

RIPLEY FARM

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Dear Members,

Welcome to the first share of 2011! It's been a good growing season so far this spring/summer and we had all the produce mature for this first week that we were hoping for. In this week's share you'll find snap peas (pull the top off and eat the whole pod), bunching onions, arugula, baby beets and carrots, radishes, salad turnips, and head lettuce. A couple of these items may be new to some of you, so here's a quick explanation of what to do with some of the less common veggies; the round white root vegetables that look like white radishes are Hakurei salad turnips. Don't be put off if you're not a turnip lover—they are perhaps our single most popular item at farmer's market; crisp, juicy, sweet, perfect sliced into a salad, gently sautéed with butter, or even just eaten out of hand like an apple! The bunch of mustard greens is arugula, a peppery green that makes an excellent salad when mixed with lettuce. They are also good lightly steamed or stir-fried as a side dish or as a mouthwatering bed to serve fish on. Don't neglect the tops of the bunching onions and beets; the onion tops are just like scallions and can be used as such, while the beet greens are my personal favorite cooked green, steamed and topped with butter and balsamic vinegar. The radishes we grow are a French variety called D'Avignon; they are the cylindrical red-and-white roots in the share. Use them just the same as round radishes.

One housekeeping change from the information we sent you previously, is that the wax boxes with the shares in them do NOT have your names on them. Just take one box, they're all identical. Also, being certified organic we don't use any chemicals on our crops, and we do take care to wash all our produce, but we still recommend to all our customers to give everything another wash before using, just like you would with vegetables from the grocery store.

Those of you picking up on the farm are welcome to walk around, look at the crops and animals. The electric fence is on and hot so be sure not to touch it. It will shock you. I can vouch for it. In the past two weeks we've gotten baby chicks, lambs and piglets. They all like visitors, so go say hi if you'd like. With hot weather upon us all the summer crops are growing like mad. Green beans, cucumbers and summer squash are all about to flower, and peppers and tomatoes already are setting small fruit. It won't be too many weeks before we start harvesting all of those crops as well as new potatoes.

Finally, here's a very easy but excellent recipe for a homemade salad dressing:
Mix ¼ cup olive oil, 1 tbsl vinegar (I like cider or balsamic), 1 tsp prepared mustard, and 1 tsp naturally fermented soy sauce (optional) together and drizzle over salad. Any minced fresh herb makes a nice optional addition.

Enjoy those veggies!