



# Boánn's Banks

Sustainable Agriculture Along the Broad River

June 1, 2002

## This Week at Market

- Mesclun Salad Mix
- Mustard "Minzuna", "Purple Wave", "Tatsoi", and "Osaka Purple"
- Chinese Cabbage "China Choy"
- Lambs' Quarters
- Edible Broccoli flowers
- Turnip Roots, "Gold Ball"
- Radishes, "Black Spanish", "French Breakfast", "Cherry Belle", "White Icicle"
- Carrot "Red Core Chantenay"
- Rutabaga "Joan"

## Rutabagas with Caramelized Onions

- 8 tablespoons** (1 stick) butter
- 1 3/4 pounds** onions, halved, thinly sliced
- 2 1/4 pounds** rutabagas, cut into 1/2- to 3/4-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons** honey

Melt 5 tablespoons butter in heavy large skillet over medium-low heat. Add onions and sauté until brown, 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook rutabagas in large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well.

Melt 3 tablespoons butter in large skillet over medium-low heat. Add rutabagas; sauté until heated through, about 10 minutes. Drizzle honey over. Gently stir in onions. Season with salt and pepper. (Can be made 3 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Rewarm over medium-low heat.)

Serves 8.



Hello! It's been a busy week on the farm. Now that June is here, the focus goes from planting seeds and seedlings to nurturing the young plants growing. The spring plants are fading fast – but we still have some nice baby salad greens this week. The green spinach is gone, but the red mountain spinach and the lambs' quarters are still going strong. The mustards are starting to bloom, but their leaves are still good eating. The root crops are coming of age, so you'll see plenty of them in the weeks ahead.

We still have a few seeds to put in (mostly varieties of peppers), but most everything has been planted. There are several varieties of heirloom tomatoes of course, and also many varieties of beans (green, shell, and soy), okra, squash, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, and melons.

Fifty new baby chicks arrived from the hatchery in Iowa on Tuesday. We'll do a better job of protecting these from marauding dogs, and later this fall they'll add to the egg supply. They're a mix of heritage breeds, including the Araucana "Easter egg" chicken that produces green,

blue, and pink eggs. Also, the hatchery threw in a few unusual chicks, such as one with feathered feet, one with a feathery top hat, and another with a naked neck. While these grow, the other flock will begin laying later this month.

We don't use any insecticides on our spring plants, not even organic ones. We've found that they affect the delicate flavor of spring greens. In our home garden last year, we let our chickens roam free in the garden, and they made quick work of the beetles and leaf hoppers. The state frowns on us doing that in the market garden, though, so the bugs had free reign. Or so they thought. Garden spiders, wolf spiders, and frogs and toads have all moved in, and I see more predators than I do prey. It's nice to watch nature work things out itself rather than trying to shape things for our benefit. I think we come out ahead this way.

Thanks for coming to market this week. Eat well!

-- Chris and Eric Wagoner  
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## Featured Vegetable

The strange rutabaga, *Brassica napus*, is this week's featured vegetable. Rutabagas are also known as "Swedish turnips" or "Swedes" and are often confused with turnips. They're actually a species all their own, a result of an unusual cross between turnips and wild cabbages in Bohemia in the 1600s. They grow especially well in northern climates, and Sweden has practically adopted it as their national vegetable. Before the potato came out of the New World, turnips and rutabagas were the main starch of northern European cuisine. Some say the potato won out only because it was much easier to produce alcohol for drinking from them. The word rutabaga comes from the Swedish *rotbagga*, or "thick root".

The vegetable is very nutritious, providing high levels of Vitamins A, B, and C as well as iron. There is more than 100% of the RDA of Vitamin C in a single serving, earning the vegetable the nickname "the orange of the north".

They're not often grown in the south, but we'll have plenty coming in now and another variety in the fall. The variety at market now is "Joan", the mildest and sweetest of the yellow-fleshed rutabagas. Use them raw or cooked, as you would a potato: roasting, grating, mashing, and boiling. You may wish to peel them, but it's not necessary.