

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000181 EndHTML:0000003163 StartFragment:0000002362
EndFragment:0000003127
SourceURL:file:///localhost/Users/computer/Desktop/obits/barefootfarmer.doc

When spring fever hits, onions are the first thing on my mind. They can withstand temperatures down to 20 °, and need to get well established before warmer weather sets in. we eat onions often, and assume our customers do, too.

Onion varieties are classified according to the length of the day light required for them to bulb. Summer days are longer up North than they are in the South. Northern, or long day varieties, won't bulb up as well in the south, so we grow short day varieties. There are also intermediate ones, which do well here, too.

Version:1.0 StartHTML:0000000181 EndHTML:0000004469 StartFragment:0000002366
EndFragment:0000004433
SourceURL:file:///localhost/Users/computer/Desktop/obits/barefootfarmer.doc

Corpa is the best storage onion. Candy and Red Candy won't keep as long, but make a sweeter, larger bulb. Superstar is an All-American selection with a mild flavor. We eat up the sweet onions first, and enjoy the storage onions throughout the winter.

Nine loads of well-composted manure were spread and worked into about a quarter acre of good garden soil. Rows were laid off and we're ready to go. We sort through bunched, removing tiny ones and broken plants. One person drops a plant every six inches, and another firms them into the soft soil. Buckets of water are gently poured down the row as soon as the plants are in.

When the field is finished, I fluff the soil back up with the cultivators. The chickweed and dead nettle complain, but their days are numbered. No weeds are allowed in the onion patch.

As soon as possible, we get in there with our hoes. By keeping the soil stirred up, we check evaporation and kill the weeds while they're still in the embryo stage, sprouting but not surfaced yet. The first hoeing pulls the soil away from the plants, the next brings it back in, and we keep alternating so the soil is always loose.

By July the tops are yellowing. We step on them so they are bent at the neck, which facilitates drying. Before a non-rainy spell, we pull them and let them sun dry for about a week, turning

Onions

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

them a few times. Then it's up into the barn loft, on slatted boards to continue the drying process. Eventually the tops are cut off and they're put into netted onion sacks. Sometimes we leave the dried tops on and braid them, to hang up on the kitchen wall.

A meal often begins by thinly slicing an onion, and carmelizing it in the frying pan with olive oil. Onions wake up beans or potatoes, flavor the soups and smother the burgers. When spring brings out the buttercups and robins, the onions in the pantry have disappeared. It's time to think about planting them again.