

PECONIC LAND TRUST



Quail Hill Farm

2007 Farm Handbook

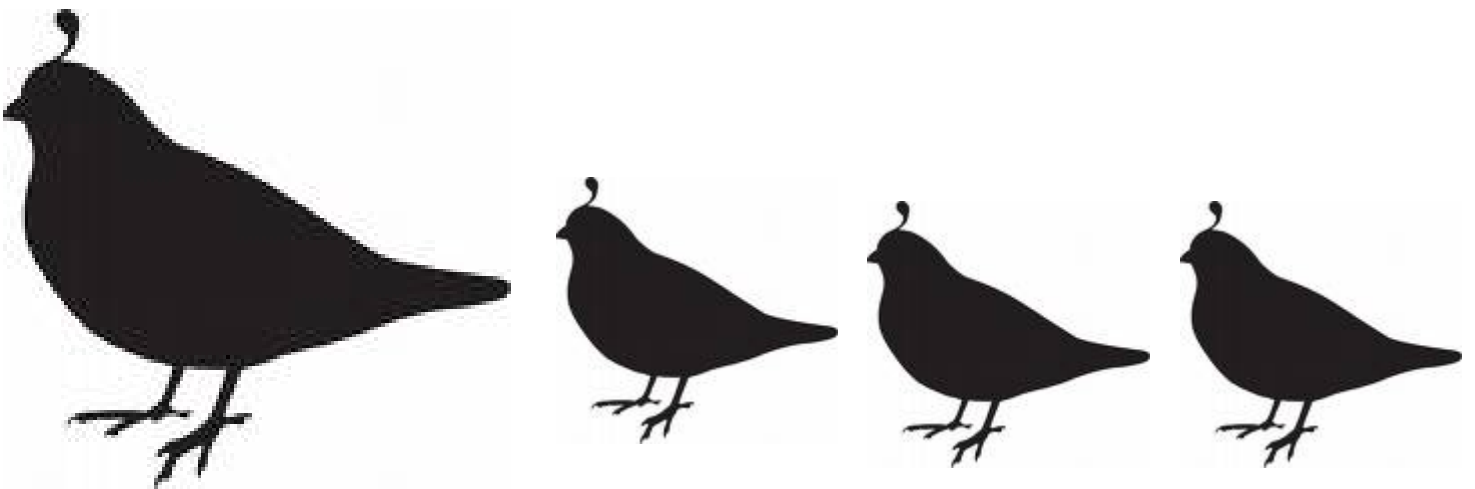


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Quail Hill Farm: A Brief History

In 1986 two individuals introduced an innovative style of farming to this country: Community Supported Agriculture. A resourceful teacher by the name of Robyn Van En, influenced by Jan Vandertuin, from Switzerland, put the idea into practice in her fields bordering Jug End Road in the village of Egremont, Massachusetts. In the same year Trauger Groh helped to form Temple/Wilton Community Farm in southern New Hampshire. Word of this resurgent community effort reached fruit grower Hugh Williams who joined with a group of ten or so families to found Full Circle Farm in 1988 at the orchard on Butter Lane, Bridgehampton. Full Circle Farm (later to become Quail Hill Farm), born in the same year as CSA of the Hudson-Mohawk, and formed by a group of families anxious to get their hands in the soil and to find a reliable source for organic produce, shares the distinction of being the first CSA in New York State.

In 1989 Full Circle found a new farmer, Bob Willet (a landscape gardener), new fields, behind St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Amagansett, and a new name: Second Circle Farm. After one growing season at this location—with a membership of about twenty five families--and faced with the need to find a more secure land base, Bob Willet approached John Halsey of the Peconic Land Trust (whose ancestor made his home near the tip of the fish shaped island circa 1640). PLT, a conservation organization, was founded by John and others in 1983. The timing for a marriage was perfect. Deborah Ann Light, an Amagansett landowner and a lover of land, was at that moment in the process of donating twenty acres of field and woodland to the PLT. When presented with the concept, John Halsey was very receptive to the introduction of a CSA farm on preserved land, land that consists of prime agricultural soils. The PLT had inherited land and responsibility, so that a stewardship presence and plan was imperative.

In 1990, now renewed as a project of the PLT and renamed Promised Land Farm, the CSA, with Bob Willet as head farmer and seventy five member families, completed the first season of farming on four acres of fields adjacent to Side Hill Lane and Deep Lane, Amagansett (using a BCS hand-push rototiller). In the autumn of 1991 Scott Chaskey took over as the head farmer of the community farm and later assumed the role of Stewardship Coordinator for the PLT. (Note: Scott C., resettled in Sag Harbor after ten years in England, was introduced to the concept of CSA when he attended a farm member meeting in early winter, 1989, at the invitation of his father-in-law, Bill King).

In 1992, renamed once again as Quail Hill Farm (a place name), the CSA continued to expand in acreage and membership; the mission and practice of the community farm evolved through educational and apprenticeship programs, and through careful stewardship of the land.

Quail Hill Farm first became a certified organic farm through NOFA-NY in 1994. The farm received a SARE grant (through the USDA) to pursue a "Community Supported Composting" project, with Will Brinton as consultant, through two growing seasons in the mid 1990's. The Heckscher Foundation generously awarded Quail Hill

with five grants over a series of years to pursue educational programs with children— both with the Bridgehampton Childcare Center and The Child Development Center of the Hamptons. A grant from the Baker Foundation in 2000 enabled the PLT to accept the donation of an Amagansett house which would serve for much needed apprentice housing. (The Hand Lane house was cut in two and moved three miles to a PLT preserve on Springs Fireplace Road!).

Beginning in 1998, and continuing for 4 years, Scott C. taught a course in Agroecology to students from Friends World College, then housed at LIU, Southampton. The students immersed themselves in the work of the community farm, and in the literature supporting it, and received college credit for this course of study.

Following her original gift of twenty acres of land Deborah Light had appointed PLT to manage the rest of her Amagansett land holdings. In 1995 she donated the entirety of her remaining two hundred acres to PLT (the whole of her gift to equal 220 acres+/-). By the year 2006, and through the generosity of a number of local landowners (the DeCuevas family being instrumental), the PLT had protected over six hundred and fifty acres of farmland and woodland, contiguous with the original twenty acres, in north Amagansett. Also in 2006 Suffolk County purchased the development rights on two hundred acres of the “Deborah Ann Light Preserve,” thus protecting this land in perpetuity.

Reporting here in 2007, at the beginning of the 18th growing season at Quail Hill, now cultivating about thirty acres of land, our CSA has grown to serve over two hundred families through a Summer Share and Winter Share. We also grow food for a local school, for food pantries, local restaurants, and for a farmer’s market; we maintain a garden at Nick& Toni’s restaurant, and we mow fields or seed cover crops for local landowners. Quail Hill farm members continue to visit the farm two days a week to renew their conversation with the community of soil, seeds, plants and animals— a conversation that conserves a harmony with land and serves to prepare the seedbed for change.

“A vision without a task is but a dream, a task without vision is drudgery, a vision with a task is the hope of the world.”

(From an inscription on a church in Sussex, England, 1730, and quoted by Robyn Van En in her “Basic Formula to Create CSA”)

REASONS TO SUPPORT QUAIL HILL FARM CSA

- In the conventional food system food travels 1,500 miles or more on average from farm to table. At Quail Hill it travels directly from the fields to your fork!
- Organic vegetables at our farm have a rich, full flavor and are loaded with vitamins, minerals and nutrients. Our sustainable farming system nourishes the environment in which the vegetables grow, varieties are selected for flavor, and YOU pick your vegetables at the peak of freshness!
- Children are exposed to four times as many cancer-causing pesticides in their food as adults. Organic produce contains NO carcinogenic pesticides.
- Only 1 child in 10 ages 6 to 11 eat the recommended 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Surveys of CSA members reveal that in becoming CSA members, households significantly increased their fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Unfortunately very few people these days spend time active, out of doors. Coming to the farm, harvesting your own vegetables, and interacting with others is a great way to unwind while still being active.
- There are 5,000 varieties of potatoes known worldwide, of which Andean farmers alone cultivate more than 3,000 varieties. In contrast, only four varieties of potatoes account for 75 percent of the crop grown in the United States. Quail Hill Farm grows over 20 varieties of potatoes and a total of over 250 varieties of mixed vegetables! At Quail Hill you have the opportunity to enjoy and discover more vegetable varieties than you might otherwise buy, or even *find* at your grocer.
- Only one quarter of all Americans know their next-door neighbors. CSA farms re-create and build community by bringing people together, creating a focal point for education and community building. Potlucks, tomato tastings, farm breakfasts, dinners in the field, and apple orchard educational events are all opportunities to meet your like-minded, conscientious neighbors!
- Conventional farmers receive less than 9 cents of your consumer food dollar on average. 75 percent of the average food price is in transportation, processing, storage, packaging and marketing. CSA share holders agree to pay something nearer to the true cost of the food and the farm receives the full consumer dollar, helping to keep sustainable agriculture viable in YOUR community.
- Organic farming creates no chemical runoff into waterways and soil, and also contributes to a healthy ecosystem by sheltering wildlife, filtering impurities from our air and water, and increasing soil fertility rather than depleting it. Supporting your local organic farm brings all these benefits to YOUR neighborhood, protecting your own water, air, and soil!
- The average U.S. citizen spends less than 12 percent of his or her disposable income on food. A CSA membership is both a great value and a great way to keep food dollars in the community, thus supporting YOUR local economy.
- The joy of eggs and our lovely CHICKENS!!!!

WHAT IS CSA?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a mutually beneficial partnership between farmers and community members. Typically an individual or a family, known as shareholders or members, agrees to pay the farm a seasonal membership fee (Summer or Winter share). This covers the cost of a “share” of the farm’s anticipated harvest in advance at an agreed upon price. The share price provides the farm with enough money in anticipation of the growing season to meet the farm’s expenditures for seed, equipment and tools, fuel, building of soil fertility, and to pay a living wage to farmers. In return, the members who come to the farm on scheduled “harvest days” throughout the season harvest vegetables and fruits planted and cultivated by the farmer.

Members receive only produce that is grown on the farm and in season, and nearly 100% of CSA’s use organic practices. If the farm has a crop failure, or if heavy rains or a cold spring delay the onset of planting, members may not receive a particular crop, or may find they are eating cool weather crops longer than usual. When the farm has an abundant harvest, members reap their share of the bounty. As a result, farmers and members share both the risks and benefits of farming, as they also share in the stewardship of local soil. CSA is more than the expectation of money for goods, it is *not* a supermarket. The investment yields more than a season’s worth of vegetables; the true value of the harvest is to be found in community.

WHAT IS ORGANIC?

Organic agriculture is an approach to farming that seeks to maintain and improve the productivity of the land by encouraging and enhancing natural biological processes.

The foundation for healthy plants and animals is healthy soil. Great attention is given to nurturing the soil through the use of composts, cover crops, rock minerals and natural fertilizers. Plant diseases and pests are controlled through the use of crop rotations, resistant varieties, cultivation, biological pest controls and botanical controls. Animal health is maintained with wholesome food, adequate shelter, access to the outdoors, and preventative health techniques.

The use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides are prohibited in certified organic production. This prohibition reduces the risks and problems of worker exposure, water pollution, and wildlife poisonings from harmful, manmade chemicals. Hormones, antibiotics, and pesticide residues in food are eliminated or drastically reduced in organic systems. Genetically modified organisms (GMO’s) are also prohibited; there is a significant lack of information concerning GMO’s to make this a safe choice for our food source at this time.

Historically those who practice or support organic agriculture do so out of a respect for natural systems as well as a recognition of the interdependence of plants, animals and people. Alternative language is often used in place of the word “organic.” Consumers (citizens) may be confused by the meaning of sustainable agriculture, eco-farming, or natural farming. If in doubt the wisest course is to question the farmer who grows the food.

Quail Hill Farm subscribes to the Farmer's Pledge, a voluntary program created by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York. We feel that this pledge goes beyond the USDA Certified Organic seal, and represents a more holistic view of farming. Please read The Farmer's Pledge on the following page, to have a clear understanding of our beliefs.

The Farmer's Pledge™

Knowing your farmer is the best assurance that the food you buy is responsibly grown; grown with methods that recognize the inherent implications of the web of life in all our individual actions. Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) believes that farmers should work in harmony with natural forces and leave the little piece of the world over which they have stewardship, in better condition than when they found it.

To further enable consumers to identify the farms they want to support with their food dollars, NOFA-NY has established a Farmer's Pledge, separate and distinct from USDA Certified Organic. Farmers and market gardeners who adhere to the following pledge have signed an affidavit which they display for customers and neighbors to view. This pledge is based on the integrity of the farmer/gardener. Those who sign this pledge agree that consumers may inspect, by appointment, their farm/garden to judge the truthfulness of this statement. NOFA-NY does not investigate or make any guarantee that the individual farmer is complying with the Farmer's Pledge.

This pledge arises from the expressed need of growers who have a fundamental disagreement with the usurpation and control of the word "organic" by the USDA, and those farmers who want to pledge to an additional philosophical statement about their growing practices.

WE PLEDGE THAT IN OUR FARMING, PROCESSING, AND MARKETING WE WILL:

- Serve the health of soil, people and nature by rejecting the use of synthetic insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fertilizers;
- reject the use of GMOs, chemically treated seeds, synthetic toxic materials, irradiation, and sewage sludge in our farming, and all synthetic substances in post harvest handling;
- treat livestock humanely by providing pasture for ruminants, access to outdoors and fresh air for all livestock, banning cruel alterations, and using no hormones, GMOs or antibiotics in feed;
- support agricultural markets and infrastructures that enable small farms to thrive;
- maintain and build healthy soils by farming practices that include rotating crops annually, using compost, cover crops, green manures, and reducing tillage;
- conserve natural resources by reducing erosion and pollution of air, soil and water through responsible farming practices;
- maximize the nutritional value of food and feed by practicing careful post harvest handling;
- practice minimal processing for all food products to preserve the natural nutritional value of food: NO use of irradiation, ultra-pasteurization, excessive heat, synthetic preservatives, or GMO processing agents or additives and include all ingredients on labels;
- reduce the ecological footprint of farms and homes by limiting energy use and converting to renewable sources of energy;
- reduce food miles by selling produce locally and regionally;
- create beneficial habitat for wildlife and encourage biodiversity;
- help preserve farmland and farming know-how;
- ensure food safety by using potable water for washing crops;
- handle raw manure and soil amendments with care;
- use ethical business practices;
- pay a living wage to all farm workers and acknowledge their freedom of association and their right to collective bargaining;
- treat family members and farm workers with respect, and ensure their safety on the farm;
- work in cooperation with other farmers and with the neighboring community to create a more sustainable way of life;
- encourage the distribution of unsold but edible food to people who need it;
- sustain the land in healthy condition for future generations.

HARVESTING AT QUAIL HILL

Summer Share Harvest Days:

Tuesdays & Saturdays
Hours: 8am to 5:30pm

Winter Share Harvest Days:

Every Other Week on Friday or Saturday
Hours: 9am to 5pm
Greenhouses 1 day per week, any time

Harvesting Supplies:

For easy harvesting, bring a knife or a pair of scissors, a basket and/ or bags. Yogurt containers are great for flowers, herbs, and other produce that must be put in water immediately, containers with lids are perfect for items that may roll about, and berry boxes are sturdy and strong for delicate produce such as raspberries and cherry tomatoes. A water hose is available at the farm stand to refresh plants before their trip home.

What's Ready to Harvest?

As soon as you arrive at the farm, visit the farm stand. There you will find a chalkboard listing crops ready for harvest and their location, upcoming events, and other exciting items of availability such as the arrival of Ronnybrook dairy products, availability of eggs, and Quail Hill honey. A farm map will be available at the stand, and regularly recipes, information bulletins, and the Quail Hill newsletter, may be found there as well.

Harvesting Methods

As you walk through the fields, wooden stakes with flagging tape will indicate a bed ready for harvest. A sign may be posted, identifying the crop and how to harvest it. A share limit will generally be posted; when no limit is posted, harvest enough for your family (within reason, and not for a dinner party...) to feed your family for 1 week. For instance a family share for potatoes may be 5 lbs. per week, green beans about ½ lb. per harvest day, and Swiss chard a bunch per harvest day. It is important to respect the share limits so that there is enough available for all community members. Please, do NOT harvest in beds that are roped off or have no signage, even if it had been available a few days prior; sometimes a crop may need time to re-grow so it will last throughout the season. Please follow the pathways between the growing beds, walking where the tractor tires have passed.

