

Schreiber & Sons

It's a Culinary Adventure

www.schreiberandsons.com

Week 16 - Week of August 15th

1. Peaches
2. Onions, green
3. Onions, bulb
4. String beans
5. Kale
6. Eggplant, medley
7. Potatoes
8. Cabbage - medium and large shares; red for conventional, Savoy for organic
9. Pepper, hot - Super Chili - watch out, they are hot
10. Pepper, bell - mixed
11. Squash - large and medium shares
12. Cucumbers - large and medium shares
13. Tomatillos - medium and large shares
14. Tomatoes
15. Melons
16. Sweet corn
17. Carrots

Surplus Produce. We have extra produce of some items right now. If anyone is interested in more tomatoes, peppers, squash, eggplant, melons, sweet corn etc, let us know. We can deliver it with your box along with an invoice. You can mail us a check. If you want some extra produce every week, we can run a tab for you and invoice you at the end of the month

Harvest Party. Please check the attached invitation to our fall harvest party.... yes, I know it is still summer, but fall is coming.

Fertility in Organic Production. I am not an organic grower, but I am learning. We have two acres certified organic, two acres that will be certified this year and 5 more that are a year away from being certifiable. We are thinking of taking another 16 acres organic next year. We have kept up the organic production roughly on par with the conventional side and I am content with our ability to have a roughly similar level of diversity. We have learned what our biggest organic challenges are; weeds and fertility. Without herbicides, weeds just take over. The other problem we have is getting enough nitrogen into the soil. It has an interesting impact on things that I did not expect. I expected to have lower yields in some crops (e.g. tomatoes) and compensated by planting about 15% more. What I did not expect was that some plants would grow more slowly or would not last as long. Our mid season organic beets are about one month

behind the conventional beets. The organic spinach did not last as long as conventional spinach. It is tempting to grumble about organic and how it does not do as well as conventional, but that would not be fair as you will see. It takes three years to transition to organic and during that time you have to figure out how to control the weeds and how to get your fertility program right. I know we can do better and not have these problems. I was advised by one long time organic grower that I should be growing vetch with oats. I can get another 120 units of nitrogen (which could be worth a couple of hundred dollar savings in fertilizer costs).

We are in the midst of trying to develop a better organic fertilizer program that would include planting vetch and oats in the fall, spreading animal manure in the winter, tilling all of it in the early spring and the applying foliar feed fertilizer during the growing season. Bearing mind that in the past 100 years the price of conventionally produced nitrogen (made from natural gas) reached an all time high in 2007 and then doubled again in 2008. As I am trying to figure out the cost of our organic program a thought dawned on me. It may be cheaper for me to starting using components of the organic program (vetch and oats and animal manure) on my conventional grown.

Difficulty in growing new crops. A few weeks ago a CSA member showed me a blacked basil plant and asked me what was wrong with the plant. I had not seen that symptom before and could not explain why the plant looked rather unappetizing. One variety of melon what so hard to figure out when to pick it and had such a short shelf life that we did not put in anyone's box. A grower pointed out that the melon they received was not ripe. These are the kind of issues that crop up all of the time with the CSA. I doubt that the most perfectly run CSA, which ours is far from being, could avoid these kinds of problems. My mother used the phrase, *jack of all trades and master of none*, to describe some of my exploits. Not only are we dividing things between conventional and organic, but we also are growing an incredible number of crops and an even higher number of varieties. All of these permutations create an incredible level of complexity. Part of the reason for growing such a diversity is figure out what grows well here. I am sure that we will settle down in a year or two and have fewer crops and varieties. We already have our list of things that we will probably not grow next year, such as the red turnip, the red carrot and so on.

What we do really well at is growing an amazing diversity of crops and varieties, but we sacrifice raising them well. We have some melons that have never been raised here before and we sometimes have a hard time figuring out when is the best time to pick them. We are also finding out that some varieties do not grow well here (daikon radish in the spring). While I will always be on the hunt for new and interesting varieties, I am sure we will narrow our list of what we will supply down to the ones that are tested and true. Eventually we will figure out how to pick the exotic melons correctly. In the mean time we will have growing pains... a melon that is not quite ripe, or is over ripe, a variety of basil that does not last very long or a turnip that just does not taste very good.

The trade off for diversity, the strange and exotic, the unexpected is you sometimes get exposed to our mistakes. Hopefully we can all learn as we build the CSA.

