



LOON ORGANICS

www.loonorganics.com

August 30, 2008

This Week's Box:

Sweet Corn- Labor Day corn is always best of year! If you find a worm on tip (and you may), trim.

Sweet Peppers: Jimmy Nardello Peppers, Mini Bells, Colored Bells or

Italian – Nardello peppers are long, skinny, reddish and very sweet. They look like a cayenne, but they are not hot at all! Mini bells are red/green or orange and very thick and juicy. Larger

Italian peppers are elongated, orangish or reddish. All are sweet peppers and good raw or cooked.

Red onions- try in salads

Eggplant- broiled with cheese?

Yellow Watermelons- These have been excellent lately. Some of the sweetest watermelons we've had.

Orange/Yellow Carrots- orange are better raw, yellow better cooked; both beautiful.

Assorted Tomatoes- San Marzano plums in bag nice for salads or cooking, red slicers, romas, and large and small heirloom varieties.

Basil- a perfect pesto batch

Assorted Hot Peppers-

Jalapeno, Hungarian hot wax (looks like a banana pepper but hot) or Wens yellow hot (small orangish pepper similar to jalapeno in heat). Careful when handling.

Garlic- garlicky pesto!

Next week:

Soon we'll begin the shift towards fall crops.

Week 11: Eating, sleeping, and breathing tomatoes

We had the best turnout yet for our CSA farm tour last Sunday afternoon, and a beautiful late summer afternoon was spent walking around the fields, picking and eating lots of cherry tomatoes, and letting the kids test drive the electric tractor! I think we may have some young and budding Future Farmers of America among our members, perhaps? Or in the least, some life-long cherry tomato and watermelon eaters. Thanks to all who came out. Meeting and talking to you all on the farm is always one of our favorite moments of the entire season. If you didn't make it, you're welcome to stop by another time. But we only have another 2 months before the season is over, and then Adam and I will be busy moving to our new farm in Hutchinson. We hope many of you can visit us there next season as well!!

Monday morning I made my way up to the mighty State Fair to exhibit one of our CSA boxes in the Eco-Experience Building. I expected a small turnout for a Monday morning, but lo and behold, there were TONS of people and a line for the pronto pups at 9 a.m. Seriously. I had some great conversations and a few interesting encounters with fair-goers who thought the vegetables were made out of wax or plastic! They were shocked to learn that the produce was fresh out of the garden, plucked at 6:30 that morning. Segue to a conversation about how we are not used to seeing and eating fresh produce anymore—product in the grocery store is often 2-3 weeks old. Most people seemed to know that, but didn't seem to mind...not yet anyway. So thanks to all of you for choosing fresh produce and taking the time to cook and prepare meals each week. It certainly takes more work to cook all these vegetables sometimes, and we're grateful that you choose to spend some of your free time with our (real, not fake, we swear) produce.

In the farm world, we are still in tomato overload (even after we implored all farm tour members to eat and pick as much as they wanted!). Last week, every afternoon was spent picking tomatoes, and there are even more this week. The heavy rain on Wednesday night has caused some tomatoes to crack, especially in the heirlooms that have very thin skin. As usual, we were happy to have the rain (over 2 inