

What's in Your Box - May

With spring on the move, new crops like strawberries and radish are a fresh start to the season!

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

carrots—generally we're in lovely UK carrots but by the end of the month, we'll be on to Italian and Spanish carrots for a time. The Italian and Spanish carrots don't always hold well, so please let us know if you have any trouble with them.

cauliflower—cauliflowers continue to be a staple into the spring.

celeriac—usually still available for a little longer. It can be cooked and made into a tasty mash or prepared raw in a remoulade or added to coleslaw. Parsnip and celeriac soup also makes a nice combo!

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.

green garlic—I always look forward to this seasonal specialty. We only get it in spring because this is garlic before it matures. The flavour is delicate but rich and gives an added dimension to whatever you put it in. Try doing an omelette with mushrooms, spring onions and green garlic (with a little cheese)—really yummy!

fennel—we sometimes grown an early crop of fennel in our tunnels in the early spring, so you may get these lovely licorishy bulbs in your box. You can slice up the bulb and add it to salad and use the long frond-like leaves in sauces. Fennel

is excellent with fish and also makes a good gratin with cream and parmesan cheese.

fresh herbs—herbs are coming back—parsley, oregano, sage, thyme, basil, coriander will all be turning up in your boxes in the coming months. Use them! Fresh herbs added to just about anything enhances the flavour. Taste them, think about the flavour and test them out.

kale—we should have new season kale sometime this month. 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 with salt and pepper.

leeks—we're usually through our leeks by May but other UK growers still have them in abundance! It's one of those veg that you can do so much with. Make a pasta bake with sautéed leeks and a mustard béchamel sauce, or leek and potato soup, leek quiche, or just chop it finely and sauté it up slowly until it carmelizes as a side to meat or fish. Look through the monthly recipe sheets for ideas.

lettuces—lettuces will be standing in as our winter salad crop comes to an end.

mushrooms—a staple in the hungry gap. We get a couple of different varieties from a grower in the Borders which we put into the boxes.

yellow onions—we are through our own onions by May and are buying in UK yellow onions. As always, anything we buy in will be fully organically certified by the Soil Association and as local as possible—Wales when available and otherwise UK; we may occasionally buy in European onions in the heart of the hungry gap (March - May), but we don't buy in beyond Europe.

potatoes—we are usually through our potatoes by March or April, but there are still UK potatoes available that we will be buying in. Our new potatoes come on in June or July.

radish—hurray for the new season veg! Radishes are getting hotter as they develop.

rhubarb—we do a small crop of rhubarb every year and it sometime appears in the box if we have enough to go round. Rhubarb is very tart so needs a lot of sugar, but there is nothing like the flavour. Stew it up with a small splash of

water and the sugar and eat with yoghurt or make a quick crumble. I also add a bit of orange juice when I'm cooking with it, to take away the funny chalky feeling you sometimes get.

strawberries—we've put in strawberries in the last couple of years and they've been a real winner for us. We grow varieties known for their taste and they are delicious. However, unlike supermarket strawberries, they are not grown to keep for an extended period of time, so keep them in your fridge if you don't eat the whole punnet as soon as it arrives!

spring onions—next up on the spring veg! Chop into salads, add to quiches. They have a delicate flavour and mild kick that gets spicier as the season gets on.

spinach—spinach makes for a great soup, is a lovely addition to a curry or stir fry or just sauté it in a splash of water with salt and pepper and a good squeeze of lemon (it takes the chalky taste away.)

spring greens—a lovely variation on cabbage, these greens are so tasty this time of year. Saute with onions, butter and cream and serve as a side with sausage and mash! Also great in soups and stir fries.

swede—the last of the UK crop is should still around, but it will be gone before the end of the month. Learn to love this vegetable—cook it well and add lots of seasoning, especially pepper.

tomatoes—hurrah for the Isle of Wight! Growers on the IOW. They are UK specialists in tomatoes and the earliest tomatoes in the UK start coming in this month. It's great to have as a stop gap to our own lovely tomato crop which will be arriving in late June / early July.