

# A to Z guide

to garden city harvest's veggies



**GARDEN CITY  
HARVEST**

As many of our vegetables (and a few fruits) that we could think of and how you store, freeze, and a few preparation tips for each. With our apologies for the inevitable typos and differences of opinion. Please feel free to send us an email on your preferred method, if you feel so moved

more on The Real Dirt blog, [gardencityharvest.org](http://gardencityharvest.org)



## Apple

Each apple is unique and has its own best use. Some are good for eating out of hand. Some are better for pies and baking. Some are better for applesauce. But don't get too caught up in those details – we've made some mean applesauce with a mix of whatever apples were getting pruned in the bottom drawer of the fridge – don't let the rules get in your way!

**To store:** Store apples in your refrigerator in a plastic bag. They are odor-absorbent, so keep them away from other strong-flavored items (ex: onions). Apples can also be dehydrated (try cinnamon sprinkled on top), and stored in a sealed bag!



**To freeze:** We do not recommend freezing apples. If you can't use them all, make them into applesauce or a pie. They store so well in your fridge, this shouldn't be too much of an issue. If you do have to freeze them, just plan to cook with them – not eat them raw! Apples can be frozen with or without sugar. Wash, peel, core and slice apples, removing any brown spots. Add ascorbic acid to prevent them from browning. Add sugar (if desired) and place in a freezer-safe plastic bag, removing as much air as possible. Then freeze!

## Arugula

Arugula has a peppery, slightly bitter flavor. It is stronger than most lettuces, so it's often paired with other greens. Mature arugula has sturdy leaves, whereas baby arugula tends to be more tender and milder in flavor. Hotter weather makes for spicier leaves. Arugula is rich in vitamins A, K, and folate.



**To store:** Arugula is highly perishable. This should be the first item you eat from your box. Store in the fridge inside a perforated plastic bag. If you decide to wash it first, be sure to thoroughly dry them before placing them into a plastic bag.

**To use:** Arugula can be sandy, so submerge it in a bowl of cold water, then drain and (if you have a salad spinner) spin dry. Refresh limp arugula by plunging it into ice water. Used as a raw salad green. It can also be tossed in at the end of sautés, pasta, or stir fries. It stands up to salty dishes well. You can use arugula in place of basil to make a peppery pesto or as a substitute for spinach. Try it in salsa verde, or chimichurri sauce. Use arugula to top sandwiches and pizzas, as a bed for grilled steak, or to garnish a dish.

## Basil

Basil has a wonderfully strong fragrance and is used in cuisines worldwide. Typically you see its green variety, but we sometimes grow purple varieties and even Thai basil on occasion.

**To store:** Basil is very sensitive to cold. **Do not refrigerate** fresh basil; it will turn black. To keep just-harvested basil fresh, strip the lower leaves off the stems and place stems in a glass of water on the kitchen counter. Wrap the stripped leaves (or all your basil if your fresh basil arrives w/o adequate stems) in a dry paper towel and keep in an airtight container at about 50 degrees or room temperature. It really makes a lovely, fragrant bouquet!

**To use:** Try chopping it and adding to butter, cream cheese, or your favorite pasta sauce. Make a batch of pesto. It pairs well with tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, green beans and summer squash. Because it is so fragile, it is best to add basil near the end of a dish's cooking time.

**To freeze:** Puree with a bit of olive oil and freeze in ice cube trays. Do this whenever you have a bit extra from your share.

**To dehydrate:** It is important not to break up the leaves before you dry them. Do that only when you are cooking with them. You can quickly dry them on a plate in the microwave (high for one minute). You can also oven dry or freeze basil. Hanging basil to air dry is not the best method.



## Beans

Beans come in lots of varieties. We grow green beans and a few other varieties (some with purple flecks, even – they are delicious!).

**To store:** Store unwashed beans in a perforated plastic bag in the veggie bin of your fridge for up to 1 week. Rejuvenate limp beans by soaking them in ice water for 30 minutes.



**Handling:** Remove strings and stems of fresh beans before cooking.

**To cook:** Steam or simmer fresh beans in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Watch carefully for beans to brighten in color and become tender, but not soft or mushy.

**To freeze:** Blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes, rinse in cold ice water, drain, dry well, and pack into airtight containers.

## Beets (Yellow, Red, or Chioggia)

Red beets have a crimson color, sweet flavor, and red-veined leaves. Golden beets have yellow skin and flesh. Because they have a delicate flavor and their color doesn't run all over, they are a good choice for more decorative meals. Chioggia beets are pinkish red on the outside and have pretty stripes of white and red on the inside like a bullseye. They don't retain their stripes after cooking though, but turn pinkish. Beets are rich in folate and vitamin C.



**To store:** If your beets still have greens attached, cut them off, leaving an inch of stem. Keep the greens unwashed and refrigerated in a closed plastic bag. Store the beet roots, with the rootlets (or "tails") attached, unwashed, in a plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. They will keep for several weeks, but their sweetness diminishes with time. So try to use them within a week. The yellow beets are especially sweet (great alternative for folks who don't love beets!).



**To prep:** Just before cooking, scrub beets well and remove any scraggly leaves and rootlets. If your recipe calls for raw beets, peel them with a knife or a veggie peeler, then grate or cut them according to the recipe. To remove the skins, you can roast them in foil or boil them, and the peels will eventually come right off.



**To cook:** Beets are delicious, grated raw into a salad. Or slice them into finger-size sticks and eat raw with dip. Cube beets into a veggie stew. Serve sliced, steamed beets at room temperature tossed in olive oil with a dash of salt and pepper, or a simple vinaigrette.

Bake beets in a foil-covered roasting pan with 1/2 cup water at 400 degrees. Or boil them, until easily pierced with a sharp knife. Both methods take 45 minutes to 1 hour. Peels should slide right off. Season with butter, salt, and pepper, or with cream and chopped fresh herbs; or with vinaigrette.

**To freeze:** Wash and cook beets as described above. Cool them in ice water or let them come to room temperature. The peels should slide right off. Trim the beets into 1/4 inch slices or keep them whole (if they are small). Place in Ziplock freezer bag and remove as much air as possible. Seal and freeze.

## Beet greens

Beet greens are the tops of beets! They are medium sized leaves and have bright red veins. Large leaves can be cooked like chard, and small, tender leaves are good in salads. Beet greens are high in potassium, calcium, iron, beta carotene and vitamin C. You can also use them for making vegetable stock.

**To store:** Cut beet greens from their roots; store beet roots separately. Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 1 week.

**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Remove the thicker stems.



**To cook:** Add uncooked greens to a mixed green salad.... Or saute greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Watch for color to brighten as this signals they are done. Or... blanch greens until they wilt, 3-5 minutes. Dot the cooked greens with butter or cream and season with fresh herbs or salt and pepper. Serve cooked greens alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes.

**To freeze:** blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.



## Bok Choy

Bok choy, which may be written as bok choy, bok choy, or pac choy, is a traditional stir-fry vegetable from China. Choy grows in elongated, upright heads of dark green leaves with large, white stems. Since the texture of the leaves differs from that of the stems, choy is practically two veggies in one. The leaves can be cooked and eaten like spinach, while the crisp stems can be used like celery or asparagus. This is a cool-season crop, so you'll only see it early in the farm share season.



**To store:** Wrap bok choy in a plastic bag and place in the crisper of your fridge. Store for up to a week before the leaves begin to wilt.

**Prep:** Rinse choy under cold running water and shake it dry. Because the thick stems and tender leaves will require different cooking times and will usually be added separately, cut the stems from the leaves. Cut the stems into 1 inch pieces and slice, shred, or tear the leaves.

