



THE ALLEGED FARM NEWS

25 October 2007

Once upon a time we grew a lot of weird radishes in the fall. We grew ones the size of small rutabagas with rough black skins like pumice and dense white flesh. We grew long red ones like carrots. We grew small purple ones. We grew ones with thick greenish skins and flesh shot through with streaks of red. We grew huge, pointy white ones. We grew a lot of weird radishes and we handed them out in mixed bunches and offered up recipes for Russian grated radish salad and Korean pickled radish cubes. And people begged us to stop. “Enough with the weird radishes” they cried out to us. And we heard their cries and we were moved to mercy. And so we gave up on big black radishes and we gave up on long red radishes and we gave up on purple ones and we even gave up on the green skinned ones with the beautiful red and white flesh.

But surely nobody thought we would give up entirely on weird radishes. Not when they grow as well as they do. It would be like taking kohlrabi off our list of crops. Who wants to get nothing but normal vegetables all the time. We assumed people just wanted fewer weird radishes, that they wanted us to offer not every weird radish we could find but only the best weird radishes. So we took them at their word and kept on planting Miyashige Diakon, which with its smooth thin skin, attractive touch of light green at the top, and crisp sweet flesh certainly deserves a chance. And anyway, how weird can a vegetable be when it is one of the major crops of Japan and Korea. So here is your daikon radish.

We will see if anyone pleads with us to cease salsify production. I doubt we will hear from many people eager for us to grow more, which is fine with me. While I do not regret having grown it and I think the tops look nice I would not miss digging it up if we were forced to stop growing it. Because of all those roots, when you pull up a salsify root you also pull up about 35 pounds of dirt. This makes for good exercise, no doubt, but we hardly need any extra weigh lifting opportunities at this point in the season.

There have from time to time been muttered suggestions that we grow a lot less kale. On the other hand, I actually know several people who actively like the stuff, who would happily defend its culinary value. Of course, a number of those kale fans have been farm workers, a group prone to excessive fondness for vegetables. Perhaps I should discount their opinions on such matters. Most of them liked the weird radishes too.

One person once requested that we grow fewer potatoes. Oddly, it was not a farm worker who made this request, though you might well think it would come from the people who have to dig them up. But I have employed a long line of potato fanatics, workers who love the potato so much they don't object to the hours spent kneeling in muddy, rocky ground hunting for tubers. As it happens, we have grown far fewer potatoes this year, but that has nothing to do with anyone's opinion of potatoes. Nor, for that matter, does it have anything to do with how many potatoes we planted. It is just a bad potato year for some reason I have not figured out. Bad enough that even my potato-loving worker gets discouraged in the potato patch. If only the potatoes had done as well as the daikon or salsify or parsley root or winter squash, all of which have prospered this season. Perhaps there is some natural law of the conservation of storage crops. Each farmer only gets to grow so many. When one storage crop does well others must do worse. Last year we had a

This week's share: Chinese cabbage, Carrots, Daikon, Garlic, Kale, Kohlrabi, Onions, Parsley root, Peppers, Hot peppers, Potatoes, Salsify, Shallots, Spinach, Butternut winter squash, Dill

huge potato yield and the squash and fall roots did not do well. The poor potato crop this season has made space available for other storage crops. Hence the steady supply of large squash and odd roots. If it were up to me I might opt for a balance a little heavier on potatoes (if only to make potato digging feel more worthwhile). But as usual I was not consulted. Whatever forces do control such things take remarkably little interest in the opinions of farmers. But then who does? Even the people who set farm policy for this country seem to have little regard for the average farmer.

Whatever the cause, we will have a range of storage crops available for sale after the CSA season ends (you get your last bag next Thursday, November 1). I have listed the crops and prices below. If you are interested in purchasing any of these vegetables, let me know what you want and in what quantities via e-mail (Thomas@theallegedfarm.com). We will deliver storage crop orders (most likely to your normal drop off site as long as the hosts do not object) on Tuesday, November 20 in time for Thanksgiving. You can also come out to the farm at some point to pick up an order. People who order 50 pounds or more will receive a 20% discount. If you are interested in a fall crop not listed (such as daikon or kale) please inquire as we may have limited amounts of other crops available.

Fall 2007 Storage Crop Price Sheet

Beets	@ \$1.50/lb
Carrots	@ \$1.50/lb
Celeriac	@ \$2.25/lb
Parsnips	@ \$2.25/lb
Parsley root	@ \$2.25/lb
Potatoes, yellow	@ \$1.25/lb
Fingerling	@ \$1.75/lb
Onions, red and yellow	@ \$2/2 lb bag
	@ \$4/5 lb bag
Shallots	@ \$4/lb
Garlic	@ \$7/lb
Winter squash	@ \$1/lb
Pumpkin	@ \$1/lb