



BLACKBROOK FARM

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Vernal Ponding...

Welcome members! We are so excited to kick off our season with lots of fresh veggies! It is a great feeling of satisfaction for us to pack that first box—it makes all the months that have led up to this time seem so well worth it. Today we cooked up some pac choi, kale and spinach in a stir fry and could taste the excitement of getting the season started in every bite. We are glad to have you on board!

As far as the weather goes, “vernal ponding” would truly be a phrase to remember this season by. Vernal refers to the spring season, which is when vernal ponds are usually seen due to rapid inundation from rain or snow. These ponds can show up anywhere that the soil does not rapidly drain, and to this our farm is a testament. The middle of the field, the end of the field, this field over here, that field over there, there’s standing water everywhere. Well, not literally everywhere, but of the ten acres or “fields” that we have in production, there is not a one of them free from the muddy mark of total saturation or standing water in parts. As farmers, we really feel the impact of the weather. Now, most folks realize it has been a really wet this spring. But we’re not just talking “really” wet, we’re talking the second wettest month of April on record all the way back to 1871 when they started keeping records. And what really stinks is that in just a few days it will be the first day of summer and our “vernal” ponds will still be there. The rain just won’t let up!

Fortunately we were able to carve out a few of the drier chunks of land we have to finally get all the plants in the ground, but it’s been a rough month of planting for us. We didn’t really

What’s in the Box:

Radishes: These are the beautiful, big Cherriette variety. Great sliced on sandwiches or salads. The greens are edible, too. Store in a plastic bag or ziploc in the fridge with the greens removed.

Pac Choi: Joi Choi variety. This is an asian cabbage variety that is great in stir fries or eaten raw. It has a mild flavor. Store in the fridge in a plastic bag in the crisper to keep it from wilting. You can eat the whole thing, top to bottom.

Head Lettuce: This is one crop that suffered a little from all the rain this spring. The heads are a little on the small side, but still as tasty. Hopefully everyone was able to get a mix of varieties: romaine, sylvesta butterhead, australe red butterhead, Oscarde red oakleaf and magenta oakleaf. Full shares 4-5 heads, small shares 3 heads

Baby Red Russian Kale: This kale is perfect for juicing or lightly chopping into a fresh salad. We mix it with lettuce and eat it with every meal. It will keep for upto 2 weeks in the plastic bag. Full shares 3/4 lb, small shares 1/2 lb

“Space” Spinach: This is some beautiful spinach this week. We gave you lot because how can you go wrong with spinach? It cooks down a lot, too if you put it in a dish. Full shares 1 lb, small shares 3/4 lb.

Arugula: This is a bit on the big side, which is one reason we wanted to start the boxes this week and not next, despite not having a lot of other veggies ready. It is spicy! Full shares 1/3 lb, small shares 1/4 lb.

Herb Pot: These beautiful herb pots have common sage, winter thyme, genovese basil, greek oregano and italian flat leaf or curly parsley. They will need to be up-potted into individual containers or a garden in order to keep them growing and the basil should be picked continuously so it does not flower. ENJOY!!!



Our hogs on pasture, working hard for us by rooting up all the weeds and fertilizing.



Stephen and Nellie harvesting baby kale

Vernal Ponding...

start until about the 8th of May, which is more than a few weeks later than most years. Of course that meant that the work that usually gets spread out over two months had to be done in one. That expression "no rest for the weary" must have been about farmers!

However, this week's box stands to show that amidst the trials of this year there is still a lot to be thankful for. Despite the weather, there is still bounty on this farm. There isn't quite as much variety as we like to see in this box, but heck it's still a lot of food. And plenty of other springtime favorites are well on their way too. A little sunshine would help things along of course, but they will be ready soon one way or another. Plants are so persistent that way. If I were a plant this year, I would have given up a long time ago. So we really should thank our plants for all of their hard work too.

While we are really happy to kick off this season's veggies, we should mention a few things about animals too. Animals are a very important part of the fertility cycle and that is why we are committed to having them on our farm. Thanks to everyone who purchased egg shares this year. For those of you on the egg share wait list, our next batch of hens will begin laying soon, so don't worry there will be more eggs available and we will promptly let you know. On another animal topic, we also recently brought eleven heritage breed hogs onto the farm. (If you're vegetarian, please skip the next few sentences). So, this fall we will have delicious pork shares available for members. We feed all of our animals organic non-gmo feed, give them plenty of pasture, and give them our nutritious vegetable extras. They live very happy lives and produce the most excellent products that are available to consumers anywhere. Seriously, if you haven't tasted pork from an organic, heritage, pastured hog, it is a mind

blowing experience for your palate. It really is that good. **Next week we will have more info on reserving your share.**

It is with many thanks to all of our members that we kick this season off. Your support makes our way of life possible. It may be a slow start with the wet season here on the farm, but we intend to reward your support with a bountiful season of fresh, delicious fruits and veggies and a really great value. This is our thanks and commitment to you. And hey, the summer crops are looking really good!

Your farmers,

James, Ayla and baby farmer
to be (in September)



Nellie packing head lettuce into boxes

Cleaning your produce:

We are an organic farm so we have weeds and harvest everything by hand from the dirt. In order to minimize weeds we use mechanical cultivation (weeding), hoeing and hand weeding in order to give you a mostly weed-free product. We also use row cover in order to minimize pest and deer damage. Inevitably, there may be a stray weed or some pest damage holes in your produce. Neither of these things will harm you!

We wash or double-wash all of our produce by hydrocooling (cold water bath) and spraying it off. We handle all the produce by hand in order to thoroughly inspect it for residual dirt. That being said, we recommend you wash your greens in case there are some dirt specks left on them.

Embrace the organicness!!



Ayla at the Midtown Farmers Market in MPLS on Sat.

What in store for next week?

these are some of the crops we are hoping for next week:

radishes
kohlrabi
garlic scapes
spring mix with baby beet greens
salad turnips
arugula
scallions
head lettuce/spinach/kale