

"IN THE BAG"

PFV West | CSA Week 9: Jul. 31, 2012

We anticipate the following choices at today's CSA pick-up (choices may differ depending on today's harvest):

- Thai, Purple or Lemon Basil -
 - Chard or Lettuce -
 - Sweet Potato Vines -
 - Beets or Carrots -
- Beans or Red Potatoes -
 - Onion Bunches -
 - Garlic -
 - Tomatoes -
 - Melons -

Storage & Prep:

- **Basil** - unlike most, basil is fussy and will turn black in protest if it's too cold. Therefore, you'll want to snip the stems of the basil, then put it in a vase or glass with water. Leave it on the countertop, or the warmest part of the refrigerator (the door). Use this herb within 2-5 days.
- **Beets** - these purple little mamas pack two meals in one, as the root and greens attached are both edible, but this duality comes at a price. Beet greens won't last as long as the bulbs will, so aim to use beet greens within 5 days, and store them in the fridge. Otherwise, if you're not a greens fan, you can always lop off the greens and store the beet root itself for up to 5 weeks in the fridge.
- **Carrots** - some vegetables like it cold, really cold, and carrots are one of them. Carrots thrive in the coldest part of the fridge; so, to keep them happy, store them dry (ideally in a reusable bag). If these orange fellas get too wet then they will either begin to sprout or rot. Although storing them in a bag is optional, they may begin to go flaccid at an accelerated rate. If all goes well, carrots can be stored in your fridge for up to 3 months.
- **Chard** - unlike other leafy greens, don't wash chard before storing it, as exposure to water will encourage it to go off. Place chard in a plastic storage bag (or reusable bag), wrap the bag tightly around the chard, squeezing as much air from the bag as possible, then place it in the fridge. Once in the fridge, the chard should last 5-7 days.
- **Leafy Greens** - most vegetables can be washed under cool (not cold) running water---leafy greens being the exception. Nothing ruins a meal more than biting into a mouthful of sandy, gritty greens. To properly wash greens and rid them of dirt: fill a large bowl or sink with cool water. Put the greens in the water and gently swish them around. Let them sit for a minute to let the dirt settle to the bottom. Lift the greens out of the water and place them in a colander to let the water drain. Do not pour the greens with the water into the colander as the grit that has settled to the bottom will only reintroduce itself back into the greens.

As a rule of thumb, greens should be washed and drained before storing the fridge. The longest shelf life for greens is had when greens are placed atop a paper towel (or reusable cloth) inside of a lidded container. Whole heads tend to store longer and better than cut leaves. Kale and chard has a shelf life of 3-14 days.

- **Lettuce** - rinse the head lettuce all at once, tear the leaves to a desired size, and then spin them dry in a salad spinner (or dab them with a cloth to wick away the moisture). Store the leaves in a plastic bag to make them fast and easy to eat

To remove grit from really dirty head lettuce: cut off the base and float the leaves in a large bowl or sink filled with cold water (simply rinsing under running water won't do it). The dirt will sink to the bottom while the leaves float at the top—swirl the leaves around with your hands to expedite the process. Remove the leaves by hand lifting them out of the sink. Repeat, if necessary. Tear the leaves to the desired size and spin them in a salad spinner.

- **Potatoes** - put potatoes in a cool, dry place that isn't too cold and is away from the light (keep beautifully in pantries or garages). Remember: **potatoes hate the fridge**; their starch will convert to sugar if they get too cold and will alter the way the potato will taste.
- **Onions** (fresh green & scallions) - unlike they're cured counterparts, you'll want to keep these fresh fellas in the fridge to extend their life. If you do so, they should last between 3-14 days. Keep an eye on their ends to determine their health.
- **Sweet Potato Vines** (see leafy greens)
- **Tomatoes** - delicate as the day, you'll want to take great care when it comes to storing tomatoes. Because of their thin skins, especially the heirloom varieties, avoid stacking anything on top of these beautiful summer beauties. If your countertop allows, it's best to keep them loose and separated on a plate/platter until just soft on the shoulders. At this point they're ready to be eaten, otherwise place them in the fridge to extend their life by a few days. **Tomatoes really don't like the fridge**, as they'll soften in texture and taste, so you're best off eating them as soon as possible.

