

## Harvesting

Written by Jeff Poppen  
Tuesday, July 16, 2013

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The potatoes want to be harvested soon, too. The green tops are browning, and after they are dead for two weeks the skins will toughen enough to handle without peeling off. Then we'll plow them up and get them in the cellar.

Summer squash and cucumbers are finally appearing in all their glory, thoroughly enjoying all the moisture. But it can be so muddy that we sink up to our ankles getting them. A mulch would help, but I can't imagine how to get it spread.

Weeds have engulfed the lettuce, which is about gone anyway. We are pulling weeds in the winter squash and watermelons, and have some Johnson grass to dig out, too. The sweet potato field has six rows hoed, but eight rows are filled with very happy weeds, who are loving the rain which is keeping us out.

Every Monday we harvest celery, swiss chard, parsley, beets and other vegetables, whether it rains or not. The procession of produce marches on through all kinds of weather. We don't complain about rain or the mud between our toes, but remain thankful for the water on the crops.

It is raining on my parade of vegetable harvesting. We got the garlic in quickly this year, and it is curing out well. By turning the stalks over and drying them out, they will soon be tied and hung up, and will store through mid-winter.

On the other hand, the onions have me a bit concerned. They like it to be dry and hot during their last month of growth, which made last year perfect onion weather. They are all out of the ground, or I could say "mud," but have a soft spot where they were underground.

We have them laid out in the barn, on top of hay. In years past I have lost a lot to rot, so we are keeping an eye on them. A truck farmer would simply sell them all now; as they are big and

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beautiful. But a CSA farmer needs onions to send every week, so we try to store them. Our customers can help, by taking all the onion they can and storing them in their own garage or shed.

Lay them on something like a screen or hang them up by tying a few together with twine, feel the bottoms, and if they are soft, use those first. Onions can be blanched and frozen, or dehydrated.