

MOUNT PLEASANT FARM & GARDENS

VEGETABLE STORAGE & USE GUIDE

BEETS

In the spring and early summer we harvest beets in bunches with their leafy tops. They are small, tender and come with wonderful edible greens. During the fall & winter you will receive larger beets without tops in your share for storage.

Storage Tips

Cut off stems one inch from the crown

Refrigerate the unwashed beet roots

Summer beets will stay in good condition for 2-3 weeks

Wash and spin greens and place in a plastic bag in the refrigerator

Greens are best when eaten within 3 days

Culinary Tips

Raw beets can be grated into a salad

Scrub the beet clean, no need to peel

Bake the beets to enhance their natural sweetness. Slice the washed and unpeeled beets into ¼ inch thick slices. Arrange slices on a lightly oiled baking pan and season with thyme or tarragon. Add a small amount of water or apple juice and cover with foil. Put in 350° oven for 25 minutes until fork-tender

Beets can also steamed and boiled. Scrub beets clean but leave skins on until after cooking to minimize color and flavor loss. Run whole, cooked beets under cold water and rub off the skins. 1 ½ inch beets take 30 minutes to cook in steam and 15-20 minutes in boiling water. Serve whole, sliced or grated.

Toss grated beets with grated carrots, apples, oil and vinegar dressing. A touch of plain yogurt makes for a wonderful color transformation.

The greens can be steamed, sautéd, and mixed with pasta with cheese.

BROCCOLI

Storage Tips

Keep unwashed, trimming only the large leaves

Store in a perforated, plastic bag in the refrigerator

It will keep fresh for several days

Culinary Tips

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First rinse the broccoli

If necessary, soak upside down in cold, salted water

Broccoli will take 8-15 minutes to steam, 4-8 to blanch. Test for doneness by piercing the stalks with a knife point. The knife will pierce easily, but the broccoli should remain crunchy. If you plan to use it later cool by plunging immediately in cold water. Drain and pat dry.

Steam or blanch broccoli before sautéing or stir-frying

The stalks and stems of the broccoli are edible, too. They cook in the same amount of time if you peel the outer skin. Insert a paring knife blade under the skin at the base and pull up. The skin pulls off easily, breaking off at the buds. Cut stalks into thick julienne strips or diagonal slices for soups or sautés.

Combine cooked broccoli with garlic and olive oil, sprinkle with cheese

Add to pizza, quiche, and pasta dishes.

CABBAGE

You will receive 4 types of cabbage in your share. Early in the season you will receive arrowhead & baby green cabbage. Mid-season you will receive red cabbage. In the late season we will distribute green cabbage for winter storage. We ship the cabbage with the outer leaves to protect the head from bruising.

Storage Tips

Refrigerate cabbage in a hydrator drawer. Do not remove the outer leaves before storage.

Once the cabbage has been cut store in a plastic bag.

Culinary Tips

Trim off outer wilted leaves & quarter the head. Then remove the core.

For salad or coleslaw thinly slice the cabbage & toss with a vinaigrette or make a creamy dressing with plain yogurt, vinegar, honey, dill, & salt. Add grated carrots or other veggies.

For steaming cut wider slices & cook for 5-6 min. Top with butter or grated cheese.

Sliced cabbage sautés & stir-fries well. Adding sliced onions or apples helps reduce the gaseous qualities of cabbage.

Finely shredded red cabbage is a colorful addition to green salad

Boil cabbage for 5 min with chopped onion & add to mashed potatoes

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CARROTS

The early carrots are a smaller, more tender variety and are harvested in bunches with their tops. The late fall and winter carrots are varieties especially chosen for their ability to hold moisture and retain sweetness even after months in cold storage.

Storage Tips

Twist off tops & refrigerate carrots in a plastic bag.

For long term storage, pack carrots with moist sand & store in a cool (but not freezing) location.

Culinary Tips

Scrub carrots under running water. Peeling removes the nutrients located just under the skin.

