

We had our first frost over night. I can't remember a year without a September frost, and it is not rare here to have frost in August. At last, though, it seems like fall. The wood pile is still growing, but it won't be long before we will have a fire in the basement stove that heats the cabin. Then, the wood shed must be full to last until May.

Along with the changing of the seasons, our eating habits take a turn, as well. We are still enjoying the best tomatoes we have had in years, and there will be many more mornings with sliced ripe tomatoes on buttered rye flat bread toast. But, the early summer crops are gone, and we like to eat with the seasons, anyway. During the warm months, I watch the squash and cabbage and think about the good meals they will provide when the weather has turned cold.

I made some sauerkraut a few days ago. The first batches, made of red cabbage, are nearly cured now, and their odor, that some people find offensive, just tells me that we are going to have some delicious combinations of sauerkraut, apples, onions, and pork this fall.

Potatoes have been on our dinner table since July, when I began "scrabbling" the hills--digging in the dirt with my hands, pulling out tiny tubers without harming the plants. Now, though, the potatoes are mature--Butte russets for baking, red French Fingerlings to boil and roast, and "regular" white and yellow Onaways and Satinas for general purposes.

Best of all, though, I think, are the flavors and textures of winter squash. I like buttercup type squash far better than any other kind, and especially Uncle David's Dakota Desert variety that David Podoll and family have been growing for decades. According to Fedco's seed catalog, "they've been selecting it for 40 years, crossing it with hubbards and other *maximas*, primarily for color, taste, sweetness, and vigor and hardiness productivity." We use this squash in various ways, but it is best, I think, peeled and chunked up, dressed with salt, pepper, butter, and a dollop of maple syrup, and baked. Even the dog likes the leftovers (if there are any.)

We have been eating beets all summer, starting with the tiny greens in salads and sautéed. Now, though, the roots are mature, and they

provide a lot of variety and color for our meals. Sometimes, I roast the long Cylindra beets, slice them, and combine them with onions and thinly sliced basil, add a dressing of olive oil, lime juice, salt, and a spoon full of honey. A little homemade feta cheese on top makes this extra special.

At other times, I shred the raw beets, sauté them in olive oil with some chopped garlic, add a little vinegar, and season them with salt and pepper. There are seldom any left in the dish.

Although we still have lettuce, herbs, peppers, tomatoes, and eggplant in the unheated greenhouses, our desires change this time of year, too, and we more often turn to leek and potato soups, root vegetables and squash, and lots of garlic. The cabin is fragrant with the aromas of fall and winter, and these heartier meals prepare our bodies, we think, for the cold season to come. We await it with pleasure.