



The Beanstalk

Easy Bean Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Easy Bean Farm

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WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Curly Kale: *When I first started 24 years ago many people would groan when we put kale in their boxes. It was one of those crops that farmers and hard-core veg enthusiasts loved but, among the masses, few knew what to do with it. Kale has benefitted from some great P.R. over the last 5-6 years, however, and now we get LOTS of requests for it. It is great*



in massaged kale salads, it is great sautéed with other veggies, is it great cooked into eggs and it is surprisingly good in smoothies. This first round of kale is rally tender and sweet. We picked the leaves at a smaller stage and it is very good. If you are confused by kale I really recommend making kale and eggs for breakfast. Sauté the kale with a little onion and garlic and then, when it is wilted, scramble in some eggs.

Romaine Head Lettuce: *This might just be some of the best romaine lettuce we have grown... which is surprising with the very hot weather we had last week. The flavor on these romaine heads is FANTASTIC. If you are not planning on using them right away, bag them loosely and keep them in your crisper drawer. A few years ago some members of ours introduced us to grilled romaine... very good!*

“Joy Choi” Pac Choi: *Some say Bok some say Pac but it all brings me great Choi. The Pac Choi is the vegetable with the nearly white stems and green leaves and it is also known, locally, as a form of Chinese Cabbage. It is a mainstay of a variety of Asian cuisines and both the stalks and the leaves are edible.... Though the stalk is the “choice” part. The Stem of the choi is often chopped like celery and used in stir-frys.*



You should be careful not to overcook Choi because the crisp texture is what makes it great. Last week I ate nearly a whole head myself sautéed with some thinly sliced marinated chicken, Szechuan peppercorn, ginger, garlic, mirin, tamari, toasted sesame oil, toasted sesame seeds and a massive amount of chopped scallion. I am a huge fan of a pac choi, mushroom, scallion stir fry. A little chicken or shrimp puts this dish over the top! This choi will keep for quite a while if stored properly, loosely bagged.

Bloomsdale Spinach:

The Spinach is the crop that I was most worried about during this very dry, and hot, past couple of weeks. Spinach really prefers cool and wet conditions... so we have been babying it. I've tried to keep it very well irrigated in order to cool the soil a bit and, while it isn't perfect, it's pretty darned good. More spinach to come (if we can keep it happy through the next few days!)



Bright Lights Swiss Chard: *The Chard is the bouquet of brightly colored leaves and stems... and both leaf and stem are edible. Chard is a close relative of the beet and has a lovely “beety” flavor. It can be eaten either fresh or lightly cooked. I really love to make a Swiss cheese/Swiss chard quiche. There are also some lovely salads made with chard, lemon, parmesan and breadcrumbs... look it up! Store this loosely wrapped in a bag in your refrigerator.*

Evergreen Scallions: *Scallion is also called green onion and it can be used as you*



would, onion, in most dishes.

French Breakfast Radishes:

These radishes are ZIPPY! If radishes are not normally your favorite thing, I recommend cooking with them. If you either roast them whole, with a little olive oil, or slice them up and cook with them, they lose their heat. I am a huge fan of a sandwich made from a crusty baguette, thickly spread butter, sliced radishes and a little black pepper.



From the Fields

Folks,

Wow! This year is nearly half over and it has thrown us quite a bit to deal with! When I started putting together our field plans, way back in the snowy depths of January, I could not have predicted even a fraction of the massive change that has taken place since then. At the time, it felt as though we were just preparing for another regular year of farming, our 24th, and that things would probably feel pretty similar to last season. Boy was I wrong! This is a year when I am especially grateful to be a farmer; It has felt really good to have work that I really care about to keep me busy and it has been gratifying to see, during this pandemic, how many people are taking a deeper look at the way our food is grown, processed and distributed. While I certainly wish that we could have achieved that same goal without all of the hardship which Covid has brought our world, it feels good to know that what we are doing really IS important and that we can be a part of feeding a broader community during this challenging time.

This year has been all about CHANGE, on so many levels. On a very basic



level, the weather patterns of this spring are VASTLY different than the patterns that have prevailed for the preceding three years. The last three springs have been very late and very wet. Last spring we had trouble, for several months, getting into the fields due to all of the moisture. It seemed like it rained every third day! This year reminds me of the first 5 years on this farm; The temperatures have vacillated up and down, trending warmer, and rain has been scarce. Last spring it was uncommon to have a rainfall of LESS than an inch. This spring has had very few rains and I think that our biggest rainfall total has been about .75"! The dry, thus far, has been much more of a blessing than a curse. Our irrigation system is adequate to cover the deficit and it has meant that we have only missed one or two partial days of work since we began in mid-March. The fields are looking great and, if it stays dry, disease pressure should remain very low. As an organic farmer, with a much smaller set of palliative tools to deal with fungal growth than a "conventional" farmer, that is a HUGE positive!

This week's box, like all of our first boxes, is full of leafy vegetables. The boxes will probably stay somewhat leafy for the first few weeks but, quite quickly, some of the fruiting and root crops should also reach maturity. My best guess is that, next week, we will have broccoli, kohlrabi, and parsley, in addition to more lettuces, greens, and spinach. It is also rather likely that the first zucchini will be ready. The cucumber crop, which currently looks BANANAS (good), looks like it could start rolling in in two weeks. Golden Beets should also make it into the second or third box. Cabbages and Cauliflower should also arrive in the 3-4 week range. Peas have just started to flower... and the crop does not look like it will be huge, but the bean crop is coming along fast and looks AMAZING!

Please try and take care of your waxed boxes and either leave them, folded up, at the site each week, or bring them back when you get your next share. They are fairly expensive, now, and we will be sanitizing them and reusing them, hopefully at least 3-4 times, each.

Finally, I am always looking for ideas for this newsletter so, if there are things you'd like to know more about, drop me a line! After 24 years I worry that I'm getting a little stale!

More Soon,
Farmer Mike