**To use:** For stir-fry, separate leaves from the thick white stem and chop both into 2-inch wide diagonal chunks. Put the stems in first near the end of cooking, then add the leaves for the last 2 minutes.

Bok choy can also be simply steamed. Then toss with toasted sesame oil, butter, salt, or vinaigrette. A small choy is mild enough to eat raw. The stems resemble celery without the strings. Include small choy leaves as a tasty addition to a raw veggie platter. Add the small uncooked, shredded leaves of a small choy to salads.

## Broccoli

Broccoli is a cool-weather crop, available only in the early summer and sometimes fall. It is a member of the brassica family. This family also includes cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale and kohlrabi. All of the brassicas contain bioflavonoids that help reduce the risk of cancer. It is also a good source of vitamin C, vitamin A and folate, along with calcium, iron, and other minerals.



**To store:** Wrap broccoli loosely in a plastic bag and keep it in the vegetable bin of your refrigerator. It keeps for over a week but is firmest and tastiest if used within a few days.

**Handling:** Organic broccoli in particular seems to attract small green worms hiding in its depths. Soak head upside down in cold salted water (1 teaspoon salt to 8 cups of water) for 30 minutes to remove any hidden field worms. Any critters will float to the top where you can rescue them or allow them to suffer a salty death. After cutting off the florets, don't discard the stem. Sliced stems are juicy, crunchy, and perfectly edible. If the skin is thick, you can remove it with a knife or peeler before adding the stem to the your dish.

**To use:** Chop and separate florets, steam lightly for 5-7 minutes. For salads and veggie platters, you may first want to blanch broccoli in boiling water for 2 minutes and then chill it instead of serving completely raw. Serve chopped broccoli as a pizza topping.

**To freeze:** Blanch 2-4 minutes, rinse under cold water, drain, let dry, and pack into Ziplock containers. Broccoli will not be firm when thawed and is best used in soups and stews.



## Broccoli Raab

Broccoli raab is a leafy green in the turnip family. The plant is cultivated for its tender stalks, florets, and leaves, all of which can be eaten. It has a strong, peppery bite, dark leafy greens, and stalks which are tender, turning woody with age. It can be cooked or eaten raw. Broccoli raab is usually displayed in a refrigerated produce case sprinkled with ice because it wilts very easily. Choose firm, green, small stems with compact heads. Like broccoli, the flower buds that make up the florets should be tightly closed and dark green, not open or yellow.



**To store:** Refrigerate unwashed in your crisper wrapped in plastic or a wet towel for up to 5 days.

**Handling:** Rinse thoroughly in cold water, shake, and cut off the bottoms of the stalks.

**To cook:** Broccoli raab is better cooked than raw. A light steaming brings out its distinctive taste. Cook it like broccoli, but whether you braise, sauté, boil, or steam it, only cook it for eight to ten minutes. You can steam it in water or chicken broth, or sauté it with oil and garlic.

**To freeze:** Blanch for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.

## Brussels Sprouts

This cool-weather member of the brassica family grows mini cabbages or sprouts on tall, straight stalks that reach up to 20 inches high. They are named after the capital of Belgium. The sprout itself will improve in flavor, sweetness, and tenderness with exposure to a few frosts so they will likely not show up until the end of the season or only at the end of season Veggie Sale. They are high in bioflavonoids that help prevent cancer. They have high levels of vitamin C vitamin A, folate, iron, and potassium.



**To store:** Brussels sprouts keep longer if they are left attached to the stalk (up to 5 weeks in a cold cellar), but if there's not enough refrigerator room you can snap them off and store them unwashed in a closed plastic bag in the veggie bin for 1-2 days (they will develop a strong flavor). Even on the stalk they should be wrapped in plastic to slow respiration. The flavor is sweetest right after harvest, so try to use them soon.

**To use:** They can be eaten raw. Slice them in half and include them on your veggie tray with dip. Snap off sprouts from main stem. Simply pare off the tough bottom part of the sprout stem and remove the two outermost leaves. You can also cook them. Boil or steam sprouts approximately 5 -8 minutes until tender crisp. Toss with olive oil, lemon juice and dash of salt and pepper. Or roast: first boil the sprout until just tender, 5-10 minutes, then drain. Coat lightly in olive oil, place in a roasting pan and roast in a 375 degree oven until lightly browned, 15-20 minutes.... Try slicing the sprouts to about 1/3 inch thick and stir-frying them with onions and ginger. You can also make chips out of them by breaking off the leaves and roasting them as you would kale chips.

**To freeze:** Blanch sprouts for 3-5 minutes, rinse in cold water, drain, let dry, and pack into airtight containers or Ziplock bags.

## Cabbage (Red or green or Napa)

Cabbage comes in 3 types at our farm: green cabbage with smooth leaves, red with purplish-red leaves, and Napa cabbage with tall, highly ridged leaves. Napa cabbage heads are not packed as tightly as the red and green types. Red cabbage has thick, crisp leaves, and its color will run into other ingredients when cooked.



**To store:** Cabbage has a remarkable storage capacity. Just stick dry, unwashed cabbage in the refrigerator, preferably in the vegetable bin. The outer leaves may eventually get floppy or yellowish, but they can be removed and discarded to reveal fresh inner leaves. Cabbage can keep for 3 months with high humidity! Once cut, wrap it in a sealed plastic bag and continue to refrigerate; it will keep for several weeks.



**Handling:** Rinse the cabbage under cold water before use. Cut cabbage head first into quarters, then diagonally across the wedge. Be sure to remove the stem end and triangular core near the base.

**To use:** Green cabbage is good fixed any way: raw, in salads, cooked, steamed, braised or fried. Red cabbage has a sharper flavor and coarser texture so it needs to be cooked longer. Make raw cabbage into coleslaw or sauerkraut.... Eat raw grated cabbage in your salad...Briefly steam slivered and rinsed cabbage for 5 minutes. Top with butter and a pinch of salt and pepper or grated cheese. For the best cabbage, stir-fry or braise it until slightly browned.... wrap grain, rice, or meat fillings in large, boiled cabbage leaves. Napa cabbage makes a great wrap/bread substitute.



**To freeze:** Rinse cabbage and shred it. Cook in boiling pot of water for 1 minute, then douse in ice water to stop the cooking process. Drain the cabbage and dry as much as possible. Place in Ziplock freezer bag and remove as much air as possible. Put in freezer.



## Carrots

We grow many varieties of carrots. One of the aromatics, carrots are part of the base for many flavor profiles (think holy trinity, mirepoix, etc.). Eaten raw, cooked into soups, stews, and sauces. . They are one of the most versatile veggies out there.

**To store:** To avoid “floppy carrots,” you need to remove the green tops (if they’re still attached) as soon as you can, leaving about an inch of stems. If you can only do one thing to prep your veggies for storage, this should be it. Refrigerate these carrots in a plastic bag. You can also store them in a bin of water (like celery) to keep them crisp, changing out the water every few days. If you get floppy carrots, fill a large bowl or your clean sink with cold water and let the carrots bathe in it for 12 -24 hours. They will usually crisp back up. Carrots store well in your refrigerator and are one of the more patient veggies in your share.



**To use:** Carrots that haven’t been exposed to pesticides don’t need to be peeled. Boil 2-inch cubed carrots in rapidly boiling salt water, uncovered, for 7-10 minutes. Save the tops to use for a pesto or seasoning (store those in a bag in the fridge). Or put them in a plastic Ziplock in your freezer and use them to make stock. Fresh carrot tops can be chopped into a green salad or stir-fry too! The greens can be dried and used as an herb like parsley. Eat carrot spears plain or dipped in hummus, peanut butter, or creamy dressing. Combine carrots with other root vegetables for a roasted vegetable platter. (Lightly coat in oil and salt and roast at 400 degrees until veggies start to brown all over about 30 minutes).