Eat carrots raw to receive the most nutrients, cut into sticks or grate into many types of salads

Slice & steam for 5-10 min or sauté in butter, top with honey for a sweet dish.

Add to soups, stir-fries, stews, & casseroles.

Steam & puree carrots add cream, onions, leeks, freshly grated ginger, or soy sauce for a simple soup.

To roast carrots, cut in large chunks, dot with butter & place in an oven-proof dish. Cover & bake in a 350° oven for 40 min.

You can also simmer the carrots in a stock instead of butter.

CAULIFLOWER

Storage Tips

Cauliflower does not store well. It can take on a strong odor and flavor.

Refrigerate in a plastic bag. It will keep for about one week.

Culinary Tips

Soak head in cold, salted water for a few minutes and then rinse

Remove tough outer leaves and cut out core for even cooking. The head can be left whole or cut into pieces

Steam the whole head for 15-20 minutes or 5-10 minutes for florets. Cook until tender but not soft. Stop the cooking process by running under cold water.

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Cut up raw florets and serve with dip

Marinate steamed cauliflower in a favorite dressing along or with other veggies. Serve chilled.

Top with a lemon butter sauce or sprinkle with grated cheese.

Use cauliflower puree for a creamy soup base or soup thickener.

CHARD

Chard is harvested as a green, leafy vegetable. Chard is in the spinach family but contains no oxalic acid which makes it easier for us to absorb the nutrients from the chard. These greens are high in vitamins A, E, & C and the minerals iron & calcium.

Storage Tips

Place chard in a plastic bag in the hydrator drawer of the refrigerator.

Chard is best if eaten within 5 days.

Cooking Tips

If leaves are large & mature, remove the stem to cook separately.

If the greens are young, cook whole.

Use in place of spinach in most recipes.

Sauté the leaves in garlic butter or olive oil & garlic.

Steam large stem pieces for 8-10 min. & leaves for 4-6 min.

Raw baby leaves are great in green salads.

Toss steamed leaves with olive oil, lemon juice, salt & pepper. OR with sesame oil, rice vinegar or soy sauce.

COLLARD GREENS

Collards contain 8 times as much Vitamin A as cabbage & twice as much as broccoli. There is more vitamin C in a serving of Collards than in a glass of orange juice. Collard greens become sweet after frost. Kale and collards can be interchanged in recipes.

Storage Tips

Store in a plastic bag in the hydrator drawer in your fridge.

Will keep well for up to 2 weeks, but best when fresh.

Culinary Tips

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Slice out the main rib & slice it into chunks. Slice the leaves into strips

Sauté garlic in olive oil, add sliced collards with a bit of water, cover & braise until collards become bright green, about 10 min. Top with tamari, balsamic vinegar, or toasted sesame oil.

Add collards to stir fries.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers are mainly water and once they are harvested they tend to shrivel very fast (for this reason, most commercial cucumbers are sold waxed). Cucumbers help replenish the fluids & minerals we lose during the hot summer months. Cucumbers can be an effective skin conditioner because they are high in vitamin E. Try rubbing an end slice or a peeling to your face for a refreshing experience.

Storage Tips

Store cucumbers in the hydrator drawer of your fridge for up to 1 week.

Sliced cucumbers deteriorate very quickly.

Culinary Tips

Add cucumber slices to a sandwich.

Use grated cucumbers in raita dressing.

Toss sliced cucumbers with plain yogurt or mayo, fresh dill or dried & salt & pepper.

Toss sliced cucumbers with your favorite vinaigrette dressing.

EGGPLANT

One of the nightshade, or Solanaceae, family of vegetables which also includes peppers, tomatoes and potatoes. These plants like to grow in warm conditions and for this reason we plant them out in a bed prepared with black plastic which traps and holds the warmth in the soil.

Storage Tips

Eggplant is best eaten fresh. Best is stored at a cool room temp. & not in the fridge.

Culinary Tips

Eggplant can be peeled but isn't necessary, especially with the skinny Asian varieties.

