

# Tips on how to store your fresh veggies from your CSA box!

## About radishes:

Radishes are a good source of potassium, fiber and vitamin C and are generally eaten raw, but are also great roasted in the oven.

## How to store radishes:

Remove the leaves from the roots first. The leaves cause moisture and nutrient loss to the roots during storage. Store greens separately for 2-3 days. Refrigerate radishes wrapped in a plastic bag for 5 to 7 days. Do not clean them first.

If you see the roots starting to dry out before you were able to use them all, soak the roots in a ice cold water bath. This will rejuvenate the radishes and keep them for another few days. Try to eat them as soon as possible because the water will be absorbed and the radish will lose its fire.

**Salad Turnips** can be stored the same way as radishes!

## About lettuce:

Have you ever been ready to make a salad only to find your lettuce is wet and soggy and starting to go bad? Storing lettuce correctly allows the vegetable to stay fresh for several days longer. Lettuce is the most widely planted salad vegetable, it is high in fiber and has many other nutritional benefits. Lettuce is best if eaten fresh as it doesn't freeze or preserve well. Take a few extra steps to storing lettuce properly and all your salads will be fresh and crunchy. If you get tired of using lettuce in salads and on sandwiches, you can use it in addition to or in place of escarole in soups. Some varieties also work well as a sandwich wrap, in place of bread.

## About Escarole:

Escarole is a variety of endive whose leaves are broader, paler and less bitter than other members of the endive family. With a crinkled shape to the leaves, escarole is an example of greens that provide various degrees of flavor as the outer leaves are removed. While the outer leaves are a dark green, peeling back a layer will reveal a lighter shade of green.

As more layers are peeled back, the leaves continue to lighten in shade. As the shade of the leaves lightens, the degree of bitter taste also lessens. High in folic acid, fiber, and vitamins A and K, escarole can be eaten raw or gently cooked. Try tossing a few escarole leaves into a mild salad, serving some quickly wilted with lemon juice, or stir chopped escarole into soup.

### **How to store lettuce and escarole:**

Peel apart the leaves and rinse under cool running water. Place leaves in a cool bowl or sink of water for additional cleansing. Swish the leaves in the water for about 30 seconds (let them sit longer if they are wilted), sand and dirt will begin to sink to the bottom of the bowl. Remove the leaves from the water. Blot the lettuce leaves dry with paper towels or spin dry in a salad spinner. The lettuce is now ready to pack for storage.

Roll leaves in paper towels loosely to store. Place leaves in a large plastic bag. Recycled grocery bags work well for this. Seal the bag well so not too much air can enter the bag. The lettuce can now be stored in the fridge and should stay fresh for at least a week or so. You can take out what you need whenever you want to make a salad or sandwich and then just reseal the bag. The plastic bags can also be reused!

### **Leaf lettuce and Asian Mix**

You can wash these mixes just like head lettuce. Rinse well so that all the extra dirt is off of the leaves. Spin in the salad spinner and make sure all excess water is dried off. Keep wrapped in paper towels in a sealed plastic bag for extra freshness.

### **About Bok Choy:**

Bok Choy in Latin, its scientific name, is *brassicca chinesis* or Chinese cabbage. The Chinese commonly call it *pac choi* or white vegetable. Bok Choy when flowering is called bok choy sum (which in Cantonese actually means heart). The leaves may get lighter in color and you will see small yellow flowers in the center of the plant. It is said that these are the best bok choy plants. Bok Choy's popularity comes from its light, sweet flavor, crisp texture and nutritional value. Not only is bok choy high in Vitamin A, Vitamin C and calcium, but it is low in calories. It is an extremely healthy vegetable, full of beta-carotene, calcium and folate. Bok choy can be served cooked or raw and can be used in salads, stir-fries, and soups. Bok Choy can be stored like any other leafy green vegetable, like lettuce or spinach.

### **How to store Bok Choy:**

Cut the root of the bok choy off, where the leaves join together at the bottom. Keep the white stems of the bok choy as you will most likely be using both parts of the leaf in your recipe.

Fill a large bowl with cool water and soak the leaves of bok choy. Swish the leaves around in the water to remove any dirt.

Remove the leaves of the bok choy and gently shake off excess water. Blot them dry on paper towels.

Roll out another section of fresh paper towels. Place the leaves of bok choy on the paper towel in a single layer. Roll them up.

