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Box #14
Even Week
2 October 2019

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Broccoli
Broccoli Raab
Cucumber: Family Shares Only
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New Stuff: broccoli raab, leeks, spaghetti squash
Choice Box: Canary melons, peppers, cilantro, etc.

Broccoli raab, also called broccoli rabe or rapini looks like leafy broccoli. The heads are thin and wispy, with green buds and yellow flowers. Broccoli raab has a nutty, sharp flavor, similar to arugula. The stalks, leaves, buds and flowers are all edible. An easy way to clean it is to chop the bunch into ½" pieces, put into a salad spinner and wash as you would lettuce.
Broccoli raab is high in vitamins A and C, and contains calcium, iron, magnesium and vitamin B-6. Store it in a plastic bag in your refrigerator, and use it up within 3-4 days.
If the flavor is too sharp for you, blanch broccoli raab for 2 minutes in boiling water. Drain, and add to whatever dish you're making.
The broccoli raab in your bunches contains mostly leaves with small heads here and there.
Since it's so leafy, broccoli raab doesn't handle frost well, so we try to put it into your boxes before frost happens. There's a chance of that this Friday morning--we'll see.

Broccoli Raab with Pasta

Put a pot of salted water on high heat for the pasta.
In a 10" skillet over medium heat, put:
3 Tbsp. olive oil
3 Tbsp. butter
Add: 1 medium onion, sliced into quarter moons
3 garlic cloves, chopped coarsely
red pepper flakes *optional*
Sauté until the onion is getting just a little brown around the edges.
Add: 1 bunch broccoli raab, washed and cut into ½" pieces (a salad spinner is very handy here)
Cook, stirring often, until the raab starts to wilt, about 5 minutes.
Add: 1 cup chicken stock
1 cup heavy cream
Bring to a simmer, then turn the heat to low and cook another 5 minutes or so, until the broccoli raab is tender.
While this cooks, chop up some fresh tomatoes and put them into a bowl.
To the broccoli raab, add: salt and pepper to taste
Cook pasta until *al dente*. Drain, return to hot pot and toss with olive oil.
To serve, put pasta into a bowl, top with broccoli raab sauce, some of the chopped tomatoes and grated cheese. Enjoy!

Leeks are one of the best-tasting alliums around. Their flavor is sweet, mild, yet complex and delicious. Adding them to a dish improves the flavor. As leeks grow, we pile soil around the stalk to keep it white: sunlight causes photosynthesis, which turns the stalk green. It's still edible, but the white portion is sweeter. This year, we planted our leeks rather late, and are just getting around to thinning them, hence "young" leeks. Treat them like scallions, using both the white and green parts. Usually, young leeks have tender green leaves up to the point where they start to divide. Further up, they're a little chewy, higher up they get downright tough—best used in stock.
Use leeks wherever you use onions, like in the Broccoli Raab with Pasta recipe in this newsletter.
To clean larger leeks, chop off the floppy leaves and the root end, slice it down the middle and rinse under running water, getting between the layers as much as possible. That soil we mound around the stalk tends to sift down between the leaves. Leeks cook faster than onions because the sections are thinner, so watch them carefully and use a lower heat. The floppy leaves are tough, but make an excellent addition to stock. The upper part of the green stalk on larger leeks will be tough also: let your knife tell you when it's time to stop cutting.
Store leeks, unwashed, in a closed plastic bag in your vegetable drawer so their onion flavor doesn't travel to the other vegetables. They should keep 2 weeks or a bit longer.

Spaghetti squash is a light yellow, oval, mild-tasting, winter squash which has flesh that comes apart in short, tender strings. It will store in cool (50-55 degrees), dry conditions for about a month or two, but not much longer.
Check the skin before storing winter squash: if there are any holes or soft spots, plan to use that squash soon

and cut out the soft spots first. Winter squash contains far more vitamin A than summer squash, is an excellent source of potassium, high in fiber and complex carbohydrates.
The best way to bake winter squash is to wash the outside, cut off the stem, then cut the squash in half. Set your oven at 400 degrees, line a half-sheet pan with aluminum foil to make cleanup easier, and place the squash on the foil, cut side down. **Do not remove the seeds** yet—they give the roasted squash more flavor. Bake for 30-60 minutes, or until the squash is soft when you poke it with your finger. Remove from the oven, flip them over and scoop out the seeds using a large spoon. Because this is spaghetti squash, switch to a fork and scrape the flesh out of the spaghetti squash to encourage the presence of those thick, tender strings. Drizzle melted butter, sprinkle salt and pepper on it, and some grated cheese and enjoy! Folks often serve spaghetti squash with tomato sauce, but the more robust tomato tends to overpower this squash's flavor.
Here's a picture of our broccoli field:



Our last broccoli patch is producing broccoli like crazy. Last Friday we harvested 3 field crates, Monday we harvested 7. The heads we tasted were great: sweet broccoli flavor. Let us know what you think. The pepper beds contain lots of maturing, red Carmen peppers, which is why you keep getting them in your box. If you can't use up what you've got fast enough, freezing them is easy. Just cut them in half, remove the stem and seeds and put them in your freezer. Once frozen, drop them in a freezer bag and enjoy them in cooked foods over the winter. There will be lots of peppers in the Choice Box this week if you want to stock your freezer.

Field Notes

Looks like we're in for a rainy week. We won't need to irrigate, but this means more split tomatoes. *Sigh.*
Next week looks dry, tho. Fingers crossed.
The cauliflower plants in the field next to the broccoli have huge leaves. The wrapper leaves in the center start out as a swirl of green, hiding a small, white head that gradually grows larger. As we walk thru this field, Chuck and I see those swirls of green forming and we know heads are not far behind. 2 weeks?
Chuck was concerned enough about this heavy rain to put row cover over a bed of lettuce: heavy raindrops can poke holes in tender lettuce leaves.
We're hoping the Canary melons will have ripened on their own out in the field despite the vines dying rather earlier than usual. There will be a few Canary melons with issues in the Choice Box this week. The good ones will show up in next week's box.
The weather gurus say it'll be dry Wednesday afternoon—a good time to pick up the Butternut squash and put it into the greenhouse to finish drying.

Chuck and I were very happy with Farm Day. We had 5 families come out to pick apples, make cider, and tour the farm. They came in from the orchard with plenty of apples, and pitched right in to wash and section them for the chopper. We pressed gallons enough for everyone to fill their container and enjoy some at home.
Altho we had some mistiness around, folks were still excited to tour our fields, and even picked a few peppers. All in all, a good day.

Time to put this newsletter to bed. Have a great week!

Terry & Chuck