Slice eggplant & lightly salt. Let sit for 10-15 min. the squeeze out excess liquid. This reduces the amount of oil needed to cook the eggplant.

Top pasta with sautéed eggplant.

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Grill slices of eggplant with other vegetables.

Dip chunks of eggplant in flour or in eggs & seasoned breadcrumbs. Saute in hot oil until lightly brown. Season with herbs, garlic, grated cheese, etc.

Add to stir fries or pasta sauce.

GREEN BEANS

Storage

Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator

Best when eaten within a week

Culinary Tips

To prepare, break off the top of the bean at the stem end

Best when blanched or steam for 5-10 min

Beans are done when the color begins to brighten & become tender (not soft or mushy)

If you serving the beans cold in a salad, cook them less so they stay crisp

Flavor with butter, lemon juice, sautéed onions, or herbed vinaigrette

BASIL

Use it in Italian and other Mediterranean dishes

It goes well in soups and sauces, egg dishes, and with spinach, tomatoes, zucchini, eggplant, broccoli, peas, and green beans

Use your extra basil to make pesto sauce

Goes well with tomato-based soups

CILANTRO

Adds the extra boost to your fresh summer salsas

PARSLEY

One teaspoon of dried parsley is equal to one tablespoon of fresh parsley

Use it in dips, salad dressings, stuffings, sauces, gravies, butters

KALE

Kale is extremely hardy and will take us through the coldest days of fall and early winter. It develops a slight sweet flavor when it goes through a frost. It is a very nutritious veggie, high

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in vitamins A, C, & the mineral calcium. Kale has the highest protein content of all the cultivated vegetables.

Storage Tips

Store in a plastic bag in the fridge for up to a week

Culinary Tips

Be sure to wash leaves well as soil sticks in the nooks & crannies on the leaves

Cut out the tough mid-rib

Chopped kale leaves take about 7-10 min to steam & slightly longer to sauté

Toss steamed kale with sautéed garlic & tamari.

Add sautéed kale to mashed potatoes, omelets, quiches, & casseroles.

LEEKs

Leeks differ from onions in developing more of a layered stalk versus a round bulb. They are milder in flavor and tougher in texture than the onion.

Storage Tips

Refrigerate leek unwashed with roots attached for up to two weeks. Wrap tightly in plastic so the flavor isn't absorbed by other foods.

LETTUCE

We grow a wide variety of head lettuce and salad mix.

Storage Tips

Place the lettuce in a bath of cold water and swish it around and then spin dry before storing.

Store the lettuce in a plastic bag in the fridge. Storing the lettuce with a paper towel will often keep the lettuce from becoming soggy.

Culinary Tips

Cut leek almost in half length wise. Dirt collects between the layers so run the leek under lukewarm water to rinse out the dirt. Be sure to move the layers and check for dirt.

Strip off any damaged outer leaves and trim off the roots.

You can use most of the green leaves just trim off the very tips.

Lightly sauté leeks alone or with other veggies.

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Add leeks to quiches, egg dishes, casseroles, stews, stocks, and stir-fries.

Add cooked leek to mashed potatoes.

Puree cooked leeks for a soup base.

ONIONS

Because of the long growing season required for onions, they are the first seeds to be started in the greenhouse in late February. We harvest one variety as fresh green onions. These onions will not store well. By late August or September we will have the other two varieties pulled up and sun-curing for a few warm, dry days out in the field, before bringing them in to the greenhouse for the final cure.

Storage Tips

Keep the fresh onions in a plastic bag in the fridge. The green leaves can also be used like scallions.

Ideal conditions for storage onions are 40-50F and low humidity, otherwise, if onions are stored with warmth or moisture they will tend to sprout.

Culinary Tips

For ease in cutting onions, cut a bit off of both ends and cut onions in half from top to bottom. If necessary, cut out the core from the base. Peel skin off with the edge of your knife and lay the cut surface down on the cutting board. Keep the onion intact while you make length-wise slices from one side of the curved onion half to the other. Then rotate the onion a quarter turn and make crosswise slices. If you can manage to hold the form intact you will end up with a uniformly chopped onion.

