of this delicacy that he ordered special greenhouses built so he could enjoy asparagus all year-round.

Asparagus is available year-round, but the fresh, local season starts in mid-April and continues through mid-June (all things going well). You can get California asparagus about a month earlier and Mexican crop about a month before that. The greatest threat to the United States asparagus market these days is Peru. Asparagus in Peru not only has a longer season, but growers can pay their workers a fraction of what pickers are paid here, they can use chemicals outlawed in the United States AND they appreciate government support from their own country as well as free trade status from the United States. There is a handful of individuals (including Alan) working to preserve Washington asparagus against the odds, so don't panic yet, but when you have the choice, BUY AMERICAN (and more specifically Washington) asparagus.

Nutritional value: One serving of asparagus is low in calories and very low in sodium. Asparagus is an excellent source of folic acid and is a fairly significant source of Vitamin C, Thiamin, and Vitamin B6. Asparagus contains no fat or cholesterol of dietary significance. It is an important source of potassium and many micronutrients. According to the National Cancer Institute, Asparagus is the highest tested food containing Glutathione, one of the body's most potent cancer fighters. Additionally, Asparagus is high in Rutin, which is valuable in strengthening the blood vessels.

Selection: Select bright green asparagus with closed, compact, firm tips. If the tips are slightly wilted, freshen them up by soaking them in cold water.

Storage: Keep fresh asparagus moist and cool until you intend to use it.

Preparation: Break off stems (there is a natural break point), then rinse.

Use: Steam, stir-fry with ginger and garlic, boil for less than five minutes (drop in ice water if you wish to retain the color for a salad or cold serving); put it on a pizza or in a soup. Asparagus is as versatile as it is popular. (Please let us know if you need salad, main dish, appetizer, pickling or any other recipes.)

Asparagus Etiquette

From the Epicurious Etiquette Guide

If asparagus spears are served already in a sauce, eat them with a fork and knife by cutting them into manageable pieces. If they are to be dipped in a sauce and are large, cut off the tips and eat them separately to avoid any dripping and dropping. You may pick up the stalks by hand, and then dip and eat the tougher part. Smaller asparagus spears can be entirely manageable by hand, in which case you can pick up the whole thing, dip, and eat.

For more information and Recipes

www.washingtonasparagus.com

www.calasparagus.com

www.asparagus.com