

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

Well we have finally had enough rain. The fields have gone from being too dry for most of the season, to too wet to work. Luckily there is plenty of work in the greenhouse and inside the farmhouse.

One of our main projects has been a root cellar. The picture below shows Devan and his uncle Jim working on it.



Initially, the cellar will serve to store vegetables for us over winter. Next year it will help keep things cool between harvest and CSA pick-ups.

The vegetables we will be storing include beets, carrots, celeriac, onions, parsnips, winter squash and pumpkins. Since we have given you an abundance of these, we

thought we would share information on storing them.

All vegetables to be stored should be free from bruising or other damage. Storage conditions should help them retain moisture but not allow water condensation, which encourages rot. The key to preventing this is airflow or storage in sand, newspaper or other materials that absorb and diffuse moisture back into the vegetable. Beets, carrots, celeriac, parsnips and winter radish all benefit from this approach. These vegetable also prefer temperatures between 0-2 C and high relative humidity (RH).

Cabbage is similar, except it prefers air flow. The crisper set to high humidity is probably best for this vegetable.

Onions, shallots and garlic like temperatures close to 0, but they prefer a lower RH of around 65-75%. They will all store well at higher temperatures and lower RH for a month or so, but will become spongy as they lose moisture and will eventually rot.

Winter squash and pumpkin are somewhat unusual in that they prefer storage temperatures between 13-18°C. Like onions they also prefer a slightly lower RH. A good place to store these is in a cool humid part of your home with airflow, maybe a clean basement or back entry way.

See how long you can keep your vegetables. Remember that until recently, this was the only way to have a variety of vegetables through the long Canadian winter.

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Black radish**
- ◆ **Cabbage**
- ◆ **Carrots**
- ◆ **Cauliflower**
- ◆ **Celeriac**
- ◆ **Chard or Kale**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Onions or Shallots**
- ◆ **Parsnips**
- ◆ **Pumpkins**
- ◆ **Spinach**
- ◆ **Squash**

This is the last Fair Fields Newsletter for 2012, as we close out the season. It was our pleasure providing you with vegetables this summer. We hope you have enjoyed the produce and the CSA experience. We hope that you have a good winter and that you will continue to eat fresh, buy local and support farmers.

Feature Produce 1 – Black Radish

Black radish comes in both round and elongated varieties. At Fair Fields, we have grown the rounder type. This radish has rough black skin, spicy white flesh and can grow to about 4 inches in diameter.

In terms of nutrition, this pungent winter radish is a good

source of vitamin C, fibre and B vitamins.

Black radish can be cut into matchsticks or grated into salads, or added to a lentil or split pea soup for a spicy kick. It can also be sliced and sautéed in butter for a milder flavour.



Feature Produce 2 – Red Cabbage

Cabbage originated in Asia Minor, and was brought to Europe around 600 B.C. More than 400 varieties have been developed since then. We've grown several at Fair Fields.

Like other types, red cabbage can be eaten raw or cooked.

Red cabbage is a good source of dietary fibre and of several vitamins and minerals including Vitamins A, C, K, and B6, potassium and manganese.

It can be a colourful addition to salads. It can also be added to soups, stews or stir-fries. Our favourite way of serving red cabbage is to slowly braise it with apples, onions and beer, as described in the recipe below.

This dish is wonderful served with sausages, though the vegetarian in our family also loves it served with a noodle kugel.



Red Cabbage with Apples

2 lbs red cabbage, cored & shredded
1 1/2 lbs tart apples (about 3 large), peeled cored & sliced
1/4 - 1/2 C butter
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp cider vinegar
1/4 tsp ground cloves
Pinch of cinnamon
Pinch of nutmeg
Black pepper to taste

Sauté the cabbage, onions and apples in butter for about 10 minutes, stirring often. Add salt, brown sugar, cider vinegar, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper to taste and the beer. Stir the mixture well, cover, lower the heat and simmer for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

The cabbage can be served at this point, but improves if cooled and reheated several hours later or the following day.

**From The Vegetarian Epicure, Book 2
Makes 6-8 servings.**

(Note: The original recipe calls for 1/2 cup butter, but we've made this dish many times with less.)