An exotic culinary contest. Perhaps the most unusual and exotic item of produce that we are growing this year is cardoon. Cardoon is a perennial native to the Mediterranean region and is closely related to artichoke. It used to be cultivated widely in Europe during the Middle Ages

and is still popular in Italy, Spain and France. The vegetable is exceedingly rare in North America. This is the first time we have attempted it here. Due to our cold winters we know it cannot be grown as a perennial, but we have found it can be grown as an annual. Our plants are over waist high and the plants are huge about four feet across. The flavor of cardoon is supposed similar to a combination of artichoke, celery and salsify. One eats the inner leaf petioles and it must be cooked in order to be eaten. We have a limited amount of cardoon growing on the farm-not enough for everyone as this was one of our test crops. If you are up for a culinary adventure, let us know and you can participate in our contest. Come up with a recipe for cardoon that sounds like you know what you are doing and we will put some in your box next week. You have to report back to us on how it went.

Your Farmer,

Alan Schreiber

Summer Squash

Botanical name: *Cucurbita pepo*

Summer squash are a subset of squashes that are harvested when immature (while the rind is still tender and edible). The name "summer squash" refers to the inability to store these squashes for long periods of time.

The delicate flavor, soft shell and creamy white flesh of summer squash is a perfect addition to any summer meal. Once only available in the summer, they are now available throughout the year; however, they are in season between May and July when they are at their best and most readily available.

Summer squash, members of the Cucurbitaceae family and relatives of both the melon and the cucumber, come in many different varieties. They are generally divided into four groups; crookneck, straight neck, scallop and zucchini. While each type varies in shape, color, size and flavor, they all share some common characteristics. The entire vegetable, including its flesh, seeds and skin, is edible. In addition, some varieties of the squash plant produce edible flowers.

History

Modern day squash developed from the wild squash that originated in an area between Guatemala and Mexico. While squash has been consumed for over 10,000 years, they were first cultivated specifically for their seeds since earlier squashes did not contain much flesh and what they did contain was very bitter and unpalatable. As time progressed, squash cultivation spread throughout the Americas, and varieties with a greater quantity of sweeter-tasting flesh were developed. Christopher Columbus brought squash back to Europe from the New World, and like other native American foods, their cultivation was introduced throughout the world by Portuguese and Spanish explorers. Today, the largest commercial producers of squash include China, Japan, Romania, Turkey, Italy, Egypt, and Argentina.

Nutritional Value: Summer squash contain few calories and no sodium or fat. They are a source of vitamins A and C.

Selection and Storage: When purchasing summer squash, look for ones that are heavy for their size and have shiny, unblemished rinds. Additionally, the rinds should not be very hard since this indicates that the squash are over mature and will have hard seeds and stringy flesh. Purchase summer squash that are of average size since those that are overly large may be fibrous, while those that are overly small may be inferior in flavor.

Summer squash is very fragile and should be handled with care as small punctures will lead to decay. It should be stored unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about seven days. While it can be frozen, this will make the flesh much softer. To do so, blanch slices of summer squash for two minutes before freezing. .

Preparation: Wash summer squash under cool running water and then cut off both ends. You can then proceed to cut it into the desired size and shape for the particular recipe.

Unlike winter squash, summer squash can be eaten rind, seeds, and all. The different varieties vary in size, shape, and color, but they can be used interchangeably in recipes. Select summer squash that's small and firm.

Varieties of Summer Squash grown at Schreiber and Sons Farm: Pattypan, Yellow Gold Rush, Crookneck, and Grey Hurakan.

Cabbage

Botanical name: Brassica oleracea

Although they look very different, cabbage, kale, broccoli, kohlrabi, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts are all the same species of plant. The differences between these plants are the results of thousands of years of human cultivation and selective propagation.

Cabbages are from the family *Cruciferae*, a large family which contains many vegetables. It is also called the mustard family.

The family name comes from the Latin word for "cross" and was given to members of this family because the flowers are cross-shaped . Cole crops are herbaceous, biennial, dicotyledonous plants specifically from the genus and species, *Brassica oleracea*.

There is historical and botanical evidence that cabbage has been cultivated for more than 4,000 years and domesticated for over 2,500 years. Before cole crops were domesticated they were collected from the wild and used primarily as medicinal herbs. The other forms were domesticated at later dates. Brussels sprouts are the most recent crop, having come into existence less than 500 years ago.

Cabbage Origins

Although Cabbage is often connected to the Irish, the Celts brought cabbage to Europe from Asia around 600 B.C.

