

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

First things first... Sorry we missed giving the last newsletter. We started the issue about 3 weeks ago, but with the large harvests, a busy schedule and some time away we are just getting that newsletter to you now. Back on track!

The hot crops are done and you may have already noticed the start of our transition to fall vegetables. You can expect more greens again, root veg, onions and squash and hopefully some cauliflower and broccoli.

This year we have had good harvests of potatoes, onions and winter

squash. They are both more plentiful (partly planned) and quite large. We think this is perhaps owing to the good moisture and late onset of diseases like powdery mildew. We will be giving more of those from here on in.

With the variety and quantity of squash we thought it would be good to feature squash. Past members will recognize some of the information from last year's newsletter. We have updated the information for this year's varieties and provided some information on storage.

With the harvests slowing and the season changing we are getting into clean up mode at the farm. It feels close to the end but there is still plenty to do, such as taking down the trellising systems, cleaning up black plastic mulch, putting the irrigation away and planting cover crops.

Many of you have asked about the finish date for the CSA. It is the last week in October, so Saturday the 26th for the farm and Wednesday the 30th for Guelph. Lots still to come so make room in there...

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Carrots**
- ◆ **Cabbage**
- ◆ **Celery**
- ◆ **Chard**
- ◆ **Garlic**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Onions**
- ◆ **Peppers**
- ◆ **Pumpkin**
- ◆ **Winter Squash**
- ◆ **Tomatoes**

(Some last-minute substitutions or additions are possible.)

Feature Produce — Winter Squash

Winter squash originated in the Americas, and is in the same family as summer squash, pumpkins and melons.

Most winter squash are sweet and slightly nutty in flavour.

Winter squash tends to be more nutrient dense than summer varieties. Squash varieties with deep orange flesh contain lots of beta-carotene and B vitamins. Winter squash also contains vitamin C, potassium and lots of fibre.

Winter squash seeds are also nutritious. You can add a little olive oil and

salt and bake them in the oven for snacking.



Some Squash Varieties from Fair Fields



Acorn Squash — shaped like an acorn, typically weighing 1-2 pounds, dark green in colour, often with a splotch of orange on the top or side. The ribs make it tricky to cut and so most often these squash are cut in half and baked (often with a little butter and maple syrup, honey or brown sugar in the middle where seeds and fibres have been scooped out).



Buttercup — a large squash, shaped like a drum, round on the sides and flat on the top and bottom, dark green with a few light green or grey stripes. Buttercup has deep-orange, sweet and smooth flesh. It's lovely cut in half, baked in the oven with chopped apples or pears, brown sugar, butter and lemon juice in the scooped out halves.



Butternut — a buff-coloured squash shaped like a bell with a long neck. The skin is easier to peel than other squashes and the flesh is deep-orange, moist and sweet. Butternut squash is frequently used in soups and purees and can be substituted for pumpkin in pumpkin pie. Butternut has a longer shelf life than most other squash and improves as it ages.



Delicata — a yellow or ivory cylindrical squash with green stripes and flecks and shallow grooves. Delicata is milder and not as sweet as some other winter squash. Its thin skin can be eaten. This squash can be steamed or roasted until tender. Delicata has a shorter shelf life than other squashes.



Kabocha — looks similar to buttercup, but more rounded on top. It has a knobby-looking dull green skin and orange flesh that is sweet and dry and stores well. The average Kabocha squash weighs 2-3 pounds. Its flesh has a taste that is described as a pumpkin and sweet potato combined. It is a common ingredient in Japanese tempura.



Long Pie Pumpkin — looks like a large zucchini. It can be picked green and will gradually turn orange in storage, when it will be ready to eat. The pumpkin flesh is sweet, smooth and almost stringless, making it easy to process. As the name suggests, this pumpkin makes great pies!



Red Kuri Squash — a showy, teardrop squash with a thick red-orange skin and a firm, dry golden flesh with a chestnut flavour. You can replace sweet potato with Red Kuri squash in most recipes. It is good stuffed and toasted, steamed, or in soups or pies.



Spaghetti Squash — yellow outside and in, spaghetti squash is more bland, and very different in texture from most other squash. When baked and cut in half lengthwise, spaghetti-like strands of squash can be scraped out of the shell with a fork. Stir in some chopped garlic and parsley that have been sautéed in butter and add grated parmesan for a simple, delicious dish.



Sugar Dumpling — small, mild, and sweet-tasting, this squash has a cream-coloured skin with green stripes and specks. The yellow-orange flesh is tender and the size is great for stuffing and baking as individual servings.

Because there are so many varieties of squash and many good recipes available on the internet, we have not provided recipes here. Note we have several pumpkin varieties in addition to the Long Pie Pumpkin. We hope you enjoy them all!

Storing Your Squash

Squash were very important as a staple storage vegetable for early colonial settlers in New England. A good source of calories and nutrients they can also help round out the winter vegetables, made up mostly of roots and shoots.

Before storing, squash should be cured at 26-28 degrees Celsius with good airflow for about 10 days. We will be offering cured squash soon, but until then they will not store as long.

One of the more important tips for storing squash is to keep the skin from becoming wet, bruised or punctured, as this provides an entry for insects and disease.

Once cured squash keep best at 10-13 degrees Celsius with 50 - 75% humidity. If conditions are right they should keep for at least 2-3 months.