

# Schreiber & Sons CSA

*It's a Culinary Adventure*

Schreiberandsons.com

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Week III

In this Weeks's box

- Asparagus
- Thyme
- Spinach - this is probably the last spinach from our overwintering planting. The leaves are large and work well in a salad but need to be torn or is excellent cooked.
- Radish - Pink Celebration - this is a new variety, it is very pink, quite an unusual color for a radish.
- Radish - French Country Breakfast - this is/was the kind ground in France and as the name suggests was commonly consumed for breakfast. It is a beautiful radish.
- Baby Bok Choy - for medium and large shares.
- Salad mix - spinach (different variety from above), red leaf lettuce, arugula and kholrabi leaf
- Spring onions - these are onions that we planted last fall. They have excellent size considering the time of the year and the cool season.

The past two week's produce has included some items we bought from local farms. As the season and temperature has progressed, we have been able to use only our produce. This is great news for us as it is a bit hurtful to my pride to use other produce. On the other hand, we should not be growing chickpeas, lentils, and dry peas and so on. I am glad you got them because they taste great and for some of you, it hopefully broadened your horizons. The small share members may feel a little slighted not receiving bok choy, but trying to keep the relative share volume proportional requires the small shares to occasionally not receive some of the items that are in the medium or large shares. For what it is worth, we have two spring plantings of bok choy and the small members are slated to receive bok choy later in the spring.

**The Weather.** So the weather has warmed up. Actually this is near record temperatures and believe it or not, this is too warm. We have to take some of our plants out of the greenhouse to keep from being damaged and if this continues some of our cool weather crops are going to bolt. So now we do not have to worry about the cold weather at night, which is good, but we are still behind in degree days. The problem we have is that if we have the kind of temperatures that would catch us up, it would be too hot for our cool weather crops. Kind of a darned if we do, darned if we don't situation. So what we do is not worry about the things we cannot control and focus on what we can influence.

**Memorial Day Weekend Farm Party.** See the attached invitation. We have ordered the pig, and dressed it should weigh about 150 pounds. We are going to be grilling our asparagus and some other vegetables and we will have a large mixed green salad. If you are coming, we would like you to RSVP, however if you do not RSVP and still want to come, please do. We need you to bring a side dish or dessert. Be thoughtful about the portion size you bring. The last time we did this, it seems that the average dish size was smaller than the amount of food consumed by each family and the patient people at the end of the line ended up with only pork to eat. If you are bringing something interesting or unusual, we encourage you to bring a recipe card to share with people. In the past we have found that CSA

members seem to pride themselves on bringing some very cool dishes and people are always interested in the recipes. And while I do not want to sound like a food nazi.....we request that you do not bring bags of potato chips and similiar kinds of food--our goal is to eat local and eat well. You do not take pork chops to a bar mitzvah so do not bring junk food to our CSA picnic.

*These parties are usually quite fun and enjoyable. The kids really love to run around the farm, see the equipment (which farm staff as chaparones they can climb on the equipment), ride around the farm on wags with hay pulled by tractors, see a whole pig (with its head on) (this sometimes makes the vegetarians cringe), the parents like to see their kids learn about where food comes from, and the best is the general fellow*

**Volunteers Needed.** We never know how many people are going to show up for the farm party, but often there are a lot of people and I try hard to not have my staff work on Sunday. I have to employees who have volunteered to work, but we could use some help. If anyone would like to volunteer, we would appreciate. Mostly what we need are people to show up a little early to help cook the pig, lead the pledge of allegiance, grill, set up tables, chairs, help with parking etc. A half of dozen folks would be plenty for the morning. We are especially in need between 10:00 and 1:00 pm. We will again need some folks to help out at the end of the party, which will be at nightfall. Usually, I deputize whoever is still there to help us. If you would like to help out, please send us an email.

**Add ons.** If you have purchased eggs, flour or beef from us, let me know how it was. I would like to summarize your reviews and share them with the other members. Regarding the meat, we have the following items left: 4 packages of rib steak that are about 1.25 pounds per package, one rump roast that is 6.25 pounds, 6 packages of round steak that are between 1 and 1.4 pounds and 134 1.5 pound packages. The steaks and roasts are going fast, but we have plenty of the organic hamburger. We need to use up some of this hamburger before we can get some more steaks, so feel free to purchase some hamburger.

Egg orders are full for next week, but we still have egg orders available for future weeks. Please let us know by Thursday at 3pm of the week prior that you would like to order eggs.

## **Radish**

Family: Brassicaceae

The radish is an annual or biennial grown for its edible swollen roots, seed pods, and leaves. Depicted on the pyramid of Cheops, it was cultivated by the Egyptians in 2780 BC and it is noted that it was given to laborers in their rations. The ancient Egyptians used radish seed oil before olive oil was known.

By 300 BC the radish was noted as being cultivated in Japan. Thought to have originated in Asia and to have been domesticated in the Mediterranean, this little vegetable has been around for centuries. The radish was so highly prized in ancient Greece that at the temple at Delphi there were radishes made of gold which were dedicated in Apollo's honor. The radish did not make its way to England until approximately 1548. By 1629 they were being cultivated in Massachusetts. Radishes were a common breakfast item for the Pennsylvania Dutch. (They still are in Japan).

