

Great-grandfather's barn at Spring Brook Farm, circa 1901

What's in the box and where do I keep it?

Crop	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Brussels Sprouts	Yes	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cauliflower	Yes	Plastic	
Celeriac	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	Yes	No	
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Sage and thyme
Leeks	Yes	Plastic	
Onions, Dry	No	No	Yellow and Cipollini
Potatoes	No	Paper	Russets
Shallots	No	No	
Winter Squash	No	No	Buttercup, Butternut, Heart of Gold, Sunshine

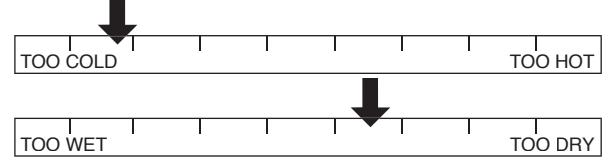
Buttercup

We'll finally trot out the buttercup squash this week. Buttercup is a variety of squash which sweetens and matures in storage. I thought it would be a good one for Thanksgiving. The buttercup are the dark green, flattened squashes with a blue 'button' on the bottom.

In fact this share is really the squash share. I try to use up the smaller squashes earlier but now we're getting down to some of the family-sized ones. Squash size is a really difficult thing to control and most varieties vary widely in their size. Some of the buttercup and butternut can top out at 7 or 8 pounds each! I usually try and sell those to the restaurant so that that you folks don't lose a hand trying to cut them in half. There are times when an axe can come in handy in the kitchen.

Farm Report

Rainfall / Snowfall 1.05"
 High Temperature 46°
 Low Temperature 5°
 Next and last winter delivery Tues. December 6
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™ :



One thing that I find happens sometimes when I make a drier squash like the buttercup is that it cooks for a while and then about a half-hour into cooking it seems to stop progressing, and never get completely cooked. I am guessing this is because the drier squashes can actually run out of internal moisture to aid in the cooking process. To offset this problem I usually put a cup or so of water in the bottom of the pan that I'm cooking them in.

Last week's cold snap finished off anything that was left in the field. Nothing really survives temperatures below 10°. I scrambled to harvest the remaining broccoli, cauliflower and herbs ahead of the snow. Unfortunately I didn't get any kale put in safe storage because it really doesn't hold in the cooler that well.

The russet potatoes are the classic mashed potato. This was my first experiment in growing russets, and, considering they ended up quite weedy, they did fairly well. I think you'll find that these have quite a bit more flavor than the typical store-bought russet. Boil a few chunks of the celeriac along with the potatoes for a nice potato-celeriac puree.

A big bag of brussels sprouts is in the box this week. We sure have been enjoying these at our house. Our favorite way so far has been to clean and trim them, cut them in half, saute in some butter for about ten minutes and then add a cup or so of cream and bring the cream to a boil until the sprouts are tender, season with salt, pepper and thyme. Yum.

Farm News

It was touch and go there for a while last week with the cold. That was the coldest test of my winter share storage system. Last year it never got that cold. I don't think my system could handle much colder weather than that, it's really designed for cooling rather than heating. There was ample time ahead of the cold

weather to make sure that everything was working and to get the well drained and shut down for the year.

With the cold weather I also had some forced time to get caught up in the office. Believe it or not, I actually look forward to getting all the bills and checks in the computer to see how we did for the year. Remarkably the farm is fairly consistently on budget. Price increases in some things cut into our budget this year, and will moreso in the spring when we do most of our purchasing for the year. Some changes are in the works for next year so I need to be looking at the numbers to figure out how everything is going to work out.

Speaking of changes, one way that you can help us make decisions about things to change is to offer your input as a member of our 'core group'. The core group is a group of members who I meet with a few times during the winter to talk about the past, present and future of the farm. I know it's very valuable for me to get candid input from the members, and I think it's valuable to the folks participating to get a better idea of how the farm operates. If this sounds like something you or someone you know would be interested in please drop me an email this week, I'm trying to schedule our first meeting.

The next delivery, Tuesday, December 6th, is the final delivery of the 2005 season. You will need to bring bags to transfer your share to so that you can leave the yellow crate behind. We do need to have all of the crates back at the end of the season so please bring any that you may have hiding around your garage.

Before this week's recipes I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for being a part of this farming enterprise. When we sit down to dinner on Thursday I find that one of the things I'm most grateful for is the opportunity to grow food for people who care about what they put in their bodies, about the future of the land and about the future of our farm. Your kind words and support over the course of the farm season is always a comfort to me. I really do enjoy the work we do at the farm but without your appreciation the enjoyment would be an empty one. Thank you.

Here's a couple recipes to get you through. Before the recipes here's a couple of ideas: if you're familiar with my squash-a-roni and cheese recipe try using the same idea with polenta; that is roast, puree and add the squash to the polenta at the end of it's cooking time, you could also do the same with risotto. Some squashes

really sweeten these up so you may need extra salt or a salty ingredient to offset the squash addition. Another idea is to use peeled, sliced, uncooked wedges of butternut as though they were potatoes in a potato au gratin dish. I made squash polenta lasagne last week and it was very good.

Roasted Squash and Apple Bisque

- 3 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 2 inch cubes (I found it easier to cut the squash up first, then peeling and seeding it.)
 - 2 tart apples, such as Granny Smith, peeled, cored and chopped
 - 1 leek, (white part only) sliced
 - 4 garlic cloves, peeled but left whole
 - 2 cups apple cider (divided)
 - 3 cups high-quality chicken or vegetable broth
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Chopped crystallized ginger or ground nutmeg, for garnish

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Lightly oil a 9 X 13 baking dish. Combine squash, apples, leek and garlic in baking dish. Dot with butter. Pour 1/2 cup cider into dish and cover with aluminum foil. Roast in preheated oven 30 minutes. Remove foil, then roast another 30 minutes until squash is completely soft.

Divide vegetables into 3 batches and puree in blender or food processor, adding remaining 1 1/2 cups cider and some of the broth to each batch. Combine batches in large saucepan, adding any remaining broth. Bring to simmer. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot, topping each bowl with a few pieces of crystallized ginger or a sprinkle of nutmeg. Makes 4-6 servings.

Brussels Sprouts With Shallots And Mustard Seeds

- 4 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 2 pounds brussels sprouts, trimmed, halved if large
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- 4 large shallots, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

Stir mustard seeds in small dry skillet over medium-low heat until seeds are lightly toasted and begin to pop, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Cool. Cook brussels sprouts in large pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain. Place in bowl of ice water to cool. Drain and cut in half. (Mustard seeds and brussels sprouts can be made 1 day ahead. Store mustard seeds at room temperature. Wrap brussels sprouts in paper towels; cover and chill.)

Melt butter in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots and sauté until tender and golden, about 4 minutes. Add brussels sprouts and sauté until just tender and heated through, about 8 minutes. Add lemon juice, mustard, and mustard seeds; toss to blend. Season with salt and pepper and serve.