

# What's Happening ON THE FARM?



Greetings Friends!

Thank you for taking a leap of faith with us on this year's storage share! We hope you find it satisfying and rewarding to cook and eat these hearty foods, and continue to support the farm. Although the regular season share is the mainstay of the farm's financial stability, and for many of you, the mainstay of your summer produce supply, we hope the storage share is becoming a valuable part of our role in providing food for the community, and will be for years to come. We are often thinking about how to increase our humble income without unduly increasing our workload or other farm expenses, and growing more fall/storage food is turning out to be one of the most effective solutions. Of course the success of this strategy relies on people like you enjoying and eating these foods, and not everybody gets as excited about the nourishing, hearty, sweet flavors of fall as they do about the juicy fruits of summer. So, whether this your first, second or third time, we appreciate your willingness to try!

As usual, we'll be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have, this week or throughout the winter. We hope this week's farm goodies warm your houses and tummies with their sweet nourishment, and add a little brightness to the ever-shortening days.

Fall droughts aren't exactly ideal, but they are much easier for us to respond to than summer droughts. There is less to irrigate in the fall, in part because the crops are established and able to send roots deeper and deeper to find a good drink. We were watering a bunch back in September and early October, though, and looking at our rain records helps us understand why. Our rain gauge has only collected 2" of rain since August 16; in the prior two months (June, July and early August) we had gotten over 14"!!! We always wish it could spread out a little more evenly... On the downside, it has meant the cover crops aren't growing as vigorously, and we've had to wait on plowing some alfalfa we'll be planting in veggies next year, as the soil is so dry it would plow up very chunky (very similar to how it does when it's too wet...) But on the upside, in a drought a project or perfectly-planned day never gets "rained out", and the skies are gorgeously clear! So we, like most folks with outdoor projects or work this fall, have been enjoying the ease, simplicity, and beauty of it.

The hardy crops remaining in the field—the kale, brussels sprouts and spinach—have been holding well, and are incredibly sweet. Between the crops harvested long in advance, and those we'll harvest the day before you come get them, the farm has again produced lots of beautiful food for the storage share this week. For the last two weeks, we have been gradually preparing for Thursday's pickup, with a mixture of harvesting the remaining carrots and other root crops, cleaning up the debris from the flurry of the growing season, and going to California for Ben's brother's wedding(!). We've been washing the 800 or so pounds of squash, washing and bagging the 700 pounds of potatoes, sorting through the onions and washing the sweet potatoes, and this week we'll be washing the thick layer of soil off the root crops. We'll also peel and wash the leeks—we call it "schmutzing"—and bring in the brussels sprouts, kale and spinach.

We have had many gleeful and satisfying moments at the dining table lately with these beautiful foods, including some where the main dishes are so sweet they seem like dessert, and we hope you have many too!

November 14, 2011

# TIDBITS ON THE STORAGE SHARE

**\*\*\*Boxes\*\*\***—This will be lots of food, and heavy, so if you like, **bring a sturdy box**, or Rubbermaid-type container, to carry some or all the bags of veggies in. We'll have some paper bags, but if you have some it's a good idea to bring a couple of those too. We can help you carry or roll this to your car if you like, feel free to ask.

**Storage Information is on pages 3+4.** There will be printed copies available for you on Friday. These are details to help answer the question "where do I put this stuff?"



**Recipes**—There are so many for this event that we thought they deserved their own separate email. Also, as usual there are more recipes on our website. Many of the recipes can be frozen, so if you are out of refrigerator space, one option is to have a big soup-making day and freeze in meal size proportions in yogurt containers or zip lock bags. In the coming months, you will be

happy you did! Speaking of freezing...

**Freezing these vegetables**— If you want to freeze them by themselves, here are some simplified instructions.

**Carrots:** cut into chunks, blanch for 2 minutes, drain & cool down, freeze.

**Beets:** Boil with skins on until tender, drain & cool down, slip the skins off, freeze.

**Winter Squash:** Roast in halves or boil peeled chunks, cool, scoop flesh out (if roasted), freeze.

**Kale:** cut or tear into bite-size pieces, blanch for 2-3 minutes, drain & cool down, freeze.

**Brussels Sprouts:** Blanch sprouts for 4 minutes, drain & cool down, freeze.



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## WHAT'S IN THE STORAGE SHARE?

**Carrots—20 lbs**—Sweet and juicy, the best carrots of the year. They'll be in two separate, ten-pound bags. The bags are perforated with holes and work great for long-term storage.

**Potatoes—10 lbs**—The variety is Kennebec, and we choose it because it stores very well, and usually yields well too.

\*\*\*\*Note: Kennebec potatoes turn green very easily with exposure to light, so be sure they are kept in a completely dark place.

