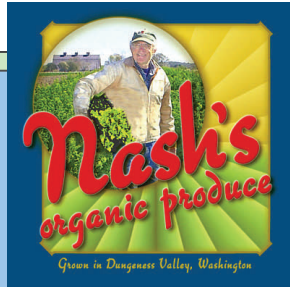


3-12-10 **What's in the box?**

Red Wheat Berries
Leeks
Green Kale Raab



Box 8 of 10

Brussels Sprouts
Parsnips
Fuji Apples (from Tonnemaker Hill
Organic Farm in Central WA)

It Begins with the Seed!

Accounts left by women who came west on the Oregon Trail indicate that seeds were their most prized possessions. That has not changed for today's organic farmers. Saving seed is a skill every organic farmer needs, and Nash has been doing it for years. He routinely saves carrot, cabbage and spinach seeds, along with all of the grains. This gives the farm a reliable supply of varieties that we know produce good results in our environment. We occasionally save seeds from specialty plants, such as cilantro and dill.

Organic Seed Alliance in Port Townsend works closely with Nash and Scott Chichester, Vegetable Production Manager, to develop new varieties and maintain existing varieties. They also train other local farmers to be seed growers. Seed is an important product on a diversified farm.

Nash supplements his own seeds with seeds from Territorial Seed Co. in Oregon, Osborne Seed Company in Mt. Vernon, WA, Johnny's Selected Seeds in Maine, and Fedco Seeds in Maine. All of these are good options for seed growers in northern climates. Territorial and Osborne have the added advantage of seeds grown in our area.

Although we prefer organically grown seed, sometimes it is not available. We can plant conventionally grown seeds and then harvest the seeds from the open-pollinated plants that are grown organically. We then use this organically grown seed in to comply with our organic certification.

Over the last few decades, many small seed companies have been bought out by large distributors. This has caused lots of seed varieties and heirloom seeds to be phased out. This consolidation trend is starting to reverse as we see small seed companies making a comeback with specialty seeds.

Wild Garden Seed in Oregon is a perfect example. They are an organic seed and vegetable operation that produces farm-original varieties of many salad greens, vegetables, herbs and flowers. All of their seed is open-pollinated, untreated, germ-and-vigor tested in living soil, and well-cleaned. These varieties have proven popular and profitable in farmers markets locally and in fine restaurants on both coasts.



More about seeds next week!

Red Wheat Berries

Bread made from flour milled from these berries will have a darker color and a fuller heartier flavor. It will also have the entire nutritious grain—not just the carbohydrate part of the kernel (the endosperm) like commercial flours. You can also soak the berries overnight, then cook them like rice. They are fantastic in a salad mixed with pecans, cranberries, green onions, parsley and a vinaigrette dressing. Add some of your raab to it as well. ENJOY!

Leeks

Leeks are a wonderful vegetable, but they need to be cleaned before they can be used. Cut off the fibrous root. If the dark-green outer leaves are very tough and/or spotty, remove them, too, and trim the ends of the remaining leaves. Cut the leek in half length-wise, and place in a bowl of warm water and swirl around to help the dirt fall to the bottom. Take the leeks out, place in a colander, and rinse again.

Cooking with Leeks

Many recipes call for just the “white parts” of leeks, when the light green is just as good and even the dark green is usable if it is sautéed for at least 5 minutes.

Got any leftover turnips from your root medley last week? Here's a delicious way to use them with leeks:

Potato Leek Turnip Soup

- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 2 medium leeks thinly sliced (white and green parts)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. caraway seeds
- 6 cups water or vegetable stock
- 1 lb. turnips, diced
- 1 lb. potatoes, diced
- 1 bunch kale, chard, or collard greens, chopped to bite-size
- Black pepper to taste

Melt butter over medium heat, add leeks and a dash of salt and sauté about 3 minutes until soft. Add garlic and caraway seeds, sauté 1 minute, then add stock, turnips and potatoes. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Stir in remaining salt, lower heat, cover and simmer 10-15 minutes until turnips and potatoes are cooked. Add winter greens and simmer 2-3 more minutes, until wilted. Add pepper, taste and adjust seasonings. We thank Peter Berley and Melissa Clark's *Fresh Food Fast*.