**To freeze:** Blanch for 3 minutes, rinse in cold ice water, drain, let dry, and pack in airtight container.

## Cauliflower

Cauliflower is a cool-weather crop, so you'll only see it in the early summer and sometimes in the fall. It comes in multiple colors (cheddar, purple, and the traditional white). Like its cousin broccoli, cauliflower is actually a mass of unopened flower buds that will burst into edible yellow flowers if allowed to mature. In spots where the leaves uncurl a little early, the sun turns the cauliflower slightly yellow or brown so part of our job as farmers is to keep them covered. Cauliflower is an excellent source of vitamin C, folate and potassium. It provides bioflavonoids to prevent cancer.



**To store:** Cauliflower does not keep well. Wrap dry, unwashed cauliflower loosely in plastic and store it in the refrigerator. It will keep for up to a week but will taste sweetest if used within a few days.

**To freeze:** Blanch 2-4 minutes, rinse under cold water, drain, let dry, and pack into freezer bags. Cauliflower will not be firm when thawed and is best used in soups and stews.

**To use:** This veggie is pretty hip lately. It can be steamed and pureed with olive oil or butter to sub mashed potatoes. It can replace pizza crust, it can be riced in a food processor. Serve raw on vegetable trays with a thick dip; use in soups, curries, or salads. To steam: cut off florets and steam for 5 minutes. Drizzle with butter and lemon juice. To roast: drizzle with olive oil and salt/pepper, bake at 450 degrees on a foil lined cookie sheet for 20 minutes, then sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top. To make it brown nicely, place the cookie sheet in the oven as it pre-heats, add the cauliflower to it as quickly as you can, then place it back in the oven.

## Collard Greens

Collards are a member of the brassica family and have large, smooth, paddle-shaped leaves. You'll want to eat these quickly because they take up so much room. They contain almost as much calcium as milk. The thick stems require longer cooking than the leaves. Season collards with vinegar, hot pepper sauce, bacon, garlic, onions, chile peppers, or lemon.



**To store:** Place collards unwashed, wrapped in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Best used very fresh, but may last for a week.

**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. If your greens have thick stems, you must remove them. Fold each leaf in half and slice out the stem. Then stack the leaves up and slice them diagonally into 1-inch-wide strips.

**To cook:** Sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Or blanch greens until they wilt, 6-10 minutes. Dot the cooked greens with butter or cream and season with fresh herbs or salt and pepper. Slow cook them in a pot for two hours with some bacon and/or ham bone (and save the remaining water for stock or cooking grains!). Serve cooked greens alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2 - 3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.



## Celeriac (Celery Root)

Celeriac, also known as celery root, has a flavor like celery, and both its root and stalks/leaves are edible. Don't be put off by celeriac's ugly appearance. Under the ugly exterior is a sweet flavor.

**To store:** Store unwashed celeriac in a plastic bag in the refrigerator where it will keep for a month. It can be stored in root cellar conditions for 6-8 months! Celeriac leaves can be dried and made into an excellent seasoning.



**Handling:** Slice off stalks at the root crown. Soak the root in warm water to loosen dirt, and then scrub with a brush. Peel skin with a sharp knife. When you are in a rush, just start by peeling the veggie, get all the tough skin off, and then wash the celeriac. You may need to remove the core if it appears pithy or hollow. Peeled celeriac will darken when exposed to air. To slow the darkening, toss with lemon juice or keep in vinegar water.

**To use:** Add raw celeriac in grated beet, carrot, or apple salads. Or serve raw celeriac with a creamy dipping sauce. Use celeriac as a seasoning or a vegetable: it has the flavor of celery and the texture of a turnip. Combine celeriac with other winter roots in stews and gratins. Add cooked celeriac to mashed potatoes: peel and quarter celeriac, then boil until soft, 20-30 minutes, before mashing it into potatoes. Try French-fry-cut celeriac strips; pan-fry or roast them with a little oil and salt.

## Swiss Chard

Swiss chard has expansive, pocketed leaves with stems in a spectrum of colors: red, white, green, yellow. It is actually in the beet family but doesn't develop a bulb. Its leaves are more tender and delicate than other greens. Eat small leaves raw in salads and blanch or steam larger leaves. You can freeze chard for recipes later.



**To store:** Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks.

**Substitutes:** spinach, beet greens, kale

**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Remove the thicker stems by folding the leaves down the center and cutting out the stem. Stack several leaves on top of each other and slice into 1-inch wide ribbons.

**To cook:** Add uncooked greens to a mixed green salad. Steam stem pieces 8-10 minutes, and leaves 4-6 minutes. Or sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Watch for color to brighten as this signals they are done. Serve cooked chard alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes. Chard also goes great in stir-fries or in any recipe calling for spinach.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2 - 3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking. Drain and freeze.

## Cilantro

Cilantro looks like parsley, but has a strong soapy smell and flavor. It is used in ethnic cuisine — Asian, Indian, and Mexican (especially salsa). Since it doesn't stand up to much heat, it is usually added to a dish right before serving. This plant grows in cool weather conditions, so you won't 'see it in the heat of the summer months.



**To store:** For short-term storage, stand upright in a container with an inch of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.

**To Dry:** Preheat oven to 250 - 300 degrees. Line a rimmed cookie sheet with parchment paper. Pluck the leaves from the stems and place them on the sheet so they don't touch. Place the leaves in the oven for 20 - 30 minutes, checking and turning the sheet (not the leaves!) once. They are done when they have lost their fresh green appearance. Remove from the oven, let cool, and using the parchment paper, funnel them into a mason jar or other airtight container.

## Sweet Corn

**To store:** Refrigerate sweet corn as soon as possible with husks on. The longer you wait to eat it, the more sugar will turn into starch, and the corn will lose its sweetness.

**Handling:** You can eat corn raw or cook it in the husks. (Eating it raw off the cob in the fields is one of our favorite things!) Shuck the cob by pulling the husks down the ear and snapping off the stem. The silks will fall off as you cook the corn. Rinse under cold water. If you see a green worm, just cut out the damaged section — the rest of the cob is still edible. To cut the kernels off the cob, stand the cob upright on its base and run a sharp knife from the tip of the ear down to the base.



**To cook:** Steam corn in 1 - 2 inches of water for 6 – 10 minutes, or drop ears into boiling water for 3 - 6 minutes. Season with butter or salt. You can also grill corn in the husk — place the corn in its husk in water for 10 minutes — then place on grill for 15 minutes. Or you can remove the husk, coat the ear in butter and salt/pepper, then wrap in foil, and grill for 15 minutes.

**To freeze:** Blanch on the cob for 3-5 minutes, rinse under cold water, and drain. Dry corn well, cut off the kernels with a knife, and then pack it into airtight freezer containers.



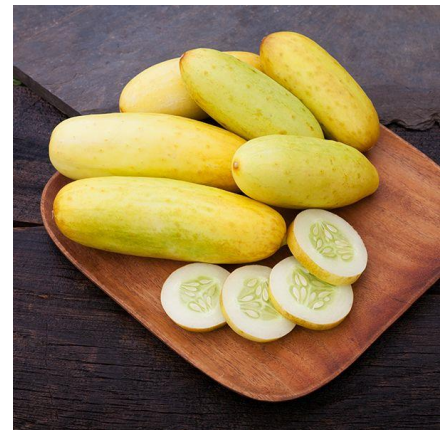
## Cucumbers

Cucumbers are in a family known as cucurbits that includes melons, squash, pumpkins and gourds. They are classified as either slicers or picklers. Pickling cucumbers have thin, lighter skin than slicers. Slicing cucumbers are larger with dark green skin. Because they are thicker, they are not usually suitable for pickling. A few of our farms grow a delicious Indian cucumber, the poona kheera, that is a yellow or russet color – don't be afraid of this cucumber – it is tender, crisp, and sweet. We also grow longer, skinnier Japanize varieties (the one pictured on left bottom is the Suyo cucumber) and are great for pickling or slicing.

**To store:** Put cucumbers in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator for up to a week. Keep them far away from tomatoes, apples, and citrus which accelerate their deterioration.

**Handling:** Slicing cucumbers are often peeled. Pickling ones are not. If the seeds are bulky, slice the cucumber lengthwise and scoop them out. Scoring the skin of a cucumber with a fork or zester gives it attractive stripes. Slice, dice or cut into chunks according to recipe.

**To use:** Eat cucumbers raw in sandwiches or salads. Try cucumber rounds topped with vegetable, egg, or tuna salad, goat cheese, or simply sprinkle with salt. Use cucumbers in chilled summer soups. Slice up cucumbers and drop into a pitcher of water to make cucumber water.



## Eggplant

Eggplant is a close relative of tomatoes, peppers and potatoes. They are smooth-skinned, oval to elongated, and range in color from white, to black to purple to pink! Eggplant requires the right kind of preparation; otherwise it can be unpleasantly bitter, rubbery, or watery.

**To store:** Surprise! The best place to store eggplant is NOT in your fridge. They like open baskets away from melons, bananas, and other ethylene and out of direct sunlight. If your home tends to be above what is considered room temp (68 – 72 degrees) then wrap unwashed eggplant in a towel (not plastic) to absorb any moisture, and keep it in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator. Use within a week and it should still be fresh and mild.

**Handling:** Eggplant is usually peeled. The flesh will brown when exposed to air. To prevent browning, coat in lemon juice or keep submerged in water.

Rinse eggplant in cool water and cut off the stem. The shape of the eggplant determines how to prepare it: cut straight narrow eggplant into strips for grilling or broiling, and cut a rounded bulbous eggplant into cubes for stews and stir fries. To remove bitter flavors and excess moisture, lightly salt slices of eggplant and allow them to sit in a colander for 10 - 15 minutes. Gently squeeze out any liquid. Eggplant will now soak up less oil and need less salt in preparation.

**To use:** Stir-fry or sauté 1-inch cubed eggplant in a very hot sauté pan with peanut oil until the eggplant has released much of its water and is very soft. Or brush 1/2-inch to 1-inch slices of eggplant with olive oil or melted butter and broil or grill until brown. You can also pierce a whole eggplant in a few places with a knife, lightly coat with olive oil, and bake at 375 degrees until the eggplant is very soft and collapsed, 30-60 minutes.

**To freeze:** Peel and cut into slices 1/3-inch thick. To preserve color, soak 5 minutes in a solution of 4 T salt per gallon water – otherwise don't worry about it. Blanch for 2 minutes in steam. Cool immediately in cold water. Package in layers with each slice separated with two pieces of wrap.



## Fennel

**To store:** Cut off the stalks where they emerge from the bulb, and if you want to use the feathery foliage as an herb, place the dry stalks upright in a glass filled with two inches of water. Cover the glass loosely with a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for few days. The unwashed bulb may be kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator drawer for 2 weeks. We don't grow this veggie every year but decided to include it anyway.



**Handling:** Use the fennel stalks and bulb separately. If the outer layers of the bulb are damaged, trim off the bad spots or remove the layers. Cut the bulb in half lengthwise and check the inner core. If it's tough, remove it with a paring knife. Fennel should be washed carefully to get out all the dirt. Chop or mince the leaves for garnish or seasoning. Prevent raw slices from discoloring by rubbing the cut edges with lemon.

**To use:** Try fennel raw: brush raw slices with olive oil and lemon juice, sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve as an appetizer. Use the fernlike tops as a licorice-flavored herb or garnish.... Use the stems in soup stocks in place of celery. Grill, braise, or roast fennel. The feathery leaves are great on baked or broiled fish with butter and lemon.



## Garlic and Garlic Scapes

We harvest both garlic bulbs and the garlic scapes. Garlic scapes are the curlicue flower stalks we snap off garlic plants in the spring. Not only will you get to enjoy garlic-flavored scapes while you wait for the bulbs to come on, you'll also get bigger bulbs of garlic later in the season as a result of our removing the flower stalks. Snapping off the flower redirects the plant's energy down toward the root, increasing the bulb size by 30%!



**To store:** Like onions, garlic can be eaten fresh or dried. Dried, cured garlic appears in August and can be kept for several months in a dark, dry, well-ventilated place at a cool room temperature. Warm temperatures will encourage the cured garlic to sprout. Fresh garlic (or garlic that has not been cured) should be kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and should be used quickly because any accumulated moisture in the bag will cause it to spoil. You can keep it on your counter, but it will spoil faster (unlike cured garlic you'll get later in the season). You'll usually see fresh garlic in mid-July.

Garlic scapes appear in early June and last for a few weeks. Store them unwashed in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

**To use:** For garlic aroma, try rubbing a cut clove around the rim of a baking dish. Try roasting garlic: cut tops off garlic to expose cloves, brush with olive oil, and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees. Squeeze garlic out of its skins and spread on crusty bread. Garlic scapes can be chopped or diced raw into green or pasta salads, sautéed in place of bulb garlic, sprinkled onto pizza, eaten raw, or used anywhere garlic flavor is desired. They're also a key ingredient in pesto.

**To freeze:** Leave the skins on and place individual cloves in a freezer bag. You can also take the skins off, chop in half and freeze on a cookie sheet until solid, then freeze in Freezer bag. Or, mince fine (or use a garlic press) and mix with coconut oil. Place teaspoon of oil/garlic mix on cookie sheet and freeze solid. Pop them into a freezer bag. Scapes can likewise be chopped and frozen in freezer bags.

## Ground Cherries

Husk cherries, also commonly referred to as ground cherries or husk tomatoes, are small pale orange fruits wrapped in a crinkly, paper-like husk. They look a little bit like small tomatillos. Their flavor is mild, yet quite sweet. We only grow these at the Youth Farm currently. Feel free to contact the Youth Farm if you are interested in trying them and are not a member there.



**To store:** Remove the husks and rinse the fruits before preparing. Husked fruits keep in the refrigerator for five to seven days.

**To use:** Mixed with berries, they make a great addition to desserts. You can also make a preserve out of them. Add with jalapenos and cilantro for a great salsa variation. And you can always just throw them into a salad.

**To freeze:** To freeze ground cherries, simply spread the husked, washed fruits on a rimmed cookie sheet and place them in the freezer. Once they're hard, package them in plastic bags.

## Kale

Kale is a member of the brassica family. Kale comes in blue-green, reddish green, and red varieties and may have flat or curly leaves. All types of kale have thick stems. It has a mild cabbage flavor when cooked. A longer cooking time is best as it brings out the sweetness in the green. It is high in beta carotene, vitamins A and E. It is rich in bioflavonoids that help protect against cancer.



**Substitutions:** Collards, turnip greens, beet greens, broccoli raab, mustard greens, dandelion, spinach and Swiss chard. Although greens have distinctive flavors that lend them to a particular preparation, they can be used interchangeably in recipes.

**To store:** Place kale unwashed, wrapped in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Best used very fresh, but may last for a week.



**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. If your greens have thick stems, you must remove them. Fold each leaf in half and slice out the stem. Then stack the leaves up and slice them diagonally into 1-inch-wide strips.

**To cook:** Sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion (and even bacon!). You can cook in bouillon to take a bit of the edge off the flavor. Blanch greens until they wilt, 6-10 minutes. Dot the cooked greens with butter or cream and season with fresh herbs or salt and pepper. Try serving cooked greens alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes. Add a few sliced kale greens to soups and stews during the last 10 minutes of cooking time. Add sautéed kale to omelets, quiches, scrambled eggs, or casseroles. Try kale chips — season with olive oil and herbs of your choice, then bake on cookie sheet at 325 about 10 minutes, until they are crisp but not burned.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers/freezer bags

## Kohlrabi

The name says it all: kohl (cabbage) rabi (turnip). This plant was developed by crossing a cabbage with a turnip! The edible part of the plant is an enlarged section of the stem that develops just above the ground. It comes in two colors: a light green and purple bulb.



**To store:** Store kohlrabi globe and leaves separately. The globe will last for 2 weeks refrigerated in a plastic bag. Wrap leaves and stalks in plastic bag and keep in hydrator drawer of refrigerator.

**Substitute:** Substitute kohlrabi where recipes call for carrots, potatoes, or turnips.

**Handling:** Rinse under cold running water just before use. Peel the outer skin off. Trim off the remains of the stalks and root. Grate, slice, or chop as desired.

**To use:** Young kohlrabi leaves can be used in recipes calling for greens. (Remove the tough stems from the leaves.) Cut raw kohlrabi bulb into sticks for a refreshing addition to a raw vegetable tray or grate it for salads. Lightly boil, steam or bake it, or add it to stews and stir-fries. Steam kohlrabi whole 25 - 30 minutes or thinly sliced 5 - 10 minutes. Dress slices simply with oil, lemon juice, and fresh dill. Roast as you would other veggies at 425 degrees for 15 – 20 minutes.

**To freeze:** Cut into cubes or slices and blanch for 3-4 minutes. Place into ice water bath to stop the cooking. Drain and dry. Place in freezer bags.



## Leeks

Leeks look like large, flat-leaf scallions, which have a buttery taste to them. They can be substituted for onions in recipes, however since they do not caramelize well, so be sure they don't burn.

**To store:** Cut off the green tops (save those greens and put them in your veggie freezer bag to make veggie stock). Loosely wrap unwashed leek bottoms (with roots attached) in a plastic bag and store them in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator where they will keep for 2 weeks.



**Handling:** Cut the leek about 1 inch above the white part, where the leaves begin changing from dark to light green. Save the unused greens; they'll give great flavor to your next vegetable stock. Slit the leek lengthwise and soak it in lukewarm water for 15 minutes. Fan the leaves under running water to dislodge dirt, then pat dry.

**To use:** Use leeks in salads, casseroles and soups. They can be left whole and eaten as a cooked vegetable — braised, boiled or steamed. Steam or boil leeks for 10-12 minutes. Top with butter, a dash of salt, pepper, and Parmesan cheese. Use slimmer, younger leeks raw in salads. Grill or braise leeks for simple side dish. Sauté leeks for use in soups or stews.

## Lettuce

We grow several varieties of lettuce in our CSA, head lettuces, from romaine to butter crunch, bibb to iceberg. Some will be in heads, others will be cut leaf. Lettuce will spoil quickly. This should be one of the first items you eat each week.

**To store:** store unwashed lettuce in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. To store lettuce that you have already washed and dried with a spinner, place back in a plastic bag with a dry paper towel in the bag, and place the package in the vegetable crisper bin.

**Handling:** Slice the head at its base with a knife and let the leaves fall open. Discard any damaged or leathery outer leaves and tear large leaves into bite-size pieces. Wash leaves in a basin of cold water. Dry in a salad spinner.

**To use:** Include combinations of greens and lettuce with grapefruit, pear, avocado, raw or roasted nuts, flax or sunflower seeds, olives, fine cheese, cooked grain, pasta, croutons, or edible flowers. With romaine or iceberg, grilling whole is also an option.



## Mixed Greens

Our mixed greens often have a bitter flavor thanks to the mixture of greens interspersed inside. This blend can contain up to 10 or more varieties of tender, young lettuces and other greens, including mizuna and other mustards and some baby brassicas (like kale). Greens are always a danger zone veggie and should be used first in your share.



**To store:** place greens unwashed, wrapped in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. If you must wash them, spin them dry and store them in a plastic bag with a paper towel. You should use them as soon as possible. Best used very fresh, but may last for a week.

## Onions (Red, Sweet, Cipollini or Yellow)

**Storage:** Red and Yellow Storage Onions may be kept in any cool, dark, dry place with adequate air circulation for several months if they are cured. (Be sure to store onions and potatoes in separate places. Moisture given off by potatoes can cause onions to spoil.) Uncured storage onions should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. (Eat within a week or two). You'll know they're uncured if they still have the green stalk attached.



Sweet onions do not store as well as their other onion friends and should be placed in the refrigerator or a cool place in your kitchen and eaten quickly. They will likely last a week on your counter top. If you want to go all out, you can place them in a pair of pantyhose, tying a knot between each onion. Hang the set of them in your pantry or a cool dark place. Cut of an onion as you go! We've never tried this, but supposedly they can last several months with this method.

**Handling:** When the sulfur in cut onions meets the water in your eyes, it turns into sulfuric acid — hence the infamous onion-induced tears. To reduce the assault, use a very sharp knife, or chill your onions in fridge before cutting them, or don your ski goggles or some of the great onion goggles available on the market. If you're planning to use chopped or sliced onions raw, it's a good idea to rinse them in water before use as this takes away the unpleasant bite. Some people reserve a separate cutting board just for onions, garlic, leeks, and scallions (if you do that, consider color coding your cutting boards). Peel the onion's skin and cut off the roots and top. Save your papery onion skins in a bag in your freezer reserved for making vegetable stock. If you encounter a little rot in your onion, just cut away the bad sections. If there are a few black spots, rinse the whole onion in cool water and rub the spots off with your thumbs. Sweet onions bruise easily, handle them with care.

**To freeze:** Cut or slice onions to desired size and place in freezer bags. Remove all the air and seal. It helps to freeze them in 2-3 cup increments. When you need them, simply add them to your recipe. Frozen onions will turn soft when they thaw, so don't use them for recipes that need crisp onions.

## Parsnip

Contrary to appearances, parsnips are not pale versions of carrots. They have a nutty-sweet taste and a tender-hearty texture that is all their own. Due to a very long growing season, parsnips are not available until late fall, and improve in sweetness after exposure to frost. Not all of our farms grow parsnips, but they are always available (and popular!) at our Fall Veggie Sale. They are high in fiber and carbohydrates.



**Substitute:** Parsnips sub well for carrots in recipes.

**To store:** Trim off parsnip tops and refrigerate unwashed in a loosely-wrapped, or perforated plastic bag for 2 weeks in the crisper drawer. Parsnips store well in root cellar conditions.

**Handling:** Young parsnips don't need to be peeled. Simply scrub them under cold running water. Larger parsnips should be peeled, and you can cut out the core if it seems woody.

**To use:** Boil 1-inch chunks for 8 minutes until tender, then season with butter or oil, salt, and pepper for a side dish. Grate parsnips raw into salads or cut into sticks for dipping. Bake them in a cake or quick bread. Sauté them with butter and parsley, roast with whole cloves or unpeeled garlic, or puree well-boiled parsnips. Add them into soups. Bake or roast with other root veggies on a cookie sheet with olive oil.

**To freeze:** Blanch peeled 1-inch chunks for 2-3 minutes, run under cold water, drain, and pack into freezer bags. Parsnip puree freezes well also.



## Peas (Sugar Snap)

There are three main types of garden peas: shell peas that need to be shelled before using, snow peas that are picked when pods are thick and peas just starting to develop, and sugar snap peas, an edible peapod that is picked when the pods are well-filled. They are rich in vitamins A and C, thiamine, riboflavin and potassium.



