

What's in Your Box - September

I joke that autumn arrives firmly on September 1st in the UK and I'm almost always right, but there is still plenty of veg on the farm and late summer veg runs well into October.

This is what you might find in your box in September:

aubergine—still abundant well into autumn. An incredibly versatile veg which I find people either love or hate. Great in stir fries, soup, lasagne, pasta, roasted, fried and baked—you name it!

beets—we have a new crop of beets coming on and you'll get golden beets as well as the traditional red ones for a bit of colour!

basil—an incredibly versatile herb. Add to anything with tomatoes, great in curries, make pesto!

carrots—we should be well into the crop by now but they will start to be loose rather than bunched in the boxes.

chard—probably the most popular green about, there are two types: swiss chard with a thick white stalk and rainbow chard, called so because of the fabulously coloured stalks—yellow, pink, and red. We tend to mix the two in our bunches. Easiest way to cook chard is to tear up leaves, taking the central stalk out, put a bit of water in a frying pan (about and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch), throw your chard in, drizzle with olive oil, sea salt and garlic (optional), cover and cook on high heat for about 5 -8 minutes stirring occasionally and making sure that water doesn't complete evaporate. A squeeze of lemon at the end will take away the chalky feel it sometime get. Also, lots of people eat the stalks, chopping them up finely and sautéing before adding the leaves. If you are making risotto (which chard is lovely for) definitely use the stalks as you would celery cooking with onions at the start of the dish.

chillies—these start ripening in late August, early September. We grow some hot ones, so watch out!

cucumber—there may be a few last cucumbers around in early September, but more likely they will have ended.

courgettes—there is so much you can do with them, from simply frying them up in olive oil and garlic to adding to pastas, curries and stir fries, lasagne and pizza.

fennel—has a white bulb and long fronds and a distinctive anise flavour. Lovely thinly sliced into salad or coleslaw like celery or you can bake in cream and top with cheese as a side (blanch them first before baking). The tops are nice used as an herb; chop finely.

french beans—our second crop will be in production! French beans are the best of the beans in my opinion; you don't have to do anything more than steam them until just tender, slather with butter and sprinkle a little salt and squeeze a bit of lemon over them. Oh so good!

fresh herbs—using fresh herbs in your cooking will give it a rich, boisterous flavours. We'll be growing parsley, sage, thyme and oregano. Sage is great with roast meats; thyme can be mixed into ground beef to make a tasty difference in burgers and it's also good with roast chicken; oregano is good in lasagne and pastas and really good with tomato; parsley, you can put into just about anything to lift the flavour.

kale— we grow a range of different kales throughout the year - Russian kale, Curly Kale, Cavolo Nero, and other special varieties as well. Key to liking kale is cooking it until it's tender which does take a bit longer but it shouldn't be tough and chewy. It works particularly well when cooked with lots of garlic and well seasoned.

yellow and red onions—we've pulled our onions and are drying them; they should take us well into winter if our crop is good.

raspberries—we sometimes have a September crop of these loveliest of berries. However, it can be a tricky crop and very weather dependent - you can't pick them if it's rained as they mold almost instantaneously. Like strawberries, our raspberries are grown to hold, so eat them as quickly as possible and keep refrigerated.

sweet peppers—we do peppers (along with chillis) really well and they are a staple of autumn. They are tasty and occasionally have a little heat (we were

surprised to find one of the varieties is slightly spicy; so maybe good to taste them before you chuck them into a stir fry for the kids...)

potatoes—we grow a range of varieties—Colleen, Ambo, Remarka, Cara and the popular Arran Victory every year with some variation.

salad leaves—our winter staple is start coming back about this time. We grow a wide variety of leaves, including rocket, mizuna, mibuna (the long slender one), baby pak choi, red and golden streaks mustard and many others. The flavours are amazing.

sorrel—we don't always grow this unusual green, but when we do, it's lovely to have. It has a strong lemony flavour that is quite sharp if eaten raw; however this softens when cooked and it is *GORGEOUS* mixed into soups, quiches, curries and stir fries. Mixes well with spinach and chard also. See our recipes for ideas and try a couple.

spinach—delicious on its own or mixed with sorrel or chard; great for juicing as well.

tomatoes—we grow a range of different tomatoes: sungold (orange cherry toms that are really sweet); traditional Gardener's Delight red cherries; as well as interesting varieties like Tigerellas, Black Cherry, Marmande and other heirlooms. Tomato salad with with herbs, sea salt and pepper, olive oil, white wine vinegar and a splash of cream is a decadent way to enjoy them all!