



# LOON ORGANICS

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## What's in the box 7/7:

**Baby Fennel:** Info. Pg 2

**Marjoram:** Similar to Oregano, but milder and more floral. Some have little flowers on stems—these are edible.

**Garlic Scapes:** Curlicue flower of the garlic plant. This is it for these until next year.

**Mesclun Mix:** Baby arugula, mizuna, and komatsuna greens. These are all “mustard” greens that are delicious in salads. A slight peppery bite yet still mild.

**Pea Shoots:** Info on Pg. 2.

**Basil/Edible Flowers:** Red and green basil—flavor is the same, only difference is color. The edible flowers are SO cute on cupcakes. Nasturtium flowers (large ones) have a radish-like flavor. They're very yummy stuffed with a soft cheese, herbs, and garlic scapes.

**Baby Beets:** These store best if you cut the roots from the greens and store them both in a plastic bag. Don't forget to eat the greens—they are similar to chard.

**Cucumbers:** English and Asian varieties of cucumbers from the greenhouse. Asian variety is the long one—they're our fav.

**Peas:** Sugar snap variety and a few snow peas mixed in.

**Green Leaf Lettuce:** This is a summer variety of leaf lettuce that is a cross between leaf lettuce and an iceberg. It makes fantastic salads and has a lot of crunchy heft to its bite.

## Week 4: Happy 4<sup>th</sup>!

Another busy week as we flip the calendar and head into July. Hope you all enjoyed both the holiday weekend and your vegetables. In vegetable news, we're still excited about the sugar snap and snow peas of course. We've picked around two hundred pounds of peas in the past week-and-a-half for our CSA boxes, and eaten our fair share while we're picking. For the next few weeks, we'll continue to pick this planting as well as another planting of both snow and snap peas from another field. All together though it should equal plenty of peas for the box. Peas don't need much in terms of prepping or cooking—my motto is simple tastes best. If you cook your peas for just a few minutes until they are crunchy-tender, and serve with lots of high-quality salted butter, it may almost be as popular as fresh sweet corn. At least it is in my book.

As I mentioned in last week's newsletter, our organic inspector came last Tuesday afternoon to walk the farm, talk with us, and review the fifty odd pages of paperwork that we maintain for our certification. The paperwork includes everything from greenhouse planting logs to cultivation, fertilization and harvesting records. Admittedly, it's a lot of paperwork but it also keeps us organized and on top of things. The inspection went well, and we got great feedback on how we're managing things. Now the inspector takes his review of our visit back to our certifying agency, International Certification Services in North Dakota, who then reviews it again and eventually we get our 2009 organic certificate in a month or two. Certification de-mystified! Oftentimes the inspector is also an organic farmer so it's always interesting to meet another farmer and hear about where they're from and what they do on their farm.

We're also back to our old watering routine this week, although chances are good that we might get some rain falling from the sky this week. Despite the heavy soil here, we didn't get nearly enough rain a couple weeks back to get us through more than a few days. The drip irrigation lines are laid out in almost all the fields, and we hook up the drip lines either to our farm well or to our 500 gallon water tank. If you've been to the farm, you've seen the tank with a Southwest desert scene painted on the side: coyote next to a cactus howling at the moon in the desert. Our first piece of farm art! (Other than some of the farm machinery that also functions as rusty art.) We bought the waterwagon from a neighbor and his wife had painted it a few years back. At any rate, we fill up the wagon daily and can water a few rows of crops that are far away from the farm well. The water is directed straight to the plant roots through tiny slits in the drip tape every 8 inches. It is an efficient and thorough way to water most crops. We also use a water reel sprinkler that we purchased from Peter and Katy (previous farm owners) and this is a handy high-volume sprinkler that you pull out to the end of the field and it slowly waters the field and rolls itself back up. It's not as efficient to water with the sprinkler, but it works well for things like greens and onions. Keep your fingers crossed for rain!

**Pea Shoots:** Essence of pea flavor! You eat the whole thing, stem, leaf and all. Rinse, drain and sauté with a little water still clinging to them. It shouldn't take more than a minute to cook.

**Pear and Greens Salad**

- ½ lb. mesclun greens
- 2 ripe pears (we like Bosc or D'anjou)
- ½ cup blue cheese
- 1 Tblspon balsamic vinegar
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- Sea salt

Put greens in a bowl. Add slices of pear on top. Sprinkle blue cheese over everything. Whisk olive oil, balsamic vinegar, and sea salt together for the dressing. Serve immediately before pears turn brown.

