

This week we will be studying Root Crops. As with cole crops, the root crops we will be looking at are plants that do well in less heat. Can you think of some of the crops we have already planted that are root crops? What about radishes, carrots, or beets?

This past week we have started digging sweet potatoes. Do sweet potatoes fit into the root crop category? What do you think? A hint: Botanists distinguish true roots (such as taproots and tuberous roots) from non-roots (such as bulbs, corms, rhizomes, and tubers). Carrots and beets are considered root vegetables because the area of stored carbohydrates and sugars is part of the root tissue, while bulbs and tubers (such as the sweet potato) store their carbohydrates and sugars in the stem. Chefs consider both to be root vegetables based on use and because both contain enlarged storage organs of carbohydrates and sugars that we like to eat.

This week we will finish digging sweet potatoes. This can be a bit messy especially if the ground is wet so the correct apparel is important. The process involves a number of steps. First we will remove the vines and then the volunteers will loosen the soil around the sweet potato so that we will be able to dig through the soil with our gloved hands to gather the sweet potatoes. Before we start the digging and gathering process we will need to remove all the sweet potato vines and bring them to the compost area. Once the sweet potatoes have been harvested they will need to be washed off to remove most of the soil. They will need to dry before bagging for you to take home. It's a big job so we will have many teams working TOGETHER to make it happen.

This week we will start the lesson on root crops (Oct 29 and Nov 5th.) Please come appropriately dressed to harvest the sweet potatoes, gloves, no opened toed shoes!, and legs covered is advisable.

Stay safe and see you on thursday for the fun,