If the Harvesting Instructions Say:

- *Pick outside leaves.* Take a few leaves from each plant, particularly larger plants. Do not take many leaves from any one plant. You may want to walk to the far end of a bed where less has been harvested.
- *Pull whole plant.* When a sign says pull the entire plant, (as with carrots, beets, bok choy, radishes, etc.), try to move down a row without skipping from section to section. If plants appear too small for harvest then it is advisable to leave them to grow for a harvest in the future.
- *Cut.* Please use a knife or scissors when cutting is indicated on a sign. It is much cleaner and less damaging to a plant, and will allow the plant to continue to flourish for a longer season.
- *Digging with a spading fork.* Sometimes spading forks will be provided for ease of harvesting certain crops such as carrots, scallions, and potatoes. Please use these when provided to loosen the soil around the crops; it will result in a cleaner harvest and less damaged produce. Always leave the forks standing upright, for safety, and so others may locate them.

Seasonal Guide

Vegetables/Fruits	Summer Share						Winter		
Share									

	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Asparagus	■								
Beans		■	■	■	■				
Brussels Sprouts					■	■	■		
Broccoli				■	■	■			
Broccoli Rabe	■			■	■	■			
Burdock						■	■	■	
Cabbage		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Carrots		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cauliflower			■	■	■	■			
Celery			■	■	■				
Celeriac							■	■	■
Cucumbers		■	■	■	■				
Eggplant			■	■	■				
Garlic		■	■	■	■	■	■		
Greens	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Herbs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Jerusalem Artichoke					■	■	■		
Kale & Collards		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Kohlrabi				■	■	■			
Leeks					■	■	■		
Lettuce	■	■		■	■		■	■	■
Melons			■	■	■				
Okra		■	■	■					
Onions & Scallions		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Parsnips						■	■	■	■
Peas	■	■							
Peppers			■	■	■				
Potatoes		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Pumpkins					■	■	■		
Radish & Daikon	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Rhubarb	■	■							
Rutabaga							■	■	■
Soybeans			■	■	■				
Spinach	■	■							
Sweet Potatoes					■	■	■	■	■
Swiss Chard		■	■	■	■	■	■		
Tomatoes & Tomatillos			■	■	■				
Turnips	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Winter Squash				■	■	■	■	■	■
Zucchini			■	■	■				
Apples				■	■	■			
Berries		■		■	■	■			
Eggs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Flowers	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Honey		■	■	■	■	■			

VEGETABLE GUIDE

Asparagus

Storage Tips



- Wrap stalks in a damp cloth and store in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. An alternate is to trim the stems, bundle with a rubber band, and stand upright in container with 1-2 inches of water; cover with a plastic bag.
- Refrigerate immediately and use as soon as possible. Asparagus' sugars will turn rapidly to starches, reducing flavor quickly. Use in 2-3 days.

Culinary Tips

- Wash under cool running water. Snap off or trim with a knife the bottom woodiest part of the spear.
- Cut a crosshatch into the base before cooking, as this end tends to be firmer than tips.
- Asparagus can be eaten raw, steamed, boiled, grilled, roasted, and added to salads.

How Much Do I Have?

- 8-10 spears= 1/2lb = 1 ½ C trimmed= ¾ C cooked

Beans

Harvesting Tips



- Choose bright colored pods (greens, yellows, and purples!) that are flexible but feel crisp.
- Be very careful to snap off only the bean, not breaking the stems, or yanking up the whole plant. The plant will continue to produce flowers and fruit if the beans are picked continually and carefully.

Storage Tips

- Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- Best if eaten within 1 week.

Culinary Tips

- Wash beans just before preparation.
- Break off the top of the bean, at the stem-end; there is no need to remove the fine point at the tip. Beans retain more nutrients and color when cooked uncut, and cooked briefly.
- When cooking beans take off the pot lid for a brighter color; for more vitamins leave the lid on.
- Beans are delicious eaten raw, blanched, steamed, or tossed in a stir-fry.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 3C trimmed, raw= 2 ½ C cooked

Beets

Harvesting Tips



- Beets can be harvested when they reach about 1 ½" in diameter.
- Gently pull straight up when you see the "shoulders" peeking from the ground.

Beets Cont'd

Storage Tips

- Beet greens are best used fresh, but may be refrigerated unwashed in a plastic bag, eaten within 3-4 days.
- For beet roots, cut off leaves and stems 1" above the root. Store unwashed in the crisper drawer; will store for several weeks.

Culinary Tips

- Young beet greens can be tossed raw into a mixed green salad, older greens can be eaten steamed or sautéed. Use in any dish calling for a mild green, such as spinach or chard.
- No need to peel the root, only scrub clean; trace minerals lie just below the surface of the skin.
- Beets can be grated and eaten raw, steamed, boiled, or baked. Baking enhances their natural sweetness.

How Much Do I Have?

- 10 medium= 1lb= 2C sliced or diced, cooked

Berries

Harvesting Tips



- Remove gently from the bramble and place into a sturdy, shallow container. As the fruit is very fragile it is best not to over fill a container.

Storage Tips

- Use quickly, they will not keep well, and may get moldy; use within 1-2 days.
- Store in a sturdy container, unwashed, in the refrigerator.

Culinary Tips

- Berries are wonderful eaten fresh, in muffins, in pancakes, as jams, in fruit salads, pies, sauces...

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 3 1/2C OR 1 pint= 2-3C

Bok Choi

Harvesting Tips



- Make a clean cut at the base of the head, using a sharp knife, or pull up the whole plant and cut off the root, leaving it in the field.

Storage Tips

- Wrap the head in a damp towel or put in a plastic bag, store in the crisper drawer.
- Stores for up to 1 week. Leaves will lose integrity and wilt if allowed to dry out.

Culinary Tips

- Slice bok choy finely and use as a base for a raw vegetable salad or slaw.
- In a stir-fry, add first the stems and then the greens of bok choy at the tail end, after the denser vegetables like carrots or celery have softened.

Broccoli

Harvesting Tips



- Cut the central head with 5-6" of stem after the head is fully developed and before the individual flowers begin to open.
- Once the central head has been harvested, smaller shoots will continue to grow, and can be harvested. The more these are harvested, the more the plant will resprout.

Storage Tips

- Store, unwashed in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Broccoli tastes best when storage is brief.
- For long-term storage, broccoli freezes well. Blanch for 3-4 minutes, rinse in icy cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, let dry, and place in an airtight container such as a freezer bag.

Culinary Tips

- Soak head upside down in cold, salted water to remove any hidden pests.
- Remove lowest part of the stem if woody or tough.
- Cut the head into florets before cooking.
- Broccoli can be eaten raw, steamed, blanched, roasted, or sautéed. Remember the stems are delicious too!

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 2C florets or 1 bunch= 3C chopped, cooked

Broccoli Rabe

Harvesting Tips



- Harvest, with a sharp knife or scissor, young stems, leaves, and small flower heads.
- Be gentle, plants will continue to produce if handled properly.

Storage Tips

- Wrap unwashed greens in a damp towel. Place in a plastic bag, in the refrigerator.
- Change the towel occasionally and keep it damp. Greens will hold their delicate flavor for up to week.

Culinary Tips

- Wash carefully.
- Use the whole vegetable! 2-3" pieces take about 3 minutes to blanch or steam. Italians traditionally sautéed the rabe with garlic and anchovies, in Asian cooking it is prepared with sesame oil and hot pepper flakes.

Brussels Sprouts

Harvesting Tips



- The small sprouts or buds may be picked or cut off the stem when they are firm, about 1" in size. The lower sprouts mature first.

Brussels Sprouts Cont'd

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate unwashed sprouts in a plastic container. They will keep well for 1 week; afterwards they will begin to lose nutrients and color, and will increase in odor.
- For long-term storage, Brussels sprouts may be frozen. Blanch sprouts for 3-5 minutes, rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, let dry, and pack into airtight containers, such as freezer bags.

Culinary Tips

- Remove any damaged or tough outer leaves, trim the base, and cut a crosshatch in the core to allow for even cooking.
- Do NOT overcook! Boil, sauté, or steam sprouts approximately 5-8 minutes; they should retain their bright green color. Brussels sprouts are best when tender, not mushy.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 lb= 4C cooked

Cabbage

Harvesting Tips



- Cabbage can be harvested any time after the heads form.
- Using a very sharp knife or pruning shears, cut as close to the lower surface of the head as possible leaving the loose outer leaves intact.