**To store:** Use as soon as possible within 4 - 5 days of harvest. Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag in the crisper drawer.

**To use:** Snap peas need stringing. Snap off stem tip toward the flat side of pod and pull downward. Eat young, fresh snap peas raw. Put them on top of a salad. Add raw peas to stir fry or soup in the last stages of cooking. Steam peas until just tender-crisp, 3 minutes. Toss with butter, olive oil, cream, vinaigrette, or pesto.

**To freeze:** Peas freeze well but will lose their crunchy texture. Remove stems/strings. Blanch peas for 1 minute, rinse under cold water, drain, and pack into freezer bags.

## Flat-Leaf Parsley (Italian Parsley)

**To store:** For short-term storage, stand upright in a container (mason jar, for example) with an inch of water. Then cover the herbs loosely with plastic bag and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks.



**To dry:** Remove leaves from stem and place piece of paper towel on glass plate. Cover with another piece of paper towel. Microwave on high for 1 minute. Leaves will be dry. Crinkle them with your finger and place them in a dry container, such as a Mason jar with a lid.

**To use:** Parsley has more vitamin A than carrots, and more vitamin C than oranges! It's also high in iron. Toss it into a green salad. Excellent in soups and stews or in homemade tomato sauce, parsley is famous for freshening breath at the end of a meal. Use it instead of basil for a variation on pesto. Use it to make compound butter to top steaks and breads. Dehydrate it for seasoning later. You can also save the stems or leaves for stock frozen in a freezer bag.

**To freeze:** Frozen herb cubes are easy to make. One frozen herb cube is equal to 1 Tablespoon fresh or 1 teaspoon dried herb. Just add a cube when your recipe calls for the herb. To prepare herbs for freezing: rinse them gently in cool water. Chop the leaves fairly coarsely. Spoon 1 tablespoon of the herb into each compartment of an ice cube tray, add about 1 inch of water to each compartment, and place the tray in the freezer. Remove the frozen herb cubes from the trays and bundle all the cubes in a plastic freezer bag. Remove as much air as possible, seal and store in the freezer for up to a year. You can also simply take a bunch of washed and dried parsley, put it neatly in the bottom of a freezer bag, press the air out, roll it up, and seal. Then stick it in the freezer. It retains its flavor well and is super easy!

## Sweet Peppers (Bell)

These come in the late summer and/or early fall as they are a hot weather crop. They come in a variety of colors: green, red, yellow, orange, and purple. Red, orange and yellow peppers are simply green peppers that were allowed to ripen to their full color change. They are sweeter and need to be eaten sooner. Shapes and sizes vary from round to bell-shaped, to elongated, to banana shaped. The long, thin Jimmy Nardello pepper looks like it might be hot, but it isn't! It has an almost uncanny sweet, fruity flavor that kids will eat raw and is known as the "Italian frying pepper" because it is great in the pan.



**To store:** Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in hydrator drawer for 1-2 weeks.

**To freeze:** Wash and dry peppers. Freeze whole or cut into bite-size pieces and place in freezer bag, removing as much air as possible. Peppers will soften when thawed, so take out only the amount you need, and use them in recipes where their crisp texture is not necessary. You can also dry peppers in a food dehydrator.

**To use:** For greatest nutrition retention, eat bell peppers raw. You can also roast peppers: Place bell pepper under broiler, above hot coals, or over open flame. Toast it, turning often, until the skin is black. Place pepper in brown bag, close and allow to steam 15 minutes. Skin will peel off easily with the aid of a paring knife. Try steaming peppers whole for 10 minutes and then stuff with your favorite stuffing.

## Hot Peppers (Chiles)

These add flavor and heat (one of the four essential elements to cooking!) to a dish. These come in the late summer and early fall as they are a hot weather crop. The illustration to the right shows the variety and heat of many of our hot peppers.

**To store:** Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in hydrator drawer for 1-2 weeks. You can also dehydrate peppers for long-term.

**Handling:** Be careful when preparing hot peppers of any kind. For greatest safety wear rubber gloves while chopping and handling them. Do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth or other places after handling these puppies—it will burn for hours! Wash hands thoroughly when finished. Slice off the top of the hot pepper, including the stem. Since the heat in chile peppers is concentrated in the seeds and membranes, you can use the whole pepper for a spicy dish, or cut out the heat-filled seeds and membranes and use just the flesh of the hot pepper for cooking (chile flavor without the bite).

**To freeze:** Wash and dry peppers. Keep whole, or cut into bite-size pieces and place in freezer bag (squeeze out any air). Peppers will soften when thawed, so take out only the amount you need, and use them in recipes where their crisp texture is not necessary.





## Pie Pumpkin (Winter Squash)

*Depending on the farm, we offer both the Baby Pam and the Jarrahdale (a blue-grey pumpkin from Australia). These instructions apply to both.*

Pumpkins are a kind of winter squash. Winter squash is called winter squash because it can be stored over winter for an extended period after harvest in the fall. Squash have high levels of vitamin A and some vitamin C, folate and potassium. Pie pumpkins are smaller than their Jack-o- lantern decorative pumpkin counterparts, and are very edible.

**To store:** Store in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50 degrees, but make sure they do not freeze. Under the best conditions, they should keep for 3-4 months. And they get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, you can wrap them in plastic and store them in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.

**To cook:** Steam 1-2 inch chunks for 15-20 minutes. Puree or top with butter and use for your pumpkin pie filling. Or you can boil 1-2 inch chunks in salted water until tender, 8-10 minutes. Or cut pumpkin in half, scrape out seeds/pulp, and bake cut-side down with 1/2 inch of water in the pan at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. Then allow to cool and scrape the flesh out and puree in food processor. Pumpkin seeds make a great snack too, baked in some olive oil and salt at 350 degrees until browned.

**To freeze:** Winter squash freezes well. Simply cook squash and mash or puree it. Then pour it into ice cube trays and freeze. Pop the frozen cubes into freezer bags.

## Potatoes

**Boiling potatoes:** have a firm, waxy texture. Because they hold their shape well when boiled or steamed, these low-starch potatoes are good choices for salads, soups, stews, or au gratin dishes. (Tip: if after slicing a raw potato, the knife comes out clean, chances are it is more suited to boiling than baking.) One example: red potatoes.

**Baking potatoes:** have a drier, starchier flesh and cook up with a fluffy texture. They are best baked, mashed or deep-fried. (Tip: if after slicing a raw potato the knife is coated with white, foamy starch, chances are it is more suited to baking than boiling.)

**All-purpose potatoes:** have qualities that fall in between those of boiling and baking potatoes. They include: blue potatoes, Yukon Gold potatoes, Kennebec potatoes.

**To store:** Keep unwashed potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place, such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard. They will keep for two weeks at room temperature. Moisture causes potatoes to spoil, light turns them green, and proximity to onions causes them to sprout. Don't put them in the refrigerator, as low temperatures convert the starch to sugars. However, new potatoes, which are young and thin-skinned, may be refrigerated if you don't plan to eat them within a few days.

**Handling:** Scrub well and cut off any sprouts or green skin. Peeling is a matter of preference. In soups, the skins may separate from the flesh and float in the broth, but when baked, pan-fried or roasted, the skins acquire a crisp, crunchy texture. If baking a whole potato, be sure to prick the skin at least 2 places to allow steam to escape.

**To use:** Boil potatoes in water for 20-30 minutes until tender. If desired, mash them. Use potatoes in soups, hash browns, and salads. Roast sliced or whole small potatoes with fresh herbs, salt, and olive oil at 400 degrees until tender, about 20 minutes.



## Radishes

Radishes come in all kinds of colors: red, white, black, purple, and pink. They also are sometimes rounder and sometimes longer.

