

RIPLEY FARM

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Dear Members,

We had two rainstorms yesterday, bringing us three-quarters of an inch of badly needed rain. It allowed us and our crops to breathe a little easier. In the share this week you'll find lettuce, carrots, radishes, basil, Yukon Gold potatoes, green beans, zucchini, and fresh onions. The onions are a sweet, mild variety called Ailsa Craig, and in addition to the bulbs, the tops are still of excellent quality, making very nice green onions.

While zucchini and green beans may be very familiar to all of you, I'm going to make a few suggestions on using them since they are both veggies that can be reduced to tasteless mush through overcooking. Green beans first: one of the best and easiest ways to cook them is to remove the stems and then steam them until they are bright green and just tender, which will only take a few minutes. Serve them with butter as a vegetable side dish. Beans prepared this way also pair well with nuts (almonds, cashews, etc.) that have been lightly toasted in butter. Another good way to prepare beans is to gently stir fry them, again only until they are just tender. They also make a nice addition to vegetable soup, added a few minutes before the soup is done.

Zucchini is one of the few vegetables that we grow that does very well stored at room temperature. Take it out of the plastic bag if you plan to store it this way. Zucchini should never be boiled! It's best prepared by one of the following methods: perhaps most simply, you can slice it (either lengthwise or in rounds) and sauté it very gently in butter until it is just tender. This only takes a couple minutes. Serve with salt and pepper and perhaps a dash of lemon juice. Zucchini is also good grated in zucchini bread or cakes (almost like potato latkes). Stuffing it is also a tasty way to prepare zucchini.

Here's a pesto recipe for the basil in the share this week:

- 1 bag basil (approx. ¼ lb. or 1.5 packed cups)
- 2-3 cloves garlic, peeled
- ¼ - ½ tsp sea salt
- 3 tbsls nuts (pine nuts are traditional, but we often use walnuts)
- 3 tbsls Parmesan cheese, grated
- 4 tbsls olive oil

Place basil leaves in food processor, pulse until chopped. Add remaining ingredients (if you want you can save out the olive oil until last and add it using the attachment that lets you add liquids drop by drop) and process to a smooth paste. Pesto lasts several days in the fridge, if sealed. It also freezes excellently. Serve mixed into pasta or on pizza instead of tomato sauce. It's also good with meat or fish.

A final note, we've been getting a few boxes back with torn flaps. Please use care in opening and breaking down the wax boxes. They should last through the whole season without tearing. If the tabs tear when you're opening them it means you're doing it incorrectly. It's tempting to try to pull on the tabs where they slide into the corresponding slots, but this will tear or badly bend them. Instead, notice the perforated seams that run across the whole flap and slide the flap back so that this seam bends and the tabs then pull out of their slots. If you're unsure how to do this ask me (at the farm), or one of the workers at the Farmhouse. Thanks.

Have a good week!