



# Notes From the Pea Patch

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## Farmer's Notebook

Every October I think to myself, "The season is almost over, things are going to be easy from here on out." And every year I'm disappointed. There is still quite a bit to do on the farm when the leaves start falling and the first frosts dust the ground white.

First and foremost is preparing for winter shares. There are hundreds of feet of carrots, celeriac, cabbage, radishes, and other storage vegetables to wash, pack, and store in the cooler. There is spinach and lettuce to plant, water, and weed in the high tunnel and this year, in a movable low tunnel set up in the back field. And there are onions (though not this year) and garlic drying in the barn to clean and store away.

Speaking of garlic, now is the time to plant next year's crop. After the summer crop has been harvested, dried, and cleaned, we separate the less than perfect bulbs into individual cloves, readying them for planting - over 1,200 each of softneck and hardneck. We plant these now, sometime in the first few weeks of October, and they set roots and send up shoots just before the ground freezes.

And that brings us to another fall task, mulching. Many perennial crops need a covering to keep them from heaving during the winter months. Crops include garlic, strawberries, lavender, oregano and thyme, and other perennial flowers and herbs. One misunderstood aspect to mulching is the fact that we are trying to keep the ground cold (frozen in fact) and NOT warm. It is the freezing and thawing that kills the plants.

Along with these seasonal tasks are the never ending jobs like weeding, mowing, collecting & washing eggs, harvesting for shares, etc. So while the days grow short and the plants go into winter slumber, the work on the farms goes on.

~ Eric

## This Week's Harvest

*our best guess for what will be in this week's share boxes - subject to change at harvest time:*



**butternut squash** - our third variety of winter squash and our hands-down favorite. It needs no better treatment than to be baked and mashed with butter, salt and pepper. Also makes delicious soup. Stores well in a cool, dry place with good air circulation.

**collards** - closely related to kale, collards are a nutritious green high in Vitamin C, fiber and many nutrients, with potent anti-cancer, anti-bacterial & anti-viral activities. Traditionally cooked with salt pork onions, plenty of salt, and a little vinegar; we like them sauteed with garlic, crushed red pepper & salt. Refrigerate in a plastic bag. If you can't use your collards quickly enough, blanch them and freeze for winter use.



**watermelon radish** - a new crop for us this year. An heirloom variety, these large globular roots have a dusky green outer layer with bright magenta interior. The flesh is crisp with mild flavor. These large radishes can be used raw or cooked - try them roasted with olive oil, sea salt & some local chevre. Store in fridge.

**also... broccoli (rotating) ~ carrots ~ garlic ~ lettuce ~ sweet peppers**

**No Fruit Shares** this week. One more delivery of late season apples to come.

**COMING ATTRACTIONS**  
red cabbage ~ leeks ~ apples



## Recipe of the Week: Sweet Pickled Watermelon Radish & Onion Salad

Since tomorrow will be our first watermelon radish harvest, I haven't had a chance to experiment with them yet, but this recipe from [WinterRidgeFoods.com](http://WinterRidgeFoods.com) looks like a good place to start.

- 1 large Watermelon radish
- 1 small white onion
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- splash of rice wine vinegar (optional)

Slice radish and onion into thin rounds. Place slices in a large mixing bowl.

Whisk together remaining ingredients. Toss with radish & onion. Refrigerate for several hours (ideally overnight) to chill and meld flavors.



Photo credit: [winterridgefoods.com](http://winterridgefoods.com)

### Stew Hens Available

Stew hens are 18-24 month old laying hens that have completed their productive egg-laying period on the farm. They have had a good life here and it's time for them to move on to make room for younger layers. They are suitable only for slow cooking in liquid, which breaks down their tissues to yield tender shredded meat and rich, flavorful broth.

Stew hens are available only once per season. Order yours now for delivery the week of October 23.

**\$8.00/bird ~ 2/\$15.00**

We'll include cooking instructions with your delivery.

## Another recipe: Collards with Potatoes

If you are ever unsure of something to make with vegetables, look for a recipe from Deborah Madison. This one is from her [Local Flavors](#) cookbook.

- 2 bunches collards, kale, or combination
- salt & pepper
- 3 medium potatoes, scrubbed and coarsely chopped into bite-sized pieces (skins on)
- 3-4 strips bacon, diced (optional)
- 2 tbs peanut or olive oil
- ½ onion, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- pinch red pepper flakes, or 1 small hot red pepper minced
- hot pepper sauce and/or vinegar to pass

Strip leaves from stems of greens and wash well. In large pot, bring several quarts of water to a boil. Add salt and greens to water. Simmer for 10 minutes. Scoop into bowl, leaving water clinging to leaves and reserving cooking water. Coarsely chop leaves.

Add potatoes to same cooking water and simmer until tender, about 8-10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook bacon until browned. Drain on paper towels. Discard grease and wipe out pan.

Return pan to heat, add oil, then onion. Cook over medium heat about 5 minutes. Add chopped greens along with garlic and hot pepper. Scoop a little potato water into pan to keep everything moist while cooking – add more liquid as needed during cooking.

When potatoes are done, add to the greens. Add bacon, toss, then season to taste and salt and pepper. If you don't mind a messy appearance, mash the potatoes into the greens, otherwise leave intact. Serve with hot pepper sauce or vinegar for seasoning.