We adapted this simple recipe from an Arugula-Pear salad recipe from [www.culinate.com](http://www.culinate.com). They have some of the best recipes on that website—check it out if you can.

**Produce Storage:** All produce this week should be stored in the fridge, preferably in plastic bags, if it isn't packed in one already. Everything should last over a week if stored properly. Beets with greens attached should have their greens removed from their roots. Contrary to popular belief, the roots last longer in the fridge NOT connected to their greens.

Basil is an herb that is somewhat cold sensitive, so we hesitate to keep it in the fridge for long, but usually it holds up for a few days. If the basil gets too cold, usually below 45 degrees or so, it gets damaged and the leaves turn black. If we want to keep basil fresh for a longer period of time, we usually put the plastic bag of basil in a paper bag on our counter in a cool spot. Putting a dry paper towel in the bag also helps soak up some of the moisture the basil releases as it sits and "respires". Your edible flowers will stay fresh in the fridge for a few days in their plastic bag.

As we were getting everything ready for the box today, it seemed like it was the week of cute, baby vegetables. There were a few crops, mainly our field-grown cucumbers, summer squash, and zucchini that were just **too** baby to pick for today. However, by next week they should be in full-force so expect to see them next week. For today's box though, the baby beets are the perfect size for roasting or steaming whole. We've been roasting a whole chicken in the oven at 425 degrees with fresh marjoram, chopped garlic scapes, basil, and olive oil stuffed in the cavity and under the skin. Then we trim the beet roots and add them in the bottom of the pan while the chicken is cooking. Usually the beets need at least 45 minutes to roast until they are fork tender. Both the chicken and the beets turn out amazingly.

**Fennel:** This is also a bit of a pint-sized version of the full-grown stuff. We are thinning out our main crop so that they all can grow bigger, and in the meantime, we can eat the thinnings. Fennel is often a new vegetable to CSAers. It is not very well-known in the United States, especially the Midwest, but you'll find it in practically every salad in Italy. Fennel has a storied and long history, most notably in ancient Greece where it was prized as food, medicine, herb, insect repellent, and was central in Greek mythology.

Fennel's flavor is best described as anise-like (similar to true licorice flavor), but it is mild, succulent, and mixes well with a variety of foods. The whole plant is edible. The bulb is usually the most valued part of the plant, and it can be sliced and eaten raw in salads or antipasto, steamed, baked, or sautéed. The stems of the fennel can be used like celery. Adding chopped fennel stems to a chicken, egg, or potato salad is a savory new twist. The beautiful fronds and leaves of the fennel can be added to salads, added to pesto along with your basil and scapes, or you can use the leaves as a bed to grill fish, meat, or tofu. Ok, here's a couple recipes to get you started:

**Tim's Layered Antipasto**

- 2 fennel bulbs, quartered and sliced thinly
- 1 jar (16 oz) mild cherry peppers
- 1 cup pitted, chopped imported black olives
- 8 oz. Italian salami, cut in thin strips
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh fennel leaves
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. thin-sliced provolone cheese, cut into strips
- Italian bread

Spread fennel in large, shallow serving dish. Drain off liquid from the jar of cherry peppers, reserving 1 Tablespoon of it for the dressing. Quarter the peppers and rinse under running water to remove seeds. Spread pepper quarters over fennel. Arrange olives over peppers. Scatter cheese and salami over olives. Whisk remaining ingredients; drizzle evenly over salad. Serve at room temperature with plenty of fresh Italian bread to soak up the dressing. This is from the cookbook *Asparagus to Zucchini* and was adapted from a recipe by Tim Mahoney of St. Paul.

**Fennel Egg Salad**

- 6 large eggs
- 4 Tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup finely chopped fennel stalk
- 1 ½ Tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2-3 tablespoons chopped fennel leaves
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2-4 tablespoons chopped sweet red onion

Place eggs in saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil. Turn off heat. Cover pan tightly and set timer for 9 minutes. When timer goes off, drain eggs and immerse them in ice water 10-15 minutes. Peel and quarter eggs; place in food processor and, using the pulse button, pulse until finely chopped, 8-12 times. Add remaining ingredients; pulse until ingredients are well blended, 3-6 more times. Use as a sandwich filling, a spread for crackers, a cold sauce for chilled asparagus, or a garnish for tossed green salads. Makes 2 cups. Also from *Asparagus to Zucchini* cookbook.

Enjoy your box this week! Happy Fourth of July!! Your farmers, Laura and Adam