Storage Tips

- Savoy and Chinese cabbage will keep for up to 2 weeks in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator, unwashed. Do not remove outer leaves before storing.
- Solid core cabbage can keep as mentioned above, for 3 weeks to 2 months. In a root cellar at high humidity and 32F cabbage can last for 4-5 months.

Culinary Tips

- Remove wilted outer leaves, quarter the head, remove core if necessary, and cut into preferred size slices.
- Cabbage may be eaten raw, thinly sliced in salads and slaws.
- Cabbage may be cut into thicker slices for steaming, 5-6 minutes or left in whole wedges and steamed for 10 minutes.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 medium head= 1 ¼ to 1 ½ lbs or 1lb= 3 ½ to 4 ½ C shredded

Carrots

Harvesting Tips



- Carrots can be pulled when the roots are ½” in diameter.
- Use a spading fork to loosen the soil and pull the carrots gently from the earth.
- Carrots are sweetest after the first frosts, and can be “stored” in the ground throughout winter, as long as the ground is not too frozen to dig them up!

Carrots Cont'd

Storage Tips

- Cut or twist off tops and place unwashed in the crisper drawer for up to 2-4 weeks.
- For long term storage carrots can also be frozen. Cut carrots into 2" rounds, blanch for 3 minutes, rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, let dry, and pack into an airtight containers such as freezer bags.
- At Quail Hill Farm we store our carrots for 4 months in the root cellar; they are topped immediately after being dug.

Culinary Tips

- Scrub carrots with a vegetable brush under running water to remove dirt.
- Do not peel unless removing damaged areas; carotene and trace minerals are close to the skin's surface.
- Raw carrots are sweet and delicious; whole, grated, julienne, or juiced.
- Lightly cooked carrots are very sweet and actually *gain* nutrients when cooked. Try them boiled, blanched, broiled, roasted, stir-fried, or puree in soups.

How Much Do I Have?

- 5-7 medium= 12-14 small= 1lb= 2 ½ C shredded or sliced= 2 ½ C cooked

Cauliflower

Harvesting Tips



- Heads are mature when compact and firm, and the leaves have begun to open up to show the head.
- Harvest the head by cutting the main stem, leaving a few leaves to protect the head.
- Be gentle with the heads to avoid bruising and getting them dirty.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate cauliflower, unwashed in a plastic bag, or tightly wrapped in plastic.
- Cauliflower will keep well for 1 week, and will still be useable for up to 2 weeks, but may take on a strong odor or flavor.
- For long-term storage, cauliflower can be frozen. Blanch for 2-4 minutes, rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, let dry, and pack into airtight containers such as freezer bags. Cauliflower will not be firm when thawed and is best used in soups and stews.

Culinary Tips

- Soak head upside down, in cold salted water to remove any hidden pests.
- Remove tough outer leaves and cut away the thick bottom end. Rinse the cauliflower head, trim off any blemishes, and core the head for even cooking.
- The head may be left intact or cut into florets. All parts of the stalk and florets are edible.
- Cauliflower can be eaten raw, or blanched and served as crudité, steamed, stir-fried, or pureed in soups for a creamy base or thickener.
- Cooked cauliflower does not keep well in the refrigerator.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 medium head= 1 ¾ - 2 ¼ C or 1lb= 1 ½ C, cut up

Celeriac

Harvesting Tips



- These roots sit primarily above ground. They must be pulled from the earth, the top greens trimmed within 1” of the root. Any small hair roots may be trimmed away.

Storage Tips

- Unwashed celeriac can be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer, and will keep well for weeks.
- Celeriac may be stored in proper root cellar conditions for 6-8 months.

Culinary Tips

- Make a flat straight cut across at either end, removing the hairy roots and top. If the root is relatively smooth peel with a vegetable peeler. If not use a sharp knife to cut down the sides from top to bottom.
- Peeled celeriac will darken when exposed to air. If not cooking immediately, place in water or a water and vinegar/lemon juice solution to retard darkening.
- Celeriac may be eaten raw, boiled, mashed, or braised.

Chard

Harvesting Tips



- Snip ONLY the outermost leaves of the plant with scissors or a sharp knife. This not only allows inner leaves to reach maturity, but also stimulates new growth.

Storage Tips

- Chard is very perishable. Wrap unwashed chard in a damp cloth, or place in a plastic bag. Keep in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator.
- Chard is best eaten within 2-4 days.
- Chard freezes very well! Blanch chopped leaves for 3 minutes rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, squeeze lightly, and pack in a ball shape, store in airtight containers such as freezer bags.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 5-6C leaves raw= 1C cooked leaves

Cucumbers

Harvesting Tips



- Look for firm cucumbers that are crisp. Remove by gently twisting off the vine any fruits that are ripe.
- Best when harvested early in the morning to avoid bitterness.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate immediately! Store loose or in a loose plastic bag in the crisper drawer.
- A cucumber refrigerated after being cut or peeled will deteriorate rapidly! Use leftovers as soon as possible.

Cucumbers Cont'd

Culinary Tips

- No need to peel a cucumber from the farm. Simply wash to remove any garden grit. (With chemically grown or waxed cukes, it is best to peel.)
- Cucumbers are most often eaten raw. Try them diced or sliced in salads, on their own as a snack, or chopped into a cold yogurt and mint soup.
- Pickles!
- Cucumbers can be julienned and stir-fried or sautéed.

How Much Do I Have?

- 2 medium= 1lb= 2 ½ to 3C sliced or chopped

Eggplant

Harvesting Tips



- Harvest the fruit when they are 6-8" long and glossy. If they are very large and have become dull or brownish they are probably over-ripe and seedy.
- Use a knife or scissors, to cut the stem, do not twist or pull to break the stem, as you may damage the plant.
- Leave the calyx, which is the green "collar," attached to the fruit.

Storage Tips

- Eggplant do not keep well (optimal storage is 50F) so don't refrigerate unless the weather is hot. If refrigeration is necessary, store unwashed in the crisper drawer for 1 week.
- For long-term freezer storage, cut eggplant in cubes, steam for 3-4 minutes, and allow cooling completely; storing in airtight containers in the freezer.
- Dishes such as baba ghanouj and ratatouille also freeze well in airtight containers.

Culinary Tips

- Eggplant is always cooked, eliminating a toxic substance called solanin.
- Eggplant can be peeled but peeling is not essential. It depends on personal preference and the intended dish.
- To remove any acrid flavors and excess moisture, lightly salt slices or cubes of eggplant and allow them to sit in a colander for 10-15 minutes. Gently squeeze out any excess liquid. Eggplant will now soak up less oil and need less salt in preparation.
- Eggplant is surprisingly versatile! It can be baked, grilled, stuffed, fried, braised, steamed, sautéed, or pureed in dips.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1medium= 1lb= 4C diced= 1 ¾ C cubed, cooked

Fava Beans

Harvesting Tips



- Twist the pod from the plant when you can feel fully formed fava inside.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate unwashed beans in their pods; store in a perforated plastic bag.
- Best eaten within 1 week.

Culinary Tips

- To shell, the pod must be split, and the outer skin of the beans removed. To remove this skin when raw squeeze bean between thumb and forefinger and the bean will pop out or, after cooking run cold water over the beans and the skins will slip off.
- Some folks eat fava with the skins on. If this is your preference you can save a lot of prep time.
- Shelled beans can be eaten blanched, steamed, in soups and stews, sautéed, stir fried, in cold bean salad...
- **CAUTION:** Some persons of Mediterranean descent can experience allergic reactions after consuming favas.

Fennel

Harvesting Tips



- Harvest bulbs when full-size and firm.
- Cut at base with a sharp knife or scissors; or pull up the whole plant and cut off the roots.

Storage Tips

- The delicate leaves will go limp.
- Store fennel in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Culinary Tips

- Use feathery leaves as a fresh herb for seasoning. Try using it in place of dill.
- Wash fennel bulb, trimming off any damaged areas or woody parts of the stalk.
- Fennel can be eaten raw, sliced thinly in salads, baked, steamed, sautéed, or added to soups, pureed or chopped.
- Try substituting for celery in most any recipe.