In Oaxaca, Mexico, Christmas Eve is also the Night of the Radishes, when large radishes are cut into animal shapes. The **Night of the Radishes** (*Noche de Rábanos*) is celebrated every year on December 23, began in 1897 in the "zócalo" (main plaza) of Oaxaca city. It lasts only a few

hours but attracts thousands of people to this plaza. It consists of an exhibition of sculptures made from a type of large red radish which can weigh up to 3 kilos in weight and 50 cm in length. (For scale: look at the people standing behind the radish sculpture.) These radishes are especially grown for this event, left in the ground for months after the normal harvests to let them attain their giant size and unusual shapes.

The sculptures are made by professional craftsmen and aficionados, who are mostly radish growers. Themes include complete nativity scenes, party scenes with dozens of figures, folk dance, models of real buildings built with much detail and saints. The sculpted scenes include other materials such as dried flowers and corn husks but what makes a sculpture stand out is the creative way of cutting a radish itself for effect, such as carefully peeling the red skin back and perforating it to create a lace skirt. A contest is held with the first-prize winner getting his/her picture in the newspaper.

Radishes are root vegetables that resemble beets or turnips in appearance and texture, but have a distinct flavor. It is the root of a plant classified in the mustard family. Radishes are one of the quickest and easiest vegetables to grow. Their name comes from the Greek word for “fast appearing”.

In the United States radishes are usually eaten raw; however, they can be added to cooked dishes or served whole. The biggest crops grown in the United States come from California and Florida, but most states grow radishes.

Radishes come in a variety of colors including, but not limited to, white, lavender, red, magenta, and black. Most common grocery store held varieties are just larger than a cherry, but some radishes can grow to over 100 pounds and over 3 feet long. The Daikon radish that we grow on the farm can be grown to be as big as a football.

The white varieties tend to be milder and are tasty eaten raw, while the black varieties can be horseradish hot and can add a pleasing tang to salads.

### **Nutritional Value**

Radishes contain no cholesterol, little fat, and few calories. They provide vitamin C, folate, calcium, potassium, and fiber. Radishes can be eaten to relieve indigestion and to aid the body as an expectorant.

### **Selection and Storage**

Radishes should feel firm; stay away from those that yield to gentle pressure as they will not be crisp. Refrigerate radishes in a plastic bag for up to two weeks, depending on the variety. Stay away from radishes that are too large or with yellow or decayed tops or those that have a spongy feel. If the leaves are still attached, the leaves should be crisp and green.

### **Preparation**

The fiery flavor in the radish is due to the presence of mustard oil, the mustard oil can be mellowed through roasting or you can highlight the zest by adding radishes to a salad of Kalamata olives, feta cheese, garlic, and yogurt. Radishes can be served raw, sliced, or shredded and is also used as a garnish. The Daikon radish is often pickled or added to cooked dishes.

## **Bok choy**

(also hakusai, bai cai, pak choy, Chinese white cabbage)

Botanical name: *Brassica rapa*, primarily Chinensis Group

Bok choy, sometimes referred to as Chinese cabbage, and all the closely related leafy greens, are as difficult to identify by name, as they are easy to eat. Bok choy is thought to be the oldest of the Asian greens. It has been cultivated in China since at least the 5th century and in Europe since the 18th century. While we in the West are most familiar with one type of bok choy, the one with large green leaves and thick ivory stems that come to a bulbous base, Hong Kong farmers grow over 20 kinds of bok choy. Many more varieties can be found across the mainland and in Taiwan. The problem with differentiation and identification may have come about in translation from the Chinese language as the Cantonese character "choy" means vegetable and the character "bok" (or "pak") means white. So directly-bok choy is a white vegetable.

The general term bok choy embraces several growth stages of the same plant: seeding, mature and flowering. Confusion arises because each stage may look like a distinctly different vegetable. The term also designates scores of varieties of bok choy, the bulk of which fall into these general groups: large white-stemmed, dwarf white-stemmed and green-stemmed. The bok choy you are receiving today is the mature stage.

**Nutritional Information:** As a member of the crucifer family, bok choy offers nutritional assets similar to those of other cabbages. It is rich in vitamins A and C and contains significant amounts of nitrogen compounds known as indoles, which appear to lower the risk of various forms of cancer. Bok choy is also a good source of folic acid. With its deep green leaves, bok choy has more beta-carotene than other cabbages, and supplies and depending on the soil it's grown in, it can have a fair to good amount of calcium, potassium, phosphorous, and iron.

**Selection and Storage:** Choose bok choy with firm crisp stalks and unblemished leaves. Reject plants with wilted, bruised, or slimy leaves and bottom stems that are dried out. Keep unwashed bok choy in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable crisper for no more than a few days; it wilts much more rapidly than head cabbage.

**Preparation:** Whatever the variety, the stalks are mild and crunchy and the leaves pleasantly tangy. If small, do no more than trim a little from the base. If large, cut bite-size pieces, slice stalks into 2- inch diagonals, halving the stem lengthwise. The stalks and leaves have quite different textures and cooking times, so in culinary terms, it's like getting two vegetables for the price of one. Be sure to give the stems a minute or two to cook before you put the leaves in so that each part cooks to perfection.

Use: blanch by boiling or steaming; then stir-fry or sauté (I just stir fry bok choy directly and it turns out just fine-however . . . ) "The two-step method makes all the difference." For baby bok choy, simply stir-fry or sauté briefly, or stir into broth.