

ROASTED BEETS AND CARROTS WITH ROSEMARY

Adapted from realsimple.com

1 lb beets, peeled, cut in 1/2 in wedges 3 Tbsp olive oil
1 lb carrots, cut in 2 in lengths 2 sprigs rosemary
1/4 cup red wine vinegar Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Toss the beets, carrots, vinegar, oil, rosemary, ¾ tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper on a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Roast, tossing once, until vegetables are tender, 30 to 35 minutes.

SMOKY SWEET POTATO KALE SALAD WITH HOT GINGER DRESSING

Adapted from howsweeteats.com

2 to 3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed	Hot ginger dressing:
olive oil for drizzling	1 1/2 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
salt and pepper	1 small shallot, diced
1/2 tsp smoked paprika	1 Tbsp chopped fresh ginger
1/2 tsp garlic powder	1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 tsp chipotle chili powder	3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
1-2 bunches of kale, stems removed and torn into pieces	1 Tbsp honey
1/4 c roasted pepitas	2 tsp soy sauce
	1/2 c olive oil

1. Heat oven to 425°F.
2. Place sweet potatoes on a nonstick baking sheet and toss with a drizzle of olive oil. Stir together the smoked paprika, garlic powder, chili powder and a big pinch of salt and pepper in a bowl. Sprinkle evenly over the sweet potatoes and toss well.
3. Roast the sweet potatoes for 25 to 30 minutes, until fork tender.
4. While the sweet potatoes roast, make the dressing. Heat a saucepan over medium-low heat and add the sesame oil. Stir in the shallot with a pinch of salt and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in the ginger and garlic and cook for 2 minutes more. Reduce the heat to low. Whisk in the vinegar, honey and soy sauce. Whisk in the olive oil until emulsified.
5. Place the kale in a bowl. Drizzle on 1 to 2 tablespoons of the dressing and, using your hands, massage the kale for a few minutes until all the leaves are coated. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes.
6. Put roasted potatoes on top of the kale. Drizzle with more of the dressing, then top with pepitas.



Winter/Spring CSA News



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Sweet Potatoes: Store sweet potatoes at room temperature. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and turn black when you cook them! The sweet potatoes you receive will keep for weeks or even months.

Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge inside a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before placing them back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb the moisture. Refresh limp leafy greens by plunging them into ice water.

Root and spuds (carrots, turnips, beets and potatoes): Store in a plastic or cloth bag in the crisper bin of your refrigerator. Both root veggies and potatoes should last for weeks.

Jarred Items: It's the best time of year to include Elmwood's organic Diced Tomatoes, Ketchup, Marinara, BBQ or Salsa in your seasonal recipes—think chili, lasagna, soups, or what about as a pizza topping?

Winter Squash: The flavor of butternuts and other fall squashes intensifies over time as the sugars concentrate. Store in the pantry or on the counter; plan to use within a month or so.

Spring Break

With this spell of warmer, sunnier weather in February, the frigid January experienced seems like ages ago. Most likely we are in for more really cold weather yet this spring, but if it does come, it won't last very long. Timing is everything in farming, especially now, as the earth begins to warm and our little micro-ecosystem wakes up.

When the ground freezes, the ice crystals swell the soil and actually shear and spear their way between the particles, holding it all together in a frozen mass. When it thaws, the particles of soil must nestle themselves back into place, forming the habitat for roots, insects, worms, and microbes to coexist. The firm footing will return if undisturbed, but during that transitional time, farmers would say the soil has 'no bottom'. We know to keep all four wheels of the vehicles on the gravel, and look for the best sod to pick a path when in the fields. The hoof action of the cattle tears up the sod in conditions like this, which is one reason they are kept on the fields that will be plowed for crops in a few weeks anyway. Feeding the big round bales of hay with the tractor is messy, especially funnel points like gates, but we unroll the bales so all can eat at once, and by doing so, eliminate the mud holes around bale feeders.

We need a window of dry weather for the rain to drain out of the top layer of soil so it can be tilled without harming the structure. Good farming is knowing when the soil conditions are right so it can be worked to manage a crop. We invert the top eight inches of soil with a moldboard plow, a bigger, badder version of the iconic Norman Rockwell image in your head. If the window is open long enough to almost dry out enough, and we know freezing weather is still likely, we will go ahead and plow, so the alfalfa and other plants will have time to decay to feed the ensuing crop. If we do not expect the freezing action described above, we hold off. We were able to plant peas and spinach last week, since just the top couple of inches need to dry for that. But, we are equipped, with seed in hand, whenever we get the next opportunity.

When you see earthworms strewn about on top of the ground, that tells you the air chambers of the soil are full of water and the worms are

escaping from drowning. Some perish before finding their way back underground, but not to worry, they have left millions of eggs that survive the wet conditions. The bazillions of microbes slow down and/or hibernate during inclement weather, be it freezing temperatures or excessive rain. To be clear, sub-zero temperatures do not "kill all the bugs" as many a home gardener hope. They too have tried-and-true survival mechanisms that have adapted to the Central Kentucky climate over the past several million years. Sure, if it stays really cold, longer into the spring, their emergence may be delayed, a mere tribute to their capabilities. This warm spell we are in may trigger some to wake up early, and then fall on hard times if it gets really cold again, but don't get your hopes up that they will all magically disappear forever. They won't.

We can track the progression of the annual awakening after winter as we see song birds returning to adorn the fields and trees. Countless "V's" of Canada Geese have been seen heading north, the kill-dee's are already luring us away from their camouflaged eggs on the ground, and the robins are on the ground nourishing them selves on the easy pickings of worms, as they prepare to rear their broods. The meadowlarks and Red-Winged blackbirds will be back soon. Only when the barn swallows return from South America do we know spring is over and summer is here.

Our Narragansett tom turkeys began strutting their stuff this past week and the hens will begin laying eggs any day now. Unlike chickens, these magnificent creatures are still seasonal egg layers, like their wild first cousins. The skunks went into their mating rituals right on cue in mid-February, evident from all those hit by cars, since they have other things on their minds. They coyotes have been howling like crazy since it warmed up, they are doing the same thing as the bulls, skunks, raccoons, opossums, frogs, birds, and the bees. I'm pretty sure it was farmers that coined and gave meaning to the phrase; 'The birds and the bees'.

So here we are, busy as bees, seeding flats in the greenhouse, lining up help for all the work to come, encouraging folks to reserve their CSA share. Much like the rest of nature, we are waking up from winter and defiantly heading into spring. We just have to be ready when the windows of opportunity present themselves. - Mac Stone