Many and varied are the dishes seasoned with onions: quiche, soup, stew, grain-based casseroles, and vegetable stir-fry

Save onion skins for the stock pot

Cut a whole onion into quarters and then half the quarters to make wedges. Bake these on an oiled baking pan with a bit of liquid (water, vegetable stock, apple juice) added to prevent sticking. Season with dried thyme or rosemary, cover with foil and bake at 350-400 F for 30 minutes. Alongside the onion wedges, prepare other root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, parsnips, rutabaga, sweet potatoes) and bake these together.

The strong pungent flavor goes well with beans or beef

PEPPERS

All green peppers are unripe red or other colored peppers. We grow green to red bell peppers and "Italia" peppers, which are long and thin. This variety turns red and sweet quickly and is great for roasting. Peppers are high in iron and vitamins A,C, and E.

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Storage Tips

Ripe peppers spoil faster than green peppers.

Store in the fridge for up to a week, unwashed

Culinary Tips

For greatest nutrient retention eat peppers raw

Add raw strips to salads and sandwiches, eat strips with your favorite dip

Roast peppers, place red pepper over hot coals or an open flame on your grill. Toast it, turning often, until the skin is evenly blackened. Place pepper in a brown bag for 10 min. to steam. Skin will peel off easily with a knife.

Marinate and grill peppers.

POTATOES

Potatoes are one of our most popular crops. If eaten with the skin on potatoes are high in potassium. If combined with meat, dairy, or grains they will form a complete protein. Potatoes are a good source of complex carbohydrates.

Storage Tips

Refrigerate baby new potatoes if not used within 2-3 days

Most potatoes will hold at room temperature for up to two weeks.

Store potatoes out of the light or skin will turn green.

For long storage, keep potatoes at 45-50 degrees F in a dark, humid place

RADISHES

This is the first root vegetable of the season, offering bright color to your first share. Radishes are in the brassica family (broccoli, cabbage family) having that familiar mustardy bite.

Storage Tips

Store radishes for up to 2 weeks in a plastic bag for damp cloth in the fridge.

Culinary Tips

Slice or grate raw into salads

Do not peel, just scrub clean

Use in soups or stews

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Steam radishes for 8-12 minutes until tender but not mushy. Roll in butter and salt and pepper

Use radish green like any other cooking green

Add radishes to stir fries

SCALLIONS

Scallions are a nice addition to the early shares in the spring. They can be eaten raw or added at the last minute to cooked dishes. They have a much milder flavor than onions.

Storage Tips

Pat dry and store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator

Culinary Tips

The white and green parts of the stem are both edible.

Cut off the root tips and discard.

Chop into fine pieces and add to salads, dips, and salad dressings

Sprinkle onto finished stir-fries or soups

Add to omelets and quiches.

SPINACH

Spinach is a nutritious green, although the nutrients are hard to absorb due to the oxalic acid found in the green. It is high in vitamins A and C. Vitamins are best retained with little or no cooking.

Storage Tips

Dunk spinach in a cold water bath and then spin dry

Store in a damp towel in a plastic bag for up to 1 week.

Culinary Tips

Steam spinach for 5-8 minutes

2-3 lbs of spinach cooks down to 2 cups

Toss with olive oil, lemon juice, diced garlic, fresh basil leaves, and feta cheese for a salad

Toss tender raw leaves into pasta

Add spinach to quiche, lasagna, or other baked dishes

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Substitute spinach for chard in other recipes

SUGAR SNAP PEAS

Eat these peas in the pods. They are best just after they are harvested before the sugars turn into starch. They are a good source of vitamins A, C, K, and the B's, along with being high in vegetable protein, carbohydrates, and fiber.

Storage Tips

Use as soon as possible. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3-4 days. Storing peas will cause them to lose some of their sweetness and crispness.

Culinary Tips

Snap peas need stringing. Snap of the stem tip and pull downward to remove the string

Cook quickly, no more than 2 minutes. Add butter or serve plain.