Garlic

Storage Tips



- Garlic stores well in a cool, dark, dry, and well-ventilated place, preferably in a basket, for several months. Warm temperatures will encourage garlic to sprout.
- Do not refrigerate unless storing peeled cloves for a short time. Keep in an airtight container to avoid garlic odor from spreading to other foods.

Garlic Cont'd

- For very long term storage garlic can be minced and covered or blended with olive oil and placed in small airtight containers and frozen. After removing from the freezer keep in the refrigerator.

Culinary Tips

- Garlic scapes (green curlicues), harvested from the top of the garlic plant in the Spring, may be chopped or diced raw into green salads or pasta salads, sautéed in place of bulb garlic, eaten raw, or used anywhere garlic flavor is desired.
- To peel garlic cloves loosen the skin by placing the clove on its side on a hard surface. Press the clove with the side of the knife applying pressure with your fist.
- Press, mince, slice or use cloves whole. A sharp knife yields best results when chopping. The more pulverized the garlic is, the more pungent the flavor.
- To mellow garlic's strong flavor, opt for longer cooking. To enjoy its more pungent flavors and increased medicinal benefit, use it raw or with minimal cooking.
- Sauté garlic only until translucent as it will easily burn and release a bitter unpleasant flavor.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 medium clove= 1 tsp minced

Greens

Harvesting Tips



- To eat raw, harvest leaves when they are young and tender. More mature leaves may be harvested and used as cooked greens.
- Be gentle with each plant and fresh leaves will regenerate to be cut again (“cut and come again...”)

Storage Tips

- Salad greens are best used within a few days. Wrap unwashed greens in a damp towel or place in a plastic bag with a damp towel in the crisper drawer.
- If greens are wilted from their trip home, they should be washed as soon as possible to crisp them up. Fill the sink or basin with enough room temperature, (not cold water,) to generously cover them. Let the greens sit for a few minutes, allowing any sand or grit to sift to the bottom. Lift them out and spin dry. Use a salad spinner, or place greens in an onion sack or pillowcase, step outside and spin them around until all the water stops spraying out. Once dry, wrap the greens in dry paper towels and place in the refrigerator in a sealed plastic bag.

Culinary Tips

- Young tender leaves make delicious salads.
- Raw greens may be served under cooked vegetables or meats, the juices wilting them slightly.
- More mature leaves may be cooked. Boil for 2-4 minutes, or steam for 5-8 minutes. Watch for the color to brighten; this signals cooking is complete or nearly complete. Colors will darken and fade in vibrancy when overcooked.
- Greens will generally cook down to ¼ to 1/8 of their original volume!

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 4-6C leaves= 1 ½ C cooked

Kale

Harvesting Tips



- On smaller plants, harvest only the outer leaves. This not only ensures the growth of smaller, inner leaves, but also of a harvest that will last throughout the season. For more mature plants, pick the leaves at the bottom of the stalk, as the stalk will continue to produce greens.

- Select leaves that are crisp, broad, and dark colored.
- Cut with a knife or scissor.

Storage Tips

- Store unwashed leaves, wrapped in a damp towel, or in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator, for up to 1 week.
- For long-term storage, kale can be frozen. Wash, de-stem, and blanch leaves for 2 minutes. Rinse in cold water to stop cooking, drain, and pack into airtight containers such as freezer bags.

Culinary Tips

- Wash kale leaves well. Soil and grit love to hide on the undersides, and in all the crinkles and wrinkles.
- Remove stems from mature kale leaves by folding the leaf in half lengthwise and stripping or slicing away thick stems. Save these stems and midribs, cut them into bite-sized pieces and cook them for a longer time than the leaves.
- Baby or very tender young leaves may be cooked stem and all.
- Kale may be steamed, sautéed, chopped finely for a winter salad, or chopped coarsely and added to soups at the end of their cooking time.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 6C raw leaves= 1 ¼ C cooked leaves

Leeks

Harvesting Tips



- Select leeks with the dark green leaves that are crisp.
- Use a spading fork to loosen leeks from the earth. Pull straight up. Trim the roots, leaving a small amount.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate leeks unwashed and dry for up to two weeks.
- Wrap loosely in plastic to avoid aromas spreading to other foods.

Culinary Tips

- The broad flat leaves of leeks easily collect soil and grit during their growth. Remove any withered outer leaves, and cut off the green upper leaves to within 2 inches of the white section. Save these green tops for making vegetable stock. Cut the leek in half lengthwise and rinse thoroughly under running water to remove any trapped grit and soil between the layers. Remove the roots.
- Leeks may be eaten raw, finely chopped on salads or as a condiment, used whole they may be braised, baked or grilled. Use leeks as a substitute for onions, as a soup base, sautéed and added to other vegetables....

Leeks Cont'd

How Much Do I Have?

- 2 large or medium= 1lb= 2C chopped or sliced (white portion)

Onions

Harvesting Tips



- Onions are harvested and cured for you by your farmers!

Storage Tips

- Do not refrigerate onions. Store in a cool, dry place, (ideally 40-50F) and they will keep for months. Warmth or moisture will cause sprouting.
- Store cut onion in the refrigerator in an airtight container to avoid transference to other foods. Use as soon as possible.

Culinary Tips

- Onion is very versatile! Enjoy onions raw, steamed, boiled, sautéed, stir-fried, braised, baked, grilled, roasted...
- The longer an onion is cooked the milder it becomes. For strongest flavors and medicinal benefits use onion raw or lightly cooked.
- If onions have begun to sprout, they still may be used. Simply remove the center of the onion which contains the new growth, as it may cause indigestion.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 small= 1/3 -1/2 C chopped or 1 medium= 1/2 - 3/4 C chopped

Parsnips

Harvesting Tips



- Dig the roots with a shovel or spading fork.
- Parsnips develop their full sweetness after a frost... when the starch is transformed to sugar.
- Parsnips may be harvested late into Fall or early in Spring once the ground has thawed.

Storage Tips

- Trim off parsnip tops and refrigerate unwashed in a plastic bag, in the crisper drawer. Parsnips will keep for several weeks.
- Parsnips may be frozen. Blanch 1" chunks for 2-3 minutes, run under cold water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers such as freezer bags. Parsnip puree also freezes well.

Culinary Tips

- If parsnips are scrubbed well with a vegetable brush it's not necessary to peel them!
- Smaller parsnips are sweeter when cooked, whereas larger parsnips may be tougher because of a central core that may need to be cut out before cooking.
- Parsnips may be boiled, steamed, sautéed, grated and eaten raw, mashed, roasted, or added to soups and stews.
-

Parsnips Cont'd

- If parsnips have been boiled or steamed, the sweet-tasting cooking water can be saved for later use in soups and sauces.

How Much Do I Have?

- 4 medium= 1lb= 2C diced, cooked

Peas

Harvesting Tips



- Shucking/ Shelling peas are ready to be picked when the pea pods are swollen. Sugar Snap peas are at their best when the pods first start to fatten, but before becoming large. Snow peas are harvested before the peas have grown and the pods are quite flat.
- Use both hands to harvest edible pods. Hold plant stem with one hand and use the other hand to pull off pod. Be gentle!

Storage Tips

- Peas are at their absolute best immediately after harvest, as their sugars rapidly convert to starch, reducing flavor and sweetness.
- Pea pods can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for about 1 week, but storing peas does sacrifice some of their sweet flavor and crisp texture.
- Peas freeze well, but will lose their crunchy texture. Blanch all types of peas for 2 minutes (shell peas must be shelled first), rinse under cold water to stop the cooking process, drain well, and pack into airtight containers such as freezer bags.

Culinary Tips

- Shelling or Shucking peas should be shucked/ shelled and the peas can be used raw, in stews, soups, mixed vegetable sautés, stir fry, blanched or steamed.
- Some Snap peas need stringing. Snap off stem tip toward the flat side of pod and pull downward. Young, fresh, Snap peas are delicious raw, or pods may be cooked very briefly (2 min.) and added to salads, deep fried in tempura batter, steamed, or sautéed.
- Snow peas are a classic stir fry vegetable, may be sautéed alone or with other vegetables and/or meats, adding in during the last minutes of cooking, or added raw or slightly cooked to a variety of salads.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb.= 1C shelled

Peppers

Harvesting Tips



- Less damage is done to pepper plants if the fruit is cut instead of pulled off.
- Green bell varieties are harvested when fully grown and mature, usually 3-4" long, firm and green.
- All peppers turn color! Colored peppers are more mature peppers, and become much sweeter as their color develops.
- Hot peppers become hotter as they mature; the seeds and membranes being the hottest parts.