**Mixed Roots—10 lbs**— You get to mix and match a bag of beets, celeriac, radishes, daikon radishes, purple carrots, and parsnips. We don't have rutabagas or purple top turnips as we have as much luck growing them as Ben would have growing a beard. We'll have those same perforated bags you can put them in for long-term storage.

**Winter Squash—5**—Mostly butternut, but we have a few carnival and ambercup squashes, and pie pumpkins, which should be eaten *before* the butternut. These other squashes aren't really for long-term storage; and they're small leftovers; but we have extra and thought you might enjoy a mixture.

**Brussels sprouts—1 or 2 stalks**—or they may be bulk.

**No Cabbage**—*This year it fits the definition of "Crop failure."* :(

**Onions—7 or so** — Just yellows this year, the reds didn't store well due to all the rain in July.

**Leeks—2-3**—Use anywhere you would use onions, and use freely—their flavor is richer and more subtle than the onions.

**Garlic—5 heads**—These should store until January or February, unless you eat it all before then.

**Kale** —Either ½ or a whole clear bag, we'll see what's out there.

**Sweet Potatoes—5 pounds**—We'll have them clean and dirty, your choice. We think the clean ones are reliably good for two or three weeks. The dirty ones will store longer, but the clean ones are less work for you, and there are certainly worse challenges than eating that many sweet potatoes in a few weeks!

**Dried Herbs—Your choice of 3 bunches**—Oregano, Thyme, Sage, and Rosemary.

**Special Bonus! Spinach** —An unusual perk of such a mild fall, this is from our regular fall plantings re-growing in the warm sun. Assuming it survives the next couple nights, it will probably be half a clear bag.



## A Few More TIDBITS

**Tell your friends: We have spaces for next year**— Our waiting list is currently shorter than the number of shareholders we hope to feed next year, so if you know anyone who is interested let them know. Sometimes people don't contact us because they know we have a waiting list, but now's the time to jump in for 2012!

**Guessing Contest!!** Once again we have one large Blue Hubbard squash that we will have on display Thursday. It's not as big as in other years, but still a good size for a small crowd. You can check it out and guess the weight. At the end of the day we will go through the guesses and the person with the closest guess wins the squash.

Any way you cook a hubbard, it's a fun, tasty and conversation-making addition to Thanksgiving, or as a feast for any other gathering—it will come with cooking instructions. Our favorite recipe is to stuff it with a decadent stuffing. Hopefully next year there will be enough to go around in the share, like there were last year! We planted the same amount of blue hubbard seed, but got just a couple squashes where last year we got a couple dozen.

**U-Pick:** For **Kale**, there is some lacinato (or dino) kale, and also some curly kale. The dino isn't as cold-hardy as the curly, but if the color is mostly still that dark green, it should be fine. There are 2 rows of kale next to the cilantro; the curly is at the southern end. Simply snap the leaves off by hand and put them in a bag.

And you can help yourself to the few cold-hardy herbs left out there: **oregano, thyme, sage, and parsley**. At press time there is still good **cilantro** too.

**Share Pickup Hours: Thursday November 17th 10-6.** If you can't make it please call or email and we will make arrangements to get you your share.

**Please Drive Carefully**—Children are everywhere, and on the move!

**\*\*\*More Storage Info and Details**

are on the following pages.\*\*\*

Thank you for eating fall and winter food with us,  
and let us know what you think!

Your Farmers,  
Erin and Ben

# Storing the Harvest

## General Tips:

- Number one rule for successful storage—don't forget about them!!! :)
- Sort as you eat, and check on things at least every couple of weeks. One bad "apple" can spoil the lot, so remove the ones that are going soft and use them first.
- Remove bad spots with a knife (including green spots on potatoes.)
- None of these crops like to freeze, so if you have anything on a porch or unheated place, remember to monitor with a thermometer and protect them!
- Many of them can, however, be prepped, cooked, and frozen. If you have something going bad, or can't eat it all right away, see the recipes and freezing tips. It has also worked for a number of people to have a soup-making extravaganza right after the share and freeze the different soups in meal-size portions to eat all winter and spring. That way there is less to manage in your fridge and you have ready-made food throughout the winter!
- If you're having trouble storing any of the veggies, we're happy to troubleshoot with you, so feel free to call or email at any point. We want this to be a satisfying eating arrangement!