Store the rolled leaves in a plastic bag. The produce bag from the grocery store is fine to reuse for this.

Place the bag in your refrigerator crisper. The bok choy should stay fresh for five to six days.

### **About Kohlrabi:**

The German derived name translates to English as "cabbage turnip", which is pretty much what it tastes like. We grow both the violet and green varieties, but that is only the color of the skin. Both the root and leaves are edible, underneath the tough outer skin of the root is a greenish white, firm, crunchy flesh very similar to a peeled potato. The leaves have the flavor of turnips greens ( which I think are similar in flavor to broccoli rabe) and should be separated from the root prior to storage. Cook the leaves the same as any other slow-cooked greens like kale or collards. It is better to peel away the tough outer skin of the root before using. Kohlrabi can be eaten raw, sliced with dips, or shredded into coleslaw. It can be battered and deep fried, sliced, or cut into wedges and added to stir fry or curry. It is definitely one of the most versatile vegetables you will find!

### **Storing Kohlrabi:**

To store kohlrabi, snip off the leaves close to the bulb portion. Then trim off the stems from the leaves. Store the leaves in a zip lock bag with a damp paper towel. Store the

bulb in separate zip lock bag without a paper towel. Both will keep for about 2 weeks if stored properly in your crisper drawer.

### **Storing Kale or Collard Greens:**

Fill a large deep bowl with water. Take the rubber band or twist-tie off the bunch of kale. Submerge the leaves of kale in water, swishing them around gently to remove any dirt. Allow kale to soak for a few minutes and swish again. Pour water out of the bowl and rinse kale under fresh water. Dry kale with dish towels or paper towels pat completely dry. Cut up kale so it can fit in the zip lock bag wrap in paper towels and store in crisper draw, if you will not use the kale within 2 or 3 days we recommend you to blanch and freeze the kale too keep the nutritional value and taste!

### **About Dandelion Greens:**

Dandelion Greens are high in dietary fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Vitamin B6, Calcium, Iron, Potassium, Manganese, Magnesium, Phosphorus and Copper.

### **How to store Dandelion Greens:**

Like any fresh cooking green: these should be kept in a plastic bag and put into the fridge as soon as you get home. when ready to use Fill a large bowl or dishpan with cold water. Add greens and swirl around vigorously. All the dirt and sand will sink to the bottom. Lift greens out of basin and into a salad spinner or colander. Spin greens to dry or drain as best you can and dry on towels.

### **About Swiss Chard:**

Swiss Chard is very low in Saturated Fat and Cholesterol. It's also a good source of Thiamin, Folic Acid and Zinc, and a great source of Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C,

Vitamin E, Vitamin K, Vitamin B6, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium, and Copper.

### **How to Store Swiss Chard:**

Once you get home you can place it in the fridge to keep it cool before you use it. Place the Swiss chard in a plastic Ziploc bag, without washing it and place it in the fridge. It can last in the fridge 4 or 5 days.

### **Storing Beets:**

When storing Beets store the leaves and the roots separately. The leaves you can store like Swiss Chard and the roots can be stored like radishes in a zip lock bag in your fridge. Beet roots will last a while (3-4 weeks) in the fridge if stored properly. The leaves will last about 5 days or so in the fridge.

### **Planting Fresh herbs:**

In the beginning of the CSA season you will be getting a variety of commonly used herbs. We use two different size herb pots. The herbs in the larger 8 inch pots can left to grow in the pot and used as needed or they can be planted into the ground. We also use a smaller size pot, these pots need to be transplanted into a larger pot or into the ground so that the roots have plenty of space to grow.

Most herbs are easy to grow, but you must select the proper location to grow them. Most herbs need a sunny location. The oils, which account for the herbs flavor, are produced in the greatest quantity when plants receive six to eight hours of full sunlight each day. If you don't have a good, sunny location, many herbs will tolerate light shade, but their growth and quality will not be as good.

When selecting a site for an herb garden, you must consider drainage. None of the important herbs grow in wet soils, but a few, such as mint, thrive in fairly moist soils.

You can grow many herbs indoors, but they will be less productive than those grown outdoors. They require the same conditions as herbs that are grown outdoors: plenty of sunlight and good, well-drained soil.

### **Storing Fresh Herbs:**

Rinse fresh herbs well and lay on a paper towel and pat dry. Wrap loosely in a paper towel and place in zip lock bag. Store your bag of herbs in your refrigerator's crisper.