Peppers Cont'd

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate whole, unwashed, unblemished peppers for 1-2 weeks in the crisper drawer. Ripe red, yellow, orange, and purple peppers will not keep as long as the green ones.
- Peppers may be frozen. Wash and dry peppers. Cut into bite size pieces and place in an airtight container, such as a freezer bag. Peppers will soften when thawed, so take out only the amount you need and replace the rest in the freezer.
- Peppers also dry well. There are many methods; it is best to consult a home preservation book to see which is most suitable for you.

Culinary Tips

- For greatest nutrient retention bell peppers should be eaten raw.
- Add peppers to soups, stews, omelets, quiches, casseroles, salads, stir fries. Peppers are also fantastic roasted and stuffed.
- Always use care when handling hot peppers! For greatest safety wear rubber gloves during handling. DO NOT touch eyes, mouth, nose or other places. Remove seeds to remove some of the peppers' heat during cooking, or let them remain to give the full heat. Wash hands thoroughly when finished.

How Much Do I Have?

- Bell/Sweet- 1 small= 1/4C chopped, OR 1 medium= 1/2C chopped, OR 1 large= 1C chopped, OR 3-5 medium= 1lb= 3-4C chopped

Potatoes

Harvesting Tips



- Potatoes are harvested after the vines die back. Using a spading fork loosen the tubers, they are usually 6"+ below the surface. Then use your hands to pull them from the soil.
- New potatoes are dug before the vines die back.

Storage Tips

- Potatoes can be stored in a cool dark place for months. Do not refrigerate potatoes, because cold converts the starch to sugar. If the environment is too warm, potatoes will shrivel and sprout.
- New potatoes should be used within 1-2 weeks, they do not keep well.

Culinary Tips

- Scrub potatoes with a vegetable brush under running water to remove soil.
- Quail Hill Farm potatoes (or other organic potatoes) need not be peeled, as most nutrients lie in or near the potato skin. If potatoes are peeled it is best to place them in water to avoid discoloration.
- Trim off any green spots or eyes (where the toxin solanin concentrates), and any damaged areas.
- Potatoes can be boiled, fried, steamed, mashed, grilled, or baked.

Potatoes Cont'd

How Much Do I Have?

- New potatoes- 9-12 small= 1lb.
- Red Potatoes- 7-9 small= 5-6 med= 1lb
- White or Russet- 3 medium= 1lb= 2 ¼ C diced= 3C shredded= 1 ¾ C mashed

Radishes

Harvesting Tips



- Pull radishes when they are young, to avoid radishes getting overly hot and spongy.
- Daikon radish will get quite large and still be of very good quality.
- Fall/ Winter radishes mature more slowly and can be harvested at a larger size.

Storage Tips

- Remove tops and store in a perforated plastic bag or damp towel in the refrigerator; use greens as soon as possible.
- Radish roots can be stored for up to 2 weeks in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer.

Culinary Tips

- Radishes may need a good scrubbing to remove garden soil, but do not need to be peeled. Trim off any damaged areas.
- Radishes can be eaten raw, sliced or grated in salads, on sandwiches, as a snack, even as a garnish.
- Radishes may also be cooked; steam, add to hearty soups and stews, slice into a stir-fry.
- Daikons are good for cooking and can be substituted in any recipe calling for turnips. Always peel daikons. Young daikons can be eaten raw, but larger ones should be cooked.
- Toss radish greens into mixed vegetable soups or stir-fries. (They cook quickly.) If they are young and tender, toss into a green salad.

How Much Do I Have?

- 12 radishes= 1C sliced

Rutabaga

Harvesting Tips



- Select smooth, un-cracked roots. They are best harvested when they are medium sized, 3-5" in diameter.
- Cool weather may sweeten the taste.

Storage Tips

- Rutabaga will store adequately at room temperature for up to one week, or refrigerated in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer for up to 1 month.

Rutabaga Cont'd

Culinary Tips

- Scrub rutabaga vigorously with a vegetable brush to remove soil. For maximum nutrition there is no need to peel the rutabaga (unless you are preparing a commercially waxed rutabaga).
- Rutabaga can be grated raw into salads and slaws.
- Rutabaga can be steamed, mashed, baked, braised, grated and fried in fritters, fried as chips, even used in hearty desserts.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 medium= 2-3lbs= 5C cubed

Scallions

Harvesting Tips



- Scallions can be harvested anytime after they reach 6" tall. Select healthy bright green tops that look crisp.
- Gently pull or dig below the slender white portion.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate unwashed, in a plastic bag. They will keep for about 5+ days.

Culinary Tips

- Trim the base and green tips if necessary before serving.
- Scallions may be chopped and served raw in a vegetable or grain salad, or in a cooked dish. Wonderful flavor enhancer for egg dishes.
- Excellent in stir-fries because they cook quickly and stay green.

How Much Do I Have?

- 6-8= 1C sliced

Spinach

Harvesting Tips



- Select spinach that is deep green with crisp stems. Plants are mature enough for harvest when the leaves are large enough to form at least a 5 or 6-leaf rosette.
- The outer leaves may be cut at the soil surface leaving younger leaves to develop for later harvests.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate spinach, unwashed, in a damp towel or plastic bag for up to one week, however the best taste and texture comes when eaten within 4 days.
- For longer-term storage, spinach may be frozen. Blanch for 1-2 minutes, rinse in cold water, drain well, squeeze lightly, form into balls, and pack into airtight containers such as freezer bags.

Culinary Tips

- Rinse spinach leaves thoroughly in a cool water bath. Soil and grit tend to accumulate on the undersides of leaves so it may take several changes of water. Do not soak spinach, as it will cause it to lose its nutrients. Dry in a salad spinner or blot with dishtowels.

Spinach Cont'd

- Remove tough stems before eating or cooking spinach.
- Spinach can be eaten raw in salads, sandwiches, pasta, or substituted for basil in a pesto. Spinach can also be steamed, added to soups, stir-fries, sautés, crepes, quiche, lasagna, or any other baked dish.
- Spinach cooks quickly. Be careful not to overcook by watching for the bright green color. Remove from heat and cool.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 4C torn leaves= 1 ½ C cooked= ½ - ¾ C cooked, squeezed dry

Summer Squash & Zucchini

Harvesting Tips



- Summer squash and zucchini are harvested when immature, before the seeds ripen and the skin hardens. They grow on vine-like bushy plants.
- Carefully cut or remove squash from the vine, using both hands, so as not to damage the plants.

Storage Tips

- Squash dehydrates quickly. Refrigerate, unwashed, in a plastic bag or crisper drawer for up to one week.
- Damaged or bruised squash will deteriorate very quickly.
- Refrigerate cooked squash in a covered container; it is best eaten within 2-3 days.
- Cooked, pureed summer squash may be frozen for an addition to or as a base for winter soups. Freeze in an airtight container.

Culinary Tips

- Rinse or wipe down summer squash if needed; no need to peel!
- Summer squash can be eaten raw cut into sticks or rounds, or grated or thinly sliced directly into salads or slaws.
- Summer squash can be steamed, grilled, sautéed, broiled, added to summer soups and stews, blanched, added to stir-fries, casseroles, or even mashed.

How Much Do I Have?

- Summer Squash- 3 medium or 6 small= 1 lb= 1 2/3C cooked and mashed= 2C sliced, cooked
- Zucchini- 3 medium= 1lb= 1C sliced

Squash Blossoms

Harvesting Tips



- Look for male flowers; they are on a stem, not on the end of the squash.
- Select blossoms that have just opened or are about to blossom.
- To prolong freshness while harvesting, put them in a plastic bag or a quart size yogurt container with stems in about 2" of water.

Storage Tips

- Use blossoms the day they are harvested. If you are planning on stuffing the blossoms, it must be done within 1 hour of harvest, as blossoms will close up.

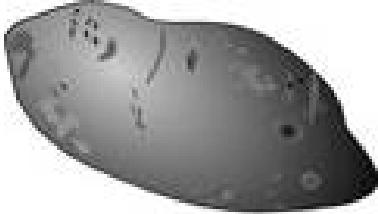
Squash Blossoms Cont'd

Culinary Tips

- Blossoms should not be washed, but should be shaken to release any bees or insects feasting inside.
- Blossoms may be stuffed and baked, lightly battered and fried, used to top pizzas or frittatas.