In the wild, Cabbage species are native to the Mediterranean. Wild Cole crops are found growing along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Europe. Cabbages and kale presumably originated in Western Europe; cauliflower and broccoli in the Mediterranean region.

Cabbages were first grown by the Slavs in the 9th century. Greek and Roman colonists brought cabbages from the Black Sea region into Russia. It was probably the Celts who introduced Cabbage to lands they invaded from the Mediterranean to the British Isles and Asia Minor.

Since Cabbage grows well in cool climates, yields large harvests, and stores well during winter, it soon became a major crop in Europe. Early Cabbage was not the full-bodied head we take for granted today, but rather a more loose-leaf variety. The head variety was developed during the Middle Ages by northern European farmers. 'Coles' were described by European writers in the first, third, fourth and 13th centuries.

Colewort, or headless Cabbage plants, such as kale and collards were brought to the United States with the arrival of the white man. It is not believed to have been cultivated by the native tribes of either North or South America.

French navigator Jacques Cartier is generally credited with the introduction of the Cabbage to the Americas in 1536. Most likely the Cabbage was brought to North America in the 1600's. The first North American record of planting cabbages was in 1699.

The variety of Napa Cabbage, introduced into Japan from China in the 1860s, was brought to North America by immigrant laborers in the 1880's and 1890's.

Origin of the Name

What food did the Greeks, Romans, Hindus, Tartars and the Celts all have in common?
Coleworts - a primitive cabbage.

Coleworts or colewyrts is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning cabbage plants. The Anglo-Saxon's got the word from the Romans whose word 'coles' or 'caulis' referenced the whole group of cabbage-like plants. The German word 'Kohl' has the same origin. Kale is a Scottish word from, you guessed it, the same Roman root word 'coles'. Collard is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon word colewyrts.

The linguistic roots of the story of this very ancient plant go much deeper. The Tartars called it Kappes, krout, or kapost, the Hindi called it kopi, the Norwegians called it kaal and the Spanish called it col. The original Greek word (from which the Romans got caulis) was Kaulion.

Cabbage is from a group of plants known as the Cole crops. The word "Cole" derives from the Middle English word "col". The Romans called these crops "caulis", and the Greeks called them

"kaulion". All these words mean "stem". The English name cabbage comes from the French caboche, meaning head, referring to its round form.

In Chinese, the word for "vegetable" is choy, which is the same word for cabbage. Kohlrabi (also known as cabbage turnip and stem cabbage) is a member of the same species. The cabbage has a place in almost every cuisine from Korean kim chee, German sauerkraut, and Irish colcannon, to New England corned beef and cabbage. Kohlrabi is popular in Austrian, German, and Eastern European soups and stews; in Chinese dishes, where it often substitutes for the similar-tasting Chinese broccoli; and in the American South, where it joins any gathering of mixed boiled greens.

Nutritional value:

- Uncooked Cabbage is high in glutamine, an amino acid that is essential for intestinal health.
- Cabbages are a good source of Vitamin K, which is essential in the production of blood clotting proteins.
- Cabbage is high in potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure, promotes a steady heartbeat, and can lower your risk of stroke.
- Savoy Cabbage is among the highest in beta-carotene.
- Bok Choy and Chinese Cabbage are highest in calcium.
- Cabbage contains quercetin, an antioxidant that is a natural antihistamine that can benefit allergy sufferers.
- Red Cabbage provides the most Vitamin C.
- Cabbage juice can be used to treat stomach ulcers and help stop any bleeding.
- All Colewyrts are high in vitamins A and C, and in the mineral iron.
- Cabbage juice is used to relieve constipation. However it may cause flatulence as the juice breaks down putrefying matter in the intestines. Cabbage leaves are considered ideal roughage.
- A chemical (isothiocyanates) found in cabbages may lower the risk of lung cancer in smokers by as much as 38%.

Selection: Choose firm cabbages that are heavy for their size, with crisp leaves and no sign of browning.

Storage: Keep cabbages very cold, or they may acquire a pronounced elderly cabbage taste.

Wrap in ventilated plastic. Store for a shorter time than their sturdy look suggests. Discard the inner core and outer leaves prior to preparation.

Preparation: Small leaves can be left whole or sliced into ½-inch pieces. Cabbages may be served raw in salads, added to side dishes, stews and stir fries, or boiled. One use for Napa cabbage is to shred the leaves and combine them with soy sauce, sesame oil, and rice vinegar for an Asian inspired coleslaw.