## Storage Needs at a Glance

	<b>In the Fridge?</b>	<b>Plastic Bag? (That we provide)</b>
<b>Roots—Carrots, Beets, Cel- eriac, etc</b>	yes	yes
<b>Kale + Spinach</b>	yes	yes
<b>Leeks</b>	yes	yes
<b>Brussels sprouts</b>	yes	yes
<b>Potatoes</b>	no	yes
<b>Winter Squash</b>	no	no
<b>Onions</b>	no	no
<b>Garlic</b>	no	no
<b>Sweet Potatoes</b>	no	no
<b>Dried Herbs</b>	no	no

# Storage Details

## Roots –Carrots, Beets, Celeriac, etc

Best to store dry, in a bag. If too moist they will sprout or mold. If kept out of the bag, they will begin to go flaccid and lose flavor. You'll notice the bags for the roots have vent holes—these should keep the moisture level just right. The roots should keep into January, or longer, in these conditions (with the exception of the daikon radish.)

Carrots like to be at a steady 34°, or above freezing but below 40°. If you know the coldest part of your fridge, put them there. The peels will start to dry out a little, but as long as there is some moisture in the bag they should be fine. If the carrots taste at all bitter, try peeling them—the bitterness is usually just in the peel and can increase with storage time.

Remember that apples can make carrots bitter because apples emit the gas ethylene, so either store one of them in a crisper drawer, or outside the fridge.

The other roots—beets, celeriac, watermelon radishes, parsnips--are happy in the fridge, or anyplace below 40° and above freezing. Daikon radishes will last a few weeks in the fridge.

**Kale**—will last a couple weeks if kept tight in a plastic bag.

**Leeks**—Can keep a month in the fridge. Best kept loosely in a plastic bag. When you want to use part but not all of a leek, simply chop off the part you want, and return the rest to the bag.

**Brussels sprouts**—The flavor is best in the first week or two, but they will probably keep 3-4 weeks. You can throw the whole stalk in the fridge or pop the sprouts off—either way being in a bag will help.

**Potatoes**—Potatoes need **darkness**. The variety is Kennebec, known for its long storability and its disdain for light. Some green spots from light exposure may have made it past our watchful eyes--if you find any green spots, do not eat them; you can eat the rest of the potato but cut out the green spots before cooking it.

Ideal storage is around 50° and mildly humid, and dark. A pantry or cool spot in the basement should work. If you'll eat them within a few weeks, a kitchen cupboard will be fine. The bag they're in is vented and they can stay in it for a long time. Cover with a blanket or cloth to keep light out but allow ventilation. For cooking, Kennebecs are said to be an all-purpose potato. We hear they make especially great french fries.

**Winter squash**—Ideal storage is 50-55°, dry, and ventilated. We like to pile them up on the kitchen counter because they're so pretty. They keep well there for a few weeks, but they keep better in a cooler part of the house (but not colder than 50°), such as the basement or cool corner upstairs (as long as it isn't humid.) The best butternut squash with no soft spots can store into February. Most of ours this year will keep until New Year's, but start eating them now, watch them closely and eat them before they go bad. If you find a brown or soft spot, you can usually cut around it and use the rest of the squash.

**Onions + Garlic**—These should keep well into January. Room temp. or cooler, dry air, well-ventilated. They keep the longest when stored near 50° to 55° and darkness helps too.

**Sweet Potatoes**—These can last into January if kept 55-60° (no lower than 50°). You'll have less go bad if you eat them before new year's. If you have dirty ones, wash right before use. Do not put in fridge—temperatures below 50° cause a "hard core", ie when cooked they will never fully soften. Not fun.

**Dried Herbs**—Two common ways are to hang the bunches from a string or in a hanging basket in the kitchen, or put the usable part in jars. Either way, keep out of direct sunlight, and enjoy!

## **Alternatives to Your Refrigerator:**

We think the crops that need fridge space will take up about one tall shelf, and the other crops can be kept in various places around the kitchen or house, depending on their needs. If the cold-needing items won't fit in your fridge, there are a few options. The fridge is certainly the easiest and lowest-maintenance storage option for these crops, but if that won't work for you try these other things. First, refer to the freezing section in the newsletter. This other storage method will require a little more thinking and monitoring to work well. Unheated garages, porches, mudrooms, etc are possible alternatives **if** you pay regular attention to them during changes in weather. For any of these:

Get the veggies very cool—fridge temp—by leaving them uncovered on a cold night.

Pile them tightly together and wrap tightly in blankets or an insulating material.

Place a thermometer next to the veggies and check it in the early morning.

Touch them with your hand, outside and inside the pile or bag, to gauge their actual temperature.

Are they cold enough? Too warm?

The vegetables' thermal mass will hold a temperature pretty well. In warm weather, covering them can help keep them cool. If they warm up during the day, uncover them, and maybe open a window to let them cool off during the night. Then re-wrap to keep them cool the next day.

In deep, long freezes it will probably be time to excavate a part of the fridge to find a home for the remaining veggies, or process and put them in the freezer.

Above all,

EAT and BE MERRY!!