If you won't be using your herbs within a week or so, it's best to freeze them. Frozen herbs can be used just like fresh herbs in any recipe. Though they will lose some of their flavor over time, so it's best to use them within a year and use a bit more than a recipe calls for. Here's how to freeze fresh herbs:

#### Flash freezing herbs

1. Pick the best freshest herbs you can find
2. Wash and pat herbs dry, you can also chop them as if you were preparing them to use
3. Lay on layer of wax/parchment paper on cookie sheet
4. Freeze overnight
5. Place leaves in freezer bag(s), using a straw to suck out excess air

#### Ice Cube Tray Method

Another method is called the ice cube tray method. This method of freezing herbs works well if you plan to use your herbs in stews or soups. Again, pick the freshest herbs out of your garden, and rinse them thoroughly. Pat them dry with a paper towel to get rid of any excess moisture. Hand chop the herbs, or use a food processor. Place the chopped herbs into an ice cube tray. You want to use about one tablespoon of the herbs for each cube slot. Fill up the ice cube tray with whatever stock you will be using for your soup or stew. Place the ice cube tray in the freezer, and leave it in there overnight, or for about 8 to 10 hours. After they are frozen solid, place the cubes into a freezer bag and close tightly. Again, get out all of the excess air that you possibly can. You can also put the whole ice cube tray into the freezer bag instead of popping out the cubes. Put the freezer bag into the freezer until you're ready to use your herbs.

\*You can use the ice cube method even if you're not using the herbs in stew or soups. Instead of using the stock, just fill up the ice cube slots with water.

## Ice Cube Tray Method Using Oil

If you plan on using your herbs in meals that require oil, you can use the ice cube tray method, only this time you'll be adding oil to it, as a bit of preparation for the dish. Select your freshest herbs from your garden, and wash them thoroughly. Pat them dry with a paper towel. When you hand chop, or put your herbs into the food processor, add in a third of a cup of oil. You want to add a third of a cup for every cup of herbs. Place the chopped herbs and oil into the ice cube tray, and freeze overnight or for 8 to 10 hours. Again, you want about one tablespoon of the herbs in each ice cube slot. After the time is up, place the cubes or the whole tray into a freezer bag, and freeze until you're ready to use the herbs.

These methods of freezing fresh herbs are simple, and they don't take much time at all. If you have a lot of fresh herbs in your garden, and you're not sure if you'll be able to use them before they spoil, freezing them is definitely an option. Freezing herbs can preserve the flavor for several months, and there's no change in how they'll make your meals taste.

## Drying Fresh Herbs:

Air drying herbs is not only the easiest and least expensive way to dry fresh herbs, but this slow drying process also doesn't deplete the herbs of their oils. This process works best with herbs that don't have a high moisture content, like Bay, Dill, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Summer Savory and Thyme. Moisture dense herbs, like Basil, Chives, Mint, Tarragon preserve better in a dehydrator or low temperature oven, or try freezing them

## How To Air Dry Herbs

1. Cut healthy branches from your herb plants.
2. Remove any dry or diseased leaves
3. Shake gently to remove any insects.
4. If necessary, rinse with cool water and pat dry with paper towels. Wet herbs will mold and rot.
5. Remove the lower leaves along the bottom inch or so of the branch.
6. Bundle 4 - 6 branches together and tie as a bunch. You can use string or a rubber band. The bundles will shrink as they dry and the rubber band will loosen, so check periodically that the bundle is not slipping. Make small bundles if you are trying to dry herbs with high water content.
7. Punch or cut several holes in a paper bag. Label the bag with the name of the herb you are drying.
8. Place the herb bundle upside down into the bag.
9. Gather the ends of the bag around the bundle and tie closed. Make sure the herbs are not crowded inside the bag.

10. Hang the bag upside down in a warm, airy room.
11. Check in about two weeks to see how things are progressing. Keep checking weekly until your herbs are dry and ready to store.

### Storing Dried Herbs

1. Store your dried herbs in air tight containers. Zip closing bags will do. I like to use small canning jars.
2. Be sure to label and date your containers.
3. Your herbs will retain more flavor if you store the leaves whole and crush them when you are ready to use them.
4. Discard any dried herbs that show the slightest sign of mold.
5. Place containers in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.
6. Dried herbs are best used within a year. As your herbs lose their color, they are also losing their flavor.
7. Use about 1 teaspoon crumbled dried leaves in place of a tablespoon of fresh