

Fair Fields News

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On the Farm

After a relatively cool summer and a couple of early frosts, it has been nice to receive some warm fall weather. The sunny days and regular rainfall have allowed our late plantings of lettuce, salad mix, tender herbs and celery to continue to grow.

Also enjoying the weather is the fall/winter rye we planted as a cover crop. Rye grows well through the fall and over winters (doesn't die overwinter), providing great protection from weeds and soil erosion from planting through late spring. In March, we will overseed red clover into the rye and it will grow up underneath,

providing further cover and fixing some nitrogen too.

At this point we are ready for frost any time. All of the big fall harvests are done and most of what is left to come is cold tolerant. We also want a little frost to help sweeten the spinach and root vegetables.

We had bumper crops of onions, potatoes, squash and pumpkins, this year, all of which are now curing or stored. We were surprised by the quantities and have only just enough space and equipment to properly cure and store everything!

If most crops did better this year, some have also been disappointments. The celeriac is fairly small and we have no good fall broccoli or cauliflower. We will be trying to implement better fertility and irrigation regimes and change our plant spacing and variety selection. Hopefully next year will be better.

The last big task for this year is planting garlic. We are planting a lot more, all local seed and decreasing our mulch with the aim of having enough for 20 bulbs per small share for next year... Fingers crossed!

This Week's Harvest

- ◆ **Beets**
- ◆ **Carrots**
- ◆ **Cabbage**
- ◆ **Celeriac**
- ◆ **Chard**
- ◆ **Garlic**
- ◆ **Herbs**
- ◆ **Onions**
- ◆ **Pumpkin**
- ◆ **Radishes**
- ◆ **Salad Mix**
- ◆ **Spinach**
- ◆ **Winter Squash**

(Some last-minute substitutions are

Feature Produce – Onions & Shallots

Allium is the term used for plants and vegetables in the onion family. We grow and throughout the season offer our members a range of alliums including: chives; scallions or green onions; leeks; shallots; garlic; and white, red and yellow onions. We find it hard to imagine cooking without using alliums as part of the meal!

Onions originated in the Near East and Central Asia and have been

grown for thousands of years. They come in rounded and also somewhat flatter shapes, like the Cipollini onions we grow.

Shallots are usually divided into two cloves and have a distinctive tapered shape.

Onions are a good source of fibre, Vitamins C and B6 as well as folate and several minerals.



Notes on Storing Onions, Shallots and Garlic

Fresh onions that have not been cured or dried have a milder, sweeter flavour, and should be stored in the fridge. Onions and shallots that have been cured (dried) have a stronger flavour and for maximum lifespan should be stored in a cool, dry, dark and well-ventilated area.

Potatoes and onions should not be stored together.

One on-line source suggests that storing onions in paper lunch bags with holes punched in them and tops folded over is an excellent way to avoid spoilage. See http://www.theyummylife.com/store_onions_garlic_shallots.



French Onion Soup

3 tbsp butter
3 tbsp oil
5 large onions, peeled & thinly sliced
Splash of water
Salt
1/2 C brandy
3 sprigs thyme
6 C rich chicken, beef or vegetable broth
4 slices bread, cut into rounds to fit into bowls, toasted
2 C Swiss, Gruyere or Emmenthal cheese, grated

Put butter, oil, onions, water and a few pinches of salt into a large soup pot on medium high heat. Cover and let onions cook until softened, about 10 minutes.

When the water has evaporated, remove the lid, turn heat to low and continue cooking onions until caramelized, stirring frequently, about 1 hour.

When onions are a deep golden colour, add brandy, broth and thyme. Season with salt and pepper and simmer 15 minutes.

Preheat your oven's broiler. Ladle soup into 4 onion soup or ovenproof bowls and top with toast slices.

Sprinkle each with cheese, and put the bowls on a baking sheet.

Place under the broiler and broil until soup is bubbling and cheese is golden brown.

Adapted from Michael Smith's French Onion Soup, The Food Network
Makes 4 servings

Onion Jam

3 large onions
2 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Olive oil
Water

Cut onions into slices or 1/4 inch pieces, whichever you prefer.

Sauté onions in a large frypan over medium heat. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft and translucent.

Add sugar, cover and cook for another 20-30 minutes until onions are a deep golden colour. Add 1/4 C of water and stir.

Cover again and cook for another 20-30 minutes until onions are dark brown. Add balsamic vinegar and another 1/4 C water and cook, covered, until liquid is adsorbed, about 10 minutes.

From Martha Stewart Living (online)

Makes 1 cup. Can be slathered onto crackers, incorporated into grilled cheese sandwiches, used as a pizza topping, served with eggs...