

clover food lab

We got a lot of requests for tips on storing root vegetables from our survey. So we thought, who better to teach you about storing root vegetables than one of our favorite root vegetable farmers, Rosendo Santizo from Winter Moon Roots!

He'll be guest writing today's Veggie Monster and giving you tips that apply to any root vegetables you may find yourself with this winter.



Greetings from Winter Moon Roots!

My name is Rosendo Santizo, and I am the owner of Winter Moon Roots. I'm originally from Guatemala - I came to the US in 2005 and started farming in 2008. A year later, I joined the Winter Moon Roots team harvesting, washing, and packing vegetables with Michael Docter who started the farm. This past summer, I'm very proud to have been able to purchase the farm from him!

I'm so happy to be continuing to bring fresh, organic, local root veggies to Boston through Clover. Michael started Winter Moon Roots with the goal of producing fresh, organic roots for winter markets in the most sustainable way possible and I'm proud to be continuing to run the farm with the same goals.

We harvest all of our roots in late fall, which gives them time to accumulate sugars and get super sweet. The roots are then stored all winter long in our cooler that uses cold outside air, in order to minimize our carbon footprint. We offer CSA shares through Clover every winter, and supply the restaurants with carrots (for the famous carrot sandwich!) and other roots.

What is a CSA?

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. In a CSA model, customers pay a farm up front for food that they will receive over the course of a season. The farmer can then use those funds when they need them the most - to buy seeds, fertilizer, and other materials to get the crops started. In return for this service to the farmers, customers usually pay a reduced rate for food. There are produce, meat, seafood, even wine CSAs (in CA wine country, at least!) CSAs are a great way to support your local farm AND get an amazing deal on fresh, local food.

How to store root vegetables

The CSA that we offer through Clover is all root vegetables (plus Mi Tierra corn tortillas and local beans!). Most root vegetables want to be stored cold and moist. This includes **carrots, beets, parsnips, radishes, rutabaga, and turnips**. At the farm, this means our cooler runs just above freezing and as close to 100% humidity as we can get. At home, the best way to store them is in the fridge, in a plastic bag with a few holes poked in it (if you get our share through Clover, the bag that the roots come in is perfect to toss into the fridge!). Roots are alive - the cells are using energy, using oxygen, releasing carbon dioxide. The cold temperature slows down the metabolic processes happening in the roots, the plastic bag keeps the roots from drying out, and the holes in the plastic bag allow for some oxygen/carbon dioxide movement. If you don't have room in your fridge, wrap your bag of roots in a blanket or 2, and put it in the coldest part of your house (an unheated entryway, by a drafty door, maybe even in the garage). The roots will produce a bit of heat and the blanket will keep them insulated. They won't last all winter like this, but definitely a week or so!

In our share, the exception to this rule is potatoes: store potatoes in a paper bag at room temperature. If potatoes are exposed to light, the skin will slowly turn green (chlorophyll, the pigment that makes leaves green, starts developing in the skin!). This green part of the potato can taste bitter, but it can easily be removed by peeling.

Sweet potatoes are also very sensitive to cold, so keep them at room temperature also.

We hope this helps you enjoy your root vegetables all winter long!



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Clover Food Lab 1075 Cambridge St Cambridge, MA 02139