

Schreiber & Sons CSA

It's a Culinary Adventure

Schreiberandsons.com

May 31, 2010

In your box this week, you should receive:

- Radishes, Icicle
- Radishes, Hailstone
- Spinach
- Bok choy, Joi Choi
- Bok choy, Purple - medium and large share members
- Asparagus
- Salad mix
- Strawberries
- Herb
- Cilantro

Notes on what you are receiving this week. The Icicle radishes will be the long, carrot shaped white radishes. The round white radishes that look like small turnips are the Hailstone (hence the name, they look like large hailstones). We are trialing a new variety of bok choy. It has purple leaves-which turn green when cooked. Since this is a trial run, there is not enough for everyone. If you receive purple bok choy and have a strong opinion for or against it, let us know. If enough people like or do not like it, that will help us make the decision on whether to keep it. We are picking the strawberries the day before or the day they are delivered. We pick straight into the box without washing them. Our operation is not set up with the kind of facility that can handle washing this many strawberries cost effectively without damaging them. For those of you who are new to the CSA this year, you have missed the previous year debacle with the strawberries. We learned the hard way that you cannot put strawberries in a plastic bags in a CSA box. The Schreiber & Sons CSA veterans are appreciating the clamshells.

Due to the cool weather we some of the produce harvest dates have been delayed, so we try to replaced this produce with a few items that can be harvested early or late. One of the items that fits this bill are herbs. Because we have been cutting our herbs more than expected, we are running out of enough herbs of anyone kind. This week you are getting one kind of an herb but it might be thyme, oregano, chive, sage or spearmint.

Making up the salad mix is always an interesting experience. Our goal is to have at least five ingredients that have a different flavor, texture, shape and color. We have to make sure that there is not too much or too little of each item. For example, we always try to have something red; not too much arugula or cress and multiple colors of green. Although it is hard to get the exact mix of each ingredient in each bag, we try. This week's salad mix has red leaf lettuce (30%), green leaf lettuce (30%), cress (5%), arugula (10%), green mizuna (10%), purple mizuna (10%) and escarole (5%)

Substitutions. Each Monday morning, Tracy Probst, the CSA Manager, and I walked the fields deciding what is ready to be picked. As we look down the rows, we try to estimate not only what is ready, but is ready in sufficient quantities. We decided the carrots are not yet ready to be picked. We are short on any one kind of herb. It is not uncommon for us to run out of an item. We try not to do this, but it happens. We found that the cabbage maggot had invaded one kind of radish, so we had to stop picking. We ran out of a certain kind of bok choy. When this happens we substitute the no longer available item with something else or double up on an existing item. We hope you understand.

If you are an organic member..... If you are an organic CSA member you should, in general, assume that everything in your box is organic. If not, we try to tell you. Occasionally, due to last minute fluctuations in produce availability we sometimes have to make substitutions. In this case of this week's box..... the strawberries are conventional. However, they are pesticide free. (I wished this was not an issue as I believe everything we produce is safe. But I also respect that others have a different value system and a different perspective than I, so we try to err on the side of giving as much information as is possible.) For what it is worth, the radishes that the conventional folks will be getting are organic.

What's going on at the farm? One of the bigger issues we have had recently is all of the rain. We have had near record amounts of rain fall over the past week. Farming in the desert is based on the fact that we cannot count on any appreciable rainfall during the growing season. When water is needed, it is ordered two days in advance. It comes into our reservoir and it has to be used. When we get large rainfall, we cannot stop irrigating even though it may not be needed. So last week in the rain, we kept on irrigating. It does not hurt the crop as our soil is sandy enough that it just drains. The bigger challenge is that we cannot stop picking-the boxes have to be there. So the issue with the rain is how to pick the crops in the driving rain. It creates unpleasant working conditions. We shift folks to do some greenhouse work, or moving the washing and packing to inside-but still it does cause some problems for us.

The lack of warm weather is playing havoc with our scheduling of growing and harvesting. It is also very hard on what we call our hot crops, those that thrive only in warm weather. We have hundreds of squash plants out and many are struggling to stay alive. When I look at the 10 day forecast and seem mostly weather in the mid to low seventies I wonder when it will ever warm up.

CSA Etiquette. I need to be very clear with CSA members-If you have not paid at least half of your membership-you should not be picking up a box. So far 9 of you have picking up a box and have not paid a membership fee. This has caused us no end of grief when the members who have paid show up and there are no boxes. I do not want cast any aspersions on our CSA members but this seems have to have been a bigger issue in the NORTH RICHLAND DROP SITE-what is it with you North Richlanders.... a little too close to Hanford?????????? Okay, a poor attempt at humor, but bear in mind, you do not get to pick up your box until you pay at least half of your membership. You need to pay the second half by July 1.

Regards

Your Farmer

Alan Schreiber