



LOON ORGANICS

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What's in the box 7/22:

Broccoli: The stem is very sweet. Peel off the tough outer layer and you will be rewarded.

Fresh Walla Walla Onions: A fresh sweet onion with milder flavor than cured onions.

New Potatoes: First of the year. These have very delicate, thin skins so we didn't wash them. Wash before you eat!

Cucumbers: We have mix of greenhouse cukes and field cukes. The little cukes are pickling cukes that we grow for eating! They are delicious eating at a small size. There is a little bit of scarring on the skin from the cucumber beetles, but they still taste great.

Assorted Summer Squash: You received a mix of patty pan (saucer-shaped), yellow summer squash, zucchini, and/or Zephyr (yellow elongated squash with green tips). They all taste similarly and are great on the grill.

Red or Green Cabbage: A great cabbage for coleslaw or cabbage wraps!

Peas: Sugar snap variety and a few snow peas mixed in. Hope you're not sick of them yet!
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Red/Green Leaf Lettuce: This may not look purty, but it still makes a mean salad.

Basil: Make a batch of pesto and freeze the leftovers in ice cube trays. You can pop out the pesto cubes and put them in bags to use this coming winter.

Week 6: Bring on the Rain Dance

I know we talk about the weather a great deal in our weekly newsletter, but the comings and goings of the weather dominate every aspect of the vegetable growing business. It can mean the difference between a bountiful, abundant year and a year of scraping by. If you live near us in Hutchinson, then you know the maddening weather patterns we've been experiencing. It was another week dominated by wishes of rain and near hits and misses. We thought for sure we would get something the end of last week, and then again we had hopes of moisture on Sunday. No such luck though and yet again the storm system split in two and headed north and south around us. Other parts of the state have been inundated and even flooded by severe storms and heavy rainfall. It seems that there is no middle ground this year. I think we've mostly stopped hoping, even though we know that sometime someday it will indeed rain. It can be quite nerve wracking to deal with a force that so affects your livelihood, yet you cannot reason, argue, beg, barter, or pay your way to changing the weather circumstances! No wonder farmers are obsessed with the weather.

We still feel like the crops are doing better than we would expect, considering that we haven't had any significant rainfall in weeks and weeks. The good yields and quality of our produce are mainly attributable to the cool weather, fertile soil, and constant irrigation. We hope that this cool spurt is not a harbinger of more cool weather to come. It makes us a bit nervous to get 50 degree nights in July even before the tomatoes and summer crops have started to ripen! Thursday and Friday mornings we donned hats and coats before going out for the workday—I can't remember ever doing that in July before. What a strange climactic season so far.

So the cool weather is slowing down the march towards the summer vegetables, but I think eventually all the green tomatoes on our plants will begin to blush and turn to red, orange, yellow, pink, white, and even well, green! We're growing some fun heirloom varieties, including *Aunt Ruby's German Green*, a beefsteak tomato that turns pale green when ripe and supposedly has a "deep flavor explosion". It is a rare tomato and is listed on Slow Food's Ark of Taste: a catalog of over 200 foods in danger of extinction. It's kind of crazy to think about a vegetable cultivar going extinct, but in these times of mass-produced food and conglomerated seed companies, it truly is something that we as small-scale organic farmers take seriously. And to prevent extinction, we eat it! Also doesn't seem like that makes sense, but the more growers and eaters who like and demand these varieties of produce, the more these varieties will be grown and the seed will be saved, sold, and grown even more! We grow several other varieties of tomatoes, peppers, and lettuce that are on the U.S. Ark of Taste. Most of the vegetables on the list also have a special story or history associated with them. To see a full list of the Ark of Taste products, you can go to: http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/details/ark_of_taste/

New produce now and into future weeks: Green beans next box. We had a very slight pick for the first time on Friday, and didn't have enough for the CSA this week. With this cool weather and no sunshine, things just basically stop growing.