Add to stir fries or chilled marinated vinaigrette style salads.

ZUCCHINI AND YELLOW SQUASH

Tastiest when fresh and relatively small sized. They dehydrate rapidly. Summer squash is easily digested, nourishing and cooling, perfect for July and August. They are also a good source of vitamins and calcium.

Storage Tips

Summer squash dehydrates quickly. Store in the hydrator drawer of your fridge for a few days.

Culinary Tips

Try raw summer squash cut into stick with your favorite dip or in salads.

Cut into chunks add to summer soups and pasta sauce.

Grill thick slices for 3-4 minutes over hot coals, then 5-8 minutes on the side of the grill. Baste with marinade.

Sauté onions in butter or oil, add summer squash and sugar snap peas. Then top with parmesan cheese and serve over pasta.

Stuff patty pan squash with buttered fresh bread crumbs sautéed with garlic and fresh herbs. Heat through and serve.

To remove excess water and prevent soggy, cooked dishes: Lightly salt the grated or thinly sliced squash. Place in a colander and let stand for 30 minutes. Some water will exude during the resting period. Much more will come out when squeezed or patted with paper towels. If you wish, rinse to remove the salt.

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TOMATOES

Tomatoes are second in popularity only to potatoes in the United States. We grow small salad tomatoes, cherry, plum, and heirloom varieties.

Storage Tips

Hold tomatoes at room temperature for up to 1 week

Cut tomatoes deteriorate quickly

Not fully ripe tomatoes will continue to ripen stored out of the sun at room temperature

Make sauces, salsas, and purees for winter eating.

Culinary Tips

Sauté, bake, broil, grill, or eat them raw

Slice tomatoes and arrange on a plate. Drizzle with olive oil or a vinaigrette, chopped fresh basil or parsley and salt and pepper.

Add tomato chunks to summer soups and pasta sauces

Sauté plum tomatoes and add to an omelet

Hollow-out partially, stuff and bake or grill

Roast halved tomatoes on a lightly oiled baking pan in a 250° oven for 3 hours (season with minced garlic and fresh, chopped basil before you pop them in the oven)

SPRING (BABY) TURNIPS

Turnips are in the brassica (cabbage) family. They are one of the most ancient and globally used vegetables. The baby turnips in the spring are sweet and their greens are tender and delicious. Both the root and the greens are good sources of vitamins and minerals.

Storage Tips

Store turnips unwashed in plastic bag in the fridge for 1-2 weeks

Store the greens separately in a damp cloth or a plastic bag. Use as soon as possible

Culinary Tips

Scrub turnips with a vegetable brush. No need to peel

Grate raw into salads and slaws

Steam 1-inch slices for 12-15 minutes

Bake turnips for 30-45 minutes at 350 degrees F basted with butter

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Roast along with roasting meats

Sauté garlic in olive oil, then add thin slices or turnips, when the turnips are almost done, add the turnip greens. Sauté until greens are bright green but not mushy. Serve with tamari.

Dice turnips and add to soups or stews or stir-fry

Mash turnips like potatoes

Use turnip greens as you would other cooking greens

WINTER SQUASH

Winter squash has 10 times more vitamin A than summer squash. Winter squash varieties are mostly interchangeable in recipes. Although the many different types of winter squash look quite different on the outside, their flesh is quite similar.

Storage Tips

Winter squash will store at room temperature for at least a month

Store for several months in a cool (50-55 degrees) and dry location

Culinary Tips

1 lb of trimmed raw squash equals 2 cups cooked squash

Boil or steam 1-2 cubes for 15-20 minutes. You can peel before or after cooking, but let it cool first.

Mash cooked squash with butter

Add chunks to stews and soups

Cut in half carefully lengthwise, scoop out the seeds. Place flesh down in a baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30- 60 minutes depending on size.

Butternut squash are a good substitute for pumpkins in pie

Add butter and maple syrup or brown sugar to bake squash

Cook squash chunks along side roasting meats.