New (To Some) Items This Week:

- **Sweet Potato Vines** (also known as sweet potato vines and kamote tops) - you didn't know you could eat these, did you? These are exactly what they sound like -- the tops of the sweet potato plant -- a common green served in West Africa, Malaysia and the Philippines. It's not secret that sweet potatoes are little nutrient powerhouses, but their leaves are quite good too, as they contain some of the highest amounts of polyphenol (an antioxidant) in the vegetable world! They're also rich in Vitamins A, C and B2. Saute them, steam them, boil them or throw them in some soup!

Related Recipes

Sweet Potato Leaves (also called sweet potato vines, kamote tops) - popular in West Africa, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Sweet Potato Leaves:

- [Kamote Top Salad](#) (super easy, flavorful Filipino dish)
- [Takashi Inoue's Namul's Sweet Potato Leaves](#)
- [Kamote Leaves & Tomatoes](#)
- [Tilapia & Kamote Tops Stew](#)

Basil (although each has a unique flavor, you can substitute any of the speciality basil in place of one another, or of regular basil):

- **Thai:**
 - [Thai Basil Eggplant](#) - in case anyone has leftover eggplant; uses **garlic**, **onion** & chili
 - [Thai Basil Crusted Chicken](#) - uses beans, omit the sweet potato (could add a bit extra red potato)
 - [Spicy Sesame Noodles w/ Chopped Peanuts & Thai Basil](#) - [here's a similar, non-peanut version](#); both use **garlic**; can substitute scallions with regular **onion**
 - [Thai Basil Chicken \(Gai Pad Krapow\)](#) - uses **onion** and chilies
 - [Thai Basil Tofu](#) - can use 1/2 cup Thai basil instead of half Thai and half traditional basil; uses **onion** and **garlic**
 - [Thai Basil Sangria](#)
- **Purple:**
 - [Purple Basil Lemonade](#)
 - [Purple Basil Parmesan Biscuits](#)
 - [Purple Basil Pesto](#)
 - [Purple Basil Pesto Soup](#) - if you're adventurous, try swapping out the cauliflower for **beets** or **potatoes** (may want to steam them first)
 - [Angel Hair Pasta w/ Purple Basil](#) - swap spinach out for **chard** or **sweet potato greens**
 - [Hummus w/ Purple Basil](#) - uses **garlic**
 - [Purple Basil Vinegar](#)
- **Lemon** (not all of these require lemon basil, but would be very complimentary as they use green basil and lemon juice):
 - [Grilled Chicken w/ Lemon Basil Pasta](#) (another variation on [lemon basil pasta](#))
 - [Lemon Basil Potato Salad](#) (add a bit extra pesto in place of mayo, if you like)
 - [Lemon Basil Syrup](#)
 - [Lemon Basil Lemonade](#)
 - [Lemon Basil Tea](#) ([here's iced tea](#) too)
 - [Lemon Basil Vinaigrette](#)
- **Desserts:**
 - [Blackberry-Purple Basil Tarts](#) - for the butter phobes like us, [here are five healthier pie dough/crust recipe options](#) - #4 sounds the best to us!)
 - [Poached Nectarines w/ Purple Basil](#)
 - Basil Ice Cream

- [Basil Melon Sorbet](#)
- [Purple Basil & Blackberry Ice Cream](#)
- [Thai Basil Ice Cream](#)
- [Lemon Basil Sorbet](#) (she uses lemon juice and regular basil, but using lemon basil would add a lovely twist)
- [Basil Gelato](#) (any type would do)

Other Recipes to use ingredients in your share:

- [Cantaloupe Salad w/ Basil & Fresh Mozzarella](#) (or [here's a recipe](#) that uses feta instead) - uses **onion**
- [Pungent Beans & Tomatoes](#)
- Oven-Roasted Tomatoes (see attached copy of *Farm Notes*)
- [Beet & Basil Pesto](#)
- [Tomato, Beet & Basil Salad](#) - uses **lettuce**
- [Rustic Potato & Bean Salad](#) - (here's a [white wine and basil sauce recipe](#)) - uses **garlic & onion** (add extra of both/either to replace the shallots)
- [Basil Pesto w/ Potatoes, Green Beans & Pasta](#)
- [Chard w/ Tomatoes & Potatoes](#) - uses **onion & garlic**
- [Creamy Grits & Chard](#) - uses **garlic**

Tried-and-True Recipes from other CSA members:

- [Baked Jalapeno Poppers](#) (thanks, Gina!)