Additional Canning & Preserving Shares:

We will contact you a week or two in advance of delivery of your preserving shares to let you know when they will be coming. All addl. shares will be delivered along with your regular CSA share. If you didn't sign up for any additional canning/preserving shares, we will let you know via the newsletter if there are any addl. shares for purchase. At this time, we are not sure if there will be any additional shares to purchase due to the wacky weather we've been having; we don't want to sell ourselves short. Usually by September though, we find ourselves with an abundance of canning tomatoes in the least.

Pesto shares will be delivered first, after we harvest and clean all of our garlic in the next few weeks. Expect the pesto shares by early to mid-August. We can also deliver them into September.

Salsa and Canning Tomato shares will be delivered end of August and into September, at the peak of the tomato and pepper harvest. We'll give you advance notice and then you can re-schedule if you have a conflict.

Greens shares will be in the fall when the weather gets cooler and the greens turn sweeter. Expect the greens share to show up end of September and early October.

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.

Thanks for remembering to bring back your boxes each week. We've had a great return rate so keep it coming! Have a great week. Your farmers, Laura and Adam

Recipe Corner

Just a reminder to wash all your produce before you eat or cook with it. We wash most everything at least once after it comes out of the field, but you should wash it again. You may find an occasional caterpillar in the broccoli/cabbage. We do soak the broccoli and cabbage and that will force out any hidden pests, but you should check it over again. You can soak your broccoli or cabbage in salted water for 10 minutes or so at home, if you are worried about the spare pest. We try to leave the bugs on the farm, but if you do find one, just know that it is your guarantee that your produce is indeed organic!

"You don't have to be cooking an all-Asian meal to make this flavorful slaw; it goes perfectly with typical backyard barbecue fare, too. It works well with additional vegetables—some julienned cucumber is nice—and it makes for a wonderful bed for grilled food, such as Thai-style grilled shrimp." –From the *Farmer John's CSA Cookbook*

Asian Cabbage Slaw

2 cups shredded cabbage (1/2 a small head)
1/3 cup grated carrot
2 tablespoons fresh mint
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon rice wine
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil plus more to taste
Salt
1/2 cup minced onion
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons peanut oil
2 teaspoons honey
freshly ground black pepper
Combine cabbage, carrot, onion, mint, and cilantro in a large bowl. Toss well. Mix the vinegar, peanut oil, rice wine, honey, and sesame oil in a small bowl until well combined. Pour the dressing over the cabbage mixture; toss. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for 1 hour before serving.

We couldn't resist the pea recipes below! One is for meat eaters and one for all.

Bacon and Balsamic Glazed Sugar Snap Peas

1/4 pound bacon, minced
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon turbinado sugar, such as Sugar in the Raw
1 1/2 cups fresh sugar snap peas
salt and pepper to taste

Cook the minced bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the fat has rendered out and the bacon has begun to crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside, leave the bacon fat in the skillet. Add the sugar snap peas, and toss to coat with the fat. Cook and stir until just cooked through, about 5 minutes. Pour in the balsamic vinegar, sugar, and cooked bacon. Continue cooking until the balsamic has reduced, and the sugar has dissolved, about 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve immediately.

Thai Peas

5 cups snow or snap peas

Steam 8-10 min. until bright green and lightly crunchy.

1/2 onion (chopped)

2 tablespoons ginger root (peeled and minced)

3 cloves garlic (minced)

In frypan or wok sauté in 2 teaspoons sesame oil over medium heat until onion is tender, 5 minutes.

3 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons Thai sweet chili sauce

Add to taste. 1 cup extra firm tofu (crumbled or cubed)

Add and cook 5 minutes. Add steamed peas and stir to coat with sauce. Simmer over medium-low heat for 5 minutes. Serve over rice.

Garnish with optional lightly roasted cashews, sesame seeds, or silvered almonds.

From *Simply in Season*, Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert

Don't forget our CSA farm tour on Sunday, August 2 from 3 – 6 p.m. It's a potluck (if you want to stay and eat), so bring a dish to pass if you'd like. We'll provide drinks, plateware and a wagon farm tour. We would love it if you would RSVP by phone or e-mail to us by Friday, July 31, so we have an idea of how many people are coming. We'll send out directions by e-mail the week before. Hope to see ya here!!