

The benefits and challenges of root crops for winter market:

There are lots of things that you can grow for winter sales, many of which are root crops. Items we are selling right now at Muddy Fingers Farm include: Turnips, Rutabagas, Kale, Celeriac, Winter squash, Winter radishes, Carrots, Parsnips, Potatoes, Spinach, Beets, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Onions, Garlic, Leeks, Lettuce, Salad mixes, Greens (brassica family especially)

Benefits of root crops: More to sell at winter market/CSA

High demand for local food in winter, less people currently growing for winter sales.

Stored in cooler or root cellar, harvest is already done- just clean, pack and display to sell!

Challenges of root crops:Need to be planted at a busy time! (mid august–mid sept for the most part)

Need to be harvested at a tired time (before they freeze hard/ are damaged)

Need consistent storage conditions (Maintain freeze free, but below 35 degrees.)

And there can be the....*What the heck is that thing factor?* Winter roots are new to people and some resemble other or other vegetables.

Planning to have items for winter sales: Planning to have items for winter sales starts early: onions a started from seed in February, garlic is planted the fall before! But lots of quick growing roots are planted in t summer!

We plan for storage beets and carrots to be planted the last week of July. Watermelon radishes and other stora radishes as well as turnips get planted in the middle of August (hopefully after the flea beetles are gone)! Rutabagas go in at the beginning of August. Parsnips take a while and are planted in early May. And Celeriac started in trays in the greenhouse in mid march and transplanted out into mulch in May.

Price:We sell our winter items through a CSA as well as winter farmer's markets. This year we charged \$2/ all of the roots except \$3/lb for parsnips and \$6/lb for garlic and shallots.

Tools:A root washer is very handy! Washing roots in the cool fall weather with a hose or immersing them in of water, is cold, muddy work!

A root harvester would be handy, but we are small scale enough that we harvest with a middle buster plow, a digging fork or by hand.

Most roots are stored in perforated plastic bags in our walk in cooler, which is operated when its warm with an conditioner and a cool bot. In the winter a light bulb is good enough to keep them from freezing- when it is ve cold, we use a little milk house heater set quite low- it doesn't take a lot to keep the temperature just above fre We monitor conditions in the cooler from inside our house with a wireless temperature and humidity station f Johnny's selected seeds.