**To store:** Remove radish leaves if they are still attached. Store the unwashed greens in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator and use ASAP. Store radish roots dry and unwashed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for 1 week.



**Handling:** Scrub radishes well to remove dirt. Trim off the stem and rootlets. Slice, chop or mince the roots or leave them whole.

**To use:** Eat radishes raw with a sprinkle of salt, or with room-temperature butter. Grate radishes into slaws and salads. Try small young radish leaves in salads or scrambled eggs; they are perfectly edible and have a terrific earthy taste like watercress. Blanch whole radishes in boiling, salt water for 5-10 minutes, or steam them until just tender, 8-12 minutes. Top with butter, salt, and pepper or with a vinaigrette. They're also great grilled.

## Rutabaga

Rutabaga is a close relative of the turnip, though larger, sweeter and more tan. They have yellow flesh, with a slight purple tinge near the top. It can be used as a substitute for turnips.

**To store:** Keep unwashed rutabagas in a plastic bag in the fridge for a month or longer.

**Handling:** Scrub well to remove any lingering dirt. Take a thin slice off the top and bottom. Peeling the skin is optional.

**To use:** Rutabaga can be grated raw into salad. Or steam 1-inch chunks for 35 minutes until tender. Mash and serve with butter and pepper. This vegetable really shines when it is roasted in olive oil at 400 F. You can also boil rutabaga in 1-inch chunks for 25 minutes until tender, and add to casseroles or stuffing mixtures, or mash cooked rutabaga with carrots and potatoes. You can also make rutabaga chips by deep-frying 1/8-inch thick slices in hot vegetable oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towel and sprinkle with salt and pepper.



## Scallion (Green or Purple Bunching Onion)

Scallions are young onions that are considered “bulbless.” Also called green onions, they can range from sweet to spicy, but generally their flavor is milder than a full-grown onion. Their round, hollow tops are almost always sweet. We grow two varieties: green (white bulb) and purple (purple skinned bulb).



**To store:** Scallions should be stored unwashed and wrapped loosely in a plastic bag. Put them in the refrigerator where they will keep for a week. To keep scallions longer, chop off about three-quarters of the tender green tips and stand the scallions in an inch of water in a tall container covered loosely with a plastic bag, refreshing the water every 3 days.

**To eat:** You can eat the entire scallion. Rinse scallions in cold water and snip off anything that’s floppy. Use chopped scallions as a garnish; they are less pungent. The minced greens of scallions are a good substitute for chives. Use scallions in almost any recipe calling for onions, raw or cooked. They are excellent in soups and stew. Try brushing scallions with sesame oil, salt, and pepper and put them on the grill. You can also use any part of the onion for your freezer bag of vegetable stock ingredients.

**To freeze:** Chop into desired size and place on cookie sheet and freeze. Then pop into a baggie and store in the freezer.



## Spaghetti Squash (Winter Squash)

Winter squash is called winter squash because it can be stored over winter for an extended period after harvest in the fall. Squash have high levels of vitamin A and some vitamin C, folate and potassium. This variety of winter squash has unusual string- like flesh, which looks like spaghetti when scraped out with a fork. They are often baked or boiled and then the mildly sweet flesh is scooped out and topped with spaghetti sauce.



**To store:** Store in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50 degrees, but make sure they do not freeze. Under the best conditions, they should keep for 3-4 months. And they get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, you can wrap them in plastic and store them in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.

**To use:** To bake, slice in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds, and place face down on cookie sheet. Add a 1/2 inch water to the pan to avoid drying out. Bake at 400 degrees. Squash will need about an hour—90 minutes to cook, depending on size. Cook until tender. Flesh is done when it scoops out easily in spaghetti-like strings. Serve hot with butter and parmesan cheese or your favorite tomato sauce on top. For a shortcut, you can microwave this squash whole or cut in half in a bowl with an inch or so of water in the bottom.

## Spinach

Spinach is a member of the greens family. Spinach has small leaves with thick stems. It can be served raw in salads or lightly cooked. The best spinach results come from briefly blanching, steaming, or sautéing until it turns bright green. Cooked spinach, some argue is actually more nutrient dense than raw (the oxalic acid in spinach can restrict your body from absorbing some of the abundant nutrients available in this nutrient dense green). Either way, this green packs a nutritional punch! Iron, calcium and so many more.



**Substitutions:** turnip greens, beet greens, broccoli raab, mustard greens, dandelion, kale, collards, and Swiss chard (spinach cooks much more quickly than all of these).

**To store:** Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 1 week.

**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Spin dry.

**To cook:** Add uncooked spinach to a mixed green salad. Blanch spinach until it wilts, 2-4 minutes, or steam for 5-8 minutes. Or sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Watch for color to brighten as this signals they are done. Serve cooked spinach alone as a side dish or use it in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes. Use cooked spinach in enchiladas, quesadillas, crepes, lasagna, and mac and cheese. For breakfast, sauté slivered greens and garlic in the frying pan before adding to eggs for scrambling. Use leftover cooked spinach in omelets, quiches, or soups.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 1 minute. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.

## Summer Squash – Yellow, Patty Pan, Zucchini

Summer squash is a general term for 70 different types of fast-growing, tender-skinned, soft-fleshed squash. Zucchini is the most famous, followed by yellow squash (either straight or crookneck), and scallops (or patty pan) which look like flying saucers. If you get a giant-sized zucchini, use it for making zucchini bread. It will be too tough and seedy for other recipes.



**Substitutions:** All summer squashes can be used inter-changeably.

**To store:** Store squash unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin. In the refrigerator they keep for about a week and a half.



**Handling:** Rinse under water to remove the dirt or prickles, and slice off the stem and blossom ends. Then slice or chop. Scrape out seeds from baseball bat sized zucchinis before using them to bake.



**To use:** Because of their bland flavor, summer squash lend themselves to many cooking applications, taking on the flavor of whatever they're cooked with. Try using them as a substitute for rice, pasta or potatoes. Slice tender, young summer squash into salads. Try them in stir-fries, with pasta. Lightly steam (4-5 minutes) and dress them with fresh herbs or pesto. Or coat squash lightly in oil and roast at 350 degrees whole or sliced in half for 15-45 minutes. Stuff whole squash with your favorite stuffings. You can also spiralize them into zucchini noodles or "zoodles!"

**To freeze:** You can freeze pureed (seeded) zucchini in freezer bags, and grated zucchini for use in breads and muffins.

## Strawberries

*Some years we have strawberries at some of our farms, some years we don't have many. They are often sold separately from our summer CSA farm share.*

Ripe strawberries are firm and bright with fresh green caps and a sweet aroma. Always shop for berries with your nose! If you can't smell the fragrance, they won't taste sweet. Medium to smaller berries are usually sweeter than bigger ones. Strawberries do not ripen once they are harvested, so be sure to pick berries that are picked ripe.



**To store:** Put your berries in a colander in your fridge as soon as possible, where they will keep for up to 5 days. Do not wash until you eat them. Strawberries taste best at room temperature.

**To use:** Wash off the berries and remove the green tops before eating. Use them in pies, smoothies, yogurt parfaits, or in a green salad.

**To freeze:** Choose ripe berries. Wash and sort out the mushy ones. Cut off the hulls. Let dry in colander for 10 minutes. Place them in an even layer on a large cookie sheet (with a lip) or any container you may have and put in freezer overnight until frozen. (No need to cover). Then pack them into a freezer bag, removing the air, and seal.

## Tomatillo

The tomatillo, or "husk tomato" is important in authentic Mexican cooking and is best known for its central role in a delicious salsa verde.

**To store:** Store at room temperature with husks on, for 2 weeks. For longer-term storage, refrigerate in husks in a plastic bag.

**Handling:** Remove husk before eating. Wash. Chop to desired size.



**To use:** Use tomatillos to make salsa verde with garlic, onion, hot chile pepper, lime juice, fresh cilantro, and salt. They are often roasted. Great for green enchilada sauce!



## Tomatoes (sungold, roma, heirloom)

Every year we grow different kinds of tomato varieties, although you can expect to see a few of the standards every year: roma (for canning and saucing, they have less water than the heirloom varieties) and sungolds (AKA nature's candy, the size of a cherry tomato). We also grow a lot of heirloom tomatoes. These tomatoes sometimes have a unique cracked appearance near the stem or odd shapes and colors. Don't worry – they're supposed to look that way. Inside, you'll be rewarded with a delicious, juicy flavor.



**To store:** Do not refrigerate tomatoes; cold temperatures deplete their flavor & texture. If your tomatoes smell fragrant and yield slightly when squeezed, they are ready to use. If not, store them for a few days at room temperature out of the sun until they are ripe. Putting dry tomatoes in a brown paper bag may accelerate the ripening process.

**Handling:** If serving tomatoes raw or lightly cooked, give them a quick rinse and slice, chop or cut them into chunks as desired. If you'll be cooking them for a long time, consider removing the skins so they don't float around in your dish. To do so, score the end of the tomato with an "X," dunk whole tomatoes in boiling water for 30 seconds, lift out with slotted spoon, plunge into ice water, and the skins will slide off.

**To freeze:** Tomatoes can be frozen whole. Skin and core tomatoes (optional), place on cookie sheet, and freeze. When solid, place in a freezer bag and replace in freezer (when you thaw them, the skins slip right off!). Thawed tomatoes are appropriate only for cooking sauces, salsas, or purees.

*Note:* avoid cooking in aluminum or iron pots because tomatoes react with those substances, giving the dish a metallic taste.

Tomatoes can also be dehydrated.

## Salad Turnip

This is not a classic turnip. You can cut these puppies with a butter knife! They are anything but tough, and can be eaten raw or cooked. They are rich in vitamin C, folic acid, potassium, and fiber.

**To store:** Remove the greens from the turnips and cook/store as instructed in the next entry. The turnip itself should be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your fridge for up to a week.

**Handling:** Cut off the green tops (which can be eaten as well). Wash and cut into wedges or slices or leave whole.

**To cook:** Serve them with dip, grated in a salad, or any way you would use a radish. You can sauté them in butter or oil with a little garlic or garlic scapes.



## Salad Turnip Greens

**To store:** Cut turnip greens from their roots; store roots separately. Keep dry, unwashed greens in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks.

**Handling:** Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. If your greens have thick stems, you must remove them. Fold each leaf in half and slice out the stem. Then stack the leaves up and slice them diagonally into 1-inch-wide strips.

**To cook:** Sauté greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. Or blanch greens until they wilt, 2 minutes. Dot the cooked greens with butter or cream and season with fresh herbs or salt and pepper. Serve cooked greens alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, scrambled eggs, fish, rice, or potatoes.

**To freeze:** Blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.

## Watermelon

Watermelon has dark and light green stripes on the outside and the inside is crisp, tender, sweet, and hydrating.

**To store:** Refrigerate watermelon right away. They do not ripen off the vine or emanate a ripe smell. Cut melon should be covered in plastic wrap, and chunks or slices should be kept in an air-tight container. Eat melons within a week.



**Handling:** A big knife and cutting board are helpful. Cut in half, then cut into quarters or slices.

**To use:** Use in salads, or eat it raw in slices. Blend watermelon, water, and sugar or honey for a refreshing agua de sandia.

**To freeze:** Melon must be frozen in sugar syrup. Choose a ripe melon (but not too mushy). Remove the rind and seeds and cut into cubes. Prepare sugar syrup. In a pot on stove, combine 1 3/4 cup sugar with 4 cups water. Heat until dissolved, then let cool. Put in fridge to cool. Syrup must be cold before packing. Place melon in freezer containers and cover with cold syrup. The syrup should cover all the fruit. Remove air and seal.

## Winter Squash

We so many varieties of winter squash at the Garden City Harvest farms! If you want more details on each, we have a separate handout. They are failry interchangeable in recipes (except for spaghetti squash, which is quite stringy and pasta like).

Generally, you can eat the skin of the yellow and orange squashes. Peel the others.

### **Here are the varieties:**

Autumn crown – tan colored, scalloped-shaped fruit with bright orange flesh – similar in taste and texture to a butternut squash.

Butternut – you know this one! Orange flesh with a sweet, nutty flavor.



Carnival – medium-small squash with yellow, green, and gold flecks. Peel this squash.



Delicata – smaller, shaped more like a zucchini, striped green and yellow (very edible flesh!), sweet, tender, and nutty. No need to peel this squash.





Hubbard – round and blue-grey. Fine grained, dark yellow flesh is delicious and sweet.



Kabocha (thunder buttercup, bonbon buttercup) – jade and forest green skin, dry, sweet and hearty. Cupless, which makes prepping it a bit easier.



Kuri (red) – teardrop in shape with red-orange flesh. Mellow, delicate chestnut-like flavor.



Spaghetti (see spaghetti squash listing for more) – this squash is a bit different inside,



because it makes thick, spaghetti like strings. Great substitute for pasta, not a great substitute for other squash dishes. Often not as flavorful as other squashes, so good with some herbs, sauces, etc.

Sunshine – dry, tender, sweet and meaty. Orange. Shaped like a buttercup with rounded shoulders and to tuban.



### **Overview for squash**

Winter squash is called winter squash because it can be stored over winter for an extended period after harvest in the fall. Squash have high levels of vitamin A and some vitamin C, folate and potassium. It is often a great (and better) substitute for pumpkin in pumpkin pie.

**To store:** Store in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50 degrees, but make sure they do not freeze. Under the best conditions, they should keep for 3-4 months. And they get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, you can wrap them in plastic and store them in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.

**To cook:** To bake, slice in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds, and place face down on cookie sheet. Add 1/2 inch of water to pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 90 minutes or more (depending on the size) until shells are soft and starting to collapse. Remove and fill with butter, maple syrup, seasonings, or fillings.

**To freeze:** Simply cook squash and mash or puree it. Then pour it into ice cube trays and freeze. Pop the frozen cubes into freezer Ziplock bags.

## Zucchini

Summer squash is a general term for 70 different types of fast-growing, tender-skinned, soft-fleshed squash. Zucchini is the most famous, followed by yellow squash (either straight or crookneck), and scallops (or patty pan) which look like flying saucers. If you get a giant-sized zucchini, use it for making zucchini bread. It will be too tough and seedy for other recipes.

**Substitutions:** All summer squashes can be used inter-changeably.

**To store:** Store squash unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin. In the refrigerator they keep for about a week and a half.



**Handling:** Rinse under water to remove the dirt or prickles, and slice off the stem and blossom ends. Then slice or chop. Scrape out seeds from baseball bat sized zucchinis before using them to bake.

**To use:** Because of their bland flavor, summer squash lend themselves to many cooking applications, taking on the flavor of whatever they're cooked with. Try using them as a substitute for rice, pasta or potatoes. Slice tender, young summer squash into salads. Try them in stir-fries, with pasta. Lightly steam (4-5 minutes) and dress them with fresh herbs or pesto. Or coat squash lightly in oil and roast at 350 degrees whole or sliced in half for 15-45 minutes. Stuff whole squash with your favorite stuffings. You can also spiralize them into zucchini noodles or "zoodles!"

**To freeze:** You can freeze pureed (seeded) zucchini in freezer bags, and grated zucchini for use in breads and muffins.