Sweet Potatoes

Harvesting Tips



- The main crop of sweet potatoes is harvested in early October
- Use a spading fork, carefully digging all around the base of the plant, removing soil to expose the fat tubers. Dig under or use your hands to pull out the sweet potatoes. Handle as little and as gently as possible to avoid bruising.

Storage Tips

- At the farm we prepare all sweet potatoes for long-term storage, as they must be “cured.” We place them in the greenhouses because they must experience over 80F temperature for at least two weeks. Then they are stored in bins in the farmhouse, where they will keep all winter, for you to enjoy throughout the coming months.
- Store sweet potatoes in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place for many weeks.
- Do not store in plastic or refrigerate. Temperatures below 50F will result in off flavors, and excess moisture will encourage sweet potatoes to rot or sprout prematurely.

Culinary Tips

- Sweet potatoes can be roasted, baked, fried, boiled, braised, grilled, even made into delicious pies!

How Much Do I Have?

- 1lb= 2C cubed or sliced= 1 ¾ -2C mashed

Tomatoes

Harvesting Tips



- Look for ripe tomatoes among the plant’s lower branches. Ripe tomatoes can usually be harvested by gently twisting them off their stem. For tomatoes wedged in next to other tomatoes by intersecting branches, use a scissor or a knife to free them.
- Remember tomatoes come in lots of colors, ranging from peach and gold to purple and black, striped and mottled to solid. There are also many variations in size and shape, from sweet currant tomatoes to giant ribbed tomatoes, some that are perfectly round and others which form a tear drop, even one which is the color of a peach and fuzzy!

Storage Tips

- Do NOT refrigerate! Cold temperatures destroy the tomato’s flavor.

Tomatoes Cont'd

- Perfectly ripe tomatoes should be eaten right away, and may hold for up to a week.
- Under-ripe tomatoes will continue to ripen, out of the sun, stored at 60-70F.
- Damaged and cut tomatoes will deteriorate rapidly; use quickly.
- Tomatoes can be frozen whole. Core tomatoes, place on a cookie sheet and freeze. When solid place in freezer bags and replace in freezer. Thawed tomatoes are appropriate for cooking or purees.
- Salsas, sauces, paste, and purees can be canned. Consult a trusted home preservation guide for detailed instructions.
- For long term storage plum tomatoes can be dried in a food dehydrator, using a very low temperature in the oven, or sun dried.

Culinary Tips

- Tomatoes are fantastic eaten raw, sliced on a salad, a sandwich, with fresh mozzarella and olive oil, added to guacamole, omelets...
- Tomatoes are very versatile; sauté, bake, broil, grill, stuff, add to shish kebab, and roast... Tomato chunks can be added to soups and stews, or tomatoes can be pureed as a soup base or stock, and of course made into amazing pasta sauces!
- Green, unripe, tomatoes can be breaded and fried for a late season treat.

How Much Do I Have?

- 1 medium= 1C chopped
- 2 large= 3 medium= 4 small= 1lb=1-1 ½ C peeled, seeded, chopped= ¾C cooked

Turnips

Harvesting Tips



- Look for “shoulders” peeking from the earth. Pull straight up.
- Early season turnips should be harvested when they are 2-3” in diameter to prevent them from becoming woody. Fall season turnips may be allowed to get larger.
- Hakurei turnips, an Asian white variety, are sweet and fruity, with a crisp, tender texture. These are faster growing than other turnip varieties and best-harvested young, at about 2” in diameter.

Storage Tips

- Refrigerate unwashed turnips in a plastic bag for 1-2 weeks.
- Refrigerate turnip greens separately, wrapped in a damp towel or plastic bag in the crisper drawer.

Culinary Tips

- Scrub turnips with a stiff-bristled vegetable brush. No need to peel- simply trim away damaged areas.
- Turnips may be used in soups or stews, boiled, steamed, braised, roasted, thinly sliced in stir fries, scalloped or mashed.
- Hakurei turnips are so sweet and delicate they can be enjoyed raw; grated onto salads or in slaws, sliced or cut into sticks and added to a veggie platter. These turnips are also fantastic cooked, but do not take as long to cook as our more traditional turnips.

Turnips Cont'd

- Turnip greens can be sautéed, blanched, or added to stir-fries.

How Much Do I Have?

- Turnip Greens- 1lb= 6-7C raw leaves= 1C cooked leaves
- Turnips- 3-4 medium= 1lb= 2 ½ -3C cooked or mashed

Winter Squash

Harvesting Tips



- Winter squash and spaghetti squash can be harvested when the rind is hard and the fruits have turned a dark color. Cut, do not pull or tug, squash from the vines, leaving 2” of stem.
- Winter squash are harvested and cured for optimal storage life, by your farmers!

Storage Tips

- Do not refrigerate winter squash. Winter squash will store at room temperature for about one month. Store for several months in a dry cool (50-55F) but not cold location.
- Do not pile squash on top of each other, instead, place squash in a single layer to avoid rotting. Bruised or damaged squash will deteriorate more quickly.

Culinary Tips

- With the exception of the “Delicata” squash, all winter squash, pumpkins, and spaghetti squash have inedible skins, peel or discard.
- Winter squash are delicious peeled, diced, and sautéed or steamed, pureed alone or with other root vegetables, added to hearty soups and stews, added to muffins, pancakes, or quick batters for extra sweetness and moisture...
- Winter squashes are easy to bake. Acorn squash is famous for being baked face up with melted butter and brown sugar or maple syrup.
- Butternut makes an excellent “pumpkin” pie.
- Spaghetti squash should be halved, skin pricked with a fork, and roasted, the flesh is done when it scoops out easily into spaghetti-like strings. Serve topped with tomato sauce, or with butter and shaved Parmesan.
- Seeds can be saved from pumpkins and squash to be roasted.

How Much Do I Have?

- Winter Squash- 1lb= 1C cooked and mashed
- Spaghetti Squash- 2lbs= 4C cooked strands
- Pumpkin- 1lb= 1C cooked, mashed= 4C peeled, cubed, OR
1 medium= 5lbs= 4 1/2C cooked, pureed

HERBS

Quail Hill Farm grows over 20 varieties of herbs, some common and others less familiar. Many of the perennial herbs are grown in the large herb circle near the Quail Hill sign, on Deep Lane, or in the herb crescent in the valley. Many annual herbs are planted in the fields amongst the vegetables on Hurricane Hill and in the Valley.

BASIL, an annual herb in our northern climate, adds delicate flavor and aroma to many cultural dishes of Greece, Italy, and the Near East. Basil is most commonly known for its role in pesto and tomato sauces. At Quail Hill we grow many varieties including Thai types, which add a fantastic anise-flavor to many Asian dishes!

BORAGE, with its downy blue-green leaves and delicately drooping clusters of blue flowers, is said to dispel sorrow and bring happiness, comfort, and courage. The flowers and leaves both have a cucumber-like flavor and bring color and flavor to salads, and make gorgeous edible decoration for desserts and other dishes. The young leaves can be chopped and eaten raw; older, larger leaves can be cooked and eaten like spinach, or lightly battered and fried as an appetizer.

The orange and yellow **CALENDULA** or **POT MARIGOLD** flowers are said to protect against intestinal trouble and bad temper. Fresh petals add vibrant color to salads, and dried they can be used as a substitute for saffron.

CHIVES, the mildest flavored member of the onion family, are a perennial herb containing iron and many vitamins. The slender, hollow, leaves are fantastic chopped and added to many dishes, or used simply as a delicate garnish. The globe-like purple flowers, which bloom in late spring are also edible; to serve, pull them apart into individual florets. Beautiful in mixed salads!

CILANTRO is a pungent herb with a unique flavor. It grows two types of leaves; the lower ones resemble flat-leaf parsley, and the upper ones are delicate and finely cut. Cilantro is used in a variety of ethnic cookery, particularly Mexican, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, and Indian. Tiny white flowers form seeds that have a sweet, lemony flavor, called **CORIANDER**, which are the core ingredient in the Indian curry tradition.

The purple-pink, daisy like **CONE FLOWER** or **ECHINACEA** is now well known for promoting general well being during cold and flu season. It is dried and made into capsules or made into tinctures.



COMFREY has large, hairy leaves at the base that become smaller and more delicate near the top of the plant. The flowers, which change from pink to blue as they open, bloom on graceful sprays during the summer. It's mainly used for minor cuts and skin preparations. When added to the compost pile, comfrey leaves help decomposition.

DILL is one of the oldest known herbs. Its aromatic leaves, seeds, and flat seed heads of tiny greenish-yellow flowers are used to season fish, pickles, cabbage, potatoes and baked goods. When steeped in wine, dill is said to have mild aphrodisiac qualities.

Anise-flavored **BRONZE FENNEL** has thick, glossy stems that grow 3 to 5 feet, with feathery leaves. This gorgeous herb makes up the height at the center of our herb circle. Its clusters of tiny yellow flowers turn into aromatic brown seeds, which are often added to sausage and baked goods. Leaves can be used with fish and in soups. It is said that a facial pack of bruised fennel leaves helps prevent wrinkles.

HORSERADISH grows in lush clumps of large, glossy green leaves. The young leaves may be added to salads, and the white, fleshy pungent root is well known for clearing sinuses. The root may be dug in autumn, with flavors enhanced by a frost; it is best grated and eaten raw with meat and fish, or added to sauces and dips. It can be grated and covered with vinegar in a glass jar, stored indefinitely in the refrigerator.

A semi-evergreen member of the mint family, **HYSSOP** has narrow, pointed dark green leaves and produces deep blue-violet spikes of edible flowers. Small amounts of the slightly bitter, mint-flavored leaves and flowers are good in salads or with fatty fish and meats. A tea of the leaves and flowers is said to aid a sore throat.

LEMON BALM, with its heart-shaped leaves, is a lemon-scented member of the mint family. Fresh leaves add a fantastic, unexpected flavor to fruit salads. The leaves when brewed make a lovely tea. Add a little chopped lemon balm to any dish that calls for lemon juice.

LOVAGE has a distinctive flavor- like pungent celery- and is an asset to soups, stews, or any other dish you would use celery in. Lovage looks much like large unblanched celery.

Several types of **MINT** may be found in the herb circle, including licorice and peppermint. Square stems and jagged leaves most easily identify mints. Mints add a cool refreshing flavor to ice cream, fruit, desserts, and drinks. Dried mint is added to many Middle Eastern dishes, and cooling yogurt drinks.



NASTURTIUM have big, round leaves and open-faced flowers. The flowers are found in all shades of yellow, orange, and red. Both the flowers and leaves have a peppery taste, which lend great character and beauty to salads.

OREGANO is a low growing perennial herb that has a spicy taste with a bite. It is stronger in flavor than **MARJORAM**, which is very similar in appearance. The leaves of these plants add a robust flavor to tomato sauces, potatoes, and eggs. Oregano is excellent at stimulating the appetite and facilitating digestion.

There are 2 varieties of culinary **PARSLEY**, the Italian flat-leafed and the more common curly leafed. Parsley offers not only wonderful flavor and rich color, but also outstanding nutrition. Use parsley in soups, stews, sauces, as an edible garnish, or in salads.

ROSEMARY is a slow growing herb, which is very difficult to over winter in our climate. For this reason it is grown in pots and over-wintered in our greenhouses. You will find fresh plants available at the stand for harvest. Rosemary, the herb of remembrance, has narrow, spiky leaves and a distinctive piney scent; used to flavor lamb, pork, potatoes, herb butters, vinegars, and bread.

SAGE has aromatic leaves that are soft grey-green in color; there are also purple and variegated varieties. Sage aids in the digestion of fatty meats like beef, pork, veal, fish, lamb, poultry, duck, and goose, and is a delicious complementary flavor for all of these. Sage makes a wonderful tea with honey for curing sore throats.

SUMMER SAVORY grows up to 2 feet tall, with branchy stems and sparse, almost scraggly foliage of slender leaves about ½” long. Its flowers are small and light pink. This annual is called the bean herb; as lentils, fava, edamame, and green beans are all enhanced by its mild peppery flavor, and it’s ability to aid in the digestion of these.

MEXICAN MINT, (TARRAGON), smells like licorice, anise, or camphor- an odor as indefinable as that of most herbs but strong and tangy, yet sweet. An annual herb at Quail Hill, it is a fantastic addition to dressings and sauces, and a great complement to fish and chicken.

THYME is a perennial of the mint family; the pungent scent of thyme comes from the oil in its small oval leaves. These sweet-smelling leaves have a bright sharp taste. As there are many varieties of thyme the tastes may vary from lemon to caraway.



WILD EDIBLES

Searching for wild food is a pleasure, and throughout time and the world over, wild plants have been used both for food and medicine. Many fantastic wild edibles can be found at Quail Hill. A few sure things are suggested here.

BLACKBERRIES may be found tangled in the hedges at the farm. Although we cultivate several varieties, you can also graze on our delicious wild species. The fruits begin to appear in mid summer and last through the early fall, turning from red to black at maturity. Berries that come off the bush easiest are usually the ripest and tastiest.

Both wild and cultivated **DANDELION** varieties impart a distinctive bitter and slightly earthy flavor to dishes. The youngest and most tender leaves will add an exciting bite to spring salads, and the older tougher leaves are best braised or added to soups. Late in the season the roots may be dug and grated on salads. * Dandelions should only be harvested from places you are certain were not treated with chemicals. *

GRAPE LEAVES abound in the hedges at Quail Hill. In May and June the most tender, saucer-sized leaves are pinched from the plant, to be used for wrapping and stuffing. The leaves can be frozen in batches to provide a year's worth of dolmades (stuffed grape leaves).

LAMB'S QUARTERS, also known as **WILD SPINACH** or **GOOSEFOOT**, have a silvery gray sheen to its leaves. Young lamb's quarters leaves are oval or somewhat wedge shaped, with wavy teeth. Leaves near the seed head are more lance shaped. Some say this "weed" is even better than spinach! Lamb's quarters are fairly easy to clean, have a taste very similar to spinach, and contain more vitamins and minerals than spinach. Use the little leaves of lamb's quarters for spinach flavor in salads. You can cook the small plants, stem and all, by steaming or boiling them 15 to 20 minutes. You can substitute lamb's quarters in any recipe that calls for spinach.

PURSLANE, with its vinegary flavor and crisp texture, makes good nibbling while you weed the garden. It has three times the calcium and Vitamin C of carrots, and five times more iron. Purslane grows only about 2 inches high, but its green and reddish succulent leaves spread on mucilaginous stems for more than a foot. The leaves have a pleasantly acidic flavor that complements milder greens in salads. Leaves may be boiled as you would other cooking greens and added to casseroles, or added to soups and stews.

The word **SORREL** is derived from the word "sour," which is a perfect description of this tender wild green. This bright green broad leaf is famous for its tangy, lemon taste. Raw or cooked, it brightens any salad or dish. Mature leaves are excellent in soups. Sorrel's leaves vary depending on species, but are generally oblong, arrowhead-shaped at the base and grow from several inches to more than 1 foot long.



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Jane Weissman, a long time farm member, for many years created the acclaimed Quail Hill Newsletter. Many items in this handbook have been gleaned from her witty and informative publication.

The *Quail Hill Farm Cookbook* and the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Coalition's *Asparagus to Zucchini Cookbook* have also proved invaluable resources in the creation of the "Vegetable Guide."

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Nikki Conzo, 2006 Field Manager

RESOURCE LIST

Online Resources

- The Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association- www.biodynamics.com
- The Center for Food Safety- www.centerforfoodsafety.org
- Center for Whole Communities- www.wholecommunities.org
- The Earth Charter- www.earthcharter.org
- Equity Trust- www.equitytrust.org
- Just Food- www.justfood.org
- The Land Institute- www.landinstitute.org
- Land Stewardship Project- www.landstewardshipproject.org
- The Land Trust Alliance- www.lta.org
- The Murie Center- www.muriecenter.org
- New Farm of Rodale Institute- www.newfarm.org
- The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) of New York- www.nofany.org
- Organic Consumers Association- www.organicconsumers.org
- Robyn Van En Center for CSA Resources- www.csacenter.org
- The Small Planet Institute- www.smallplanetinstitute.org
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Books For Kids

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- *The Gigantic Turnip*, Aleksie Tolstoy
- *Grandpa's Garden Lunch*, Judith Caseley
- *Growing Up Green*, Alice Skelsey and Gloria Huckaby
- *Sugaring Time*, Kathryn Lasky
- *Ugly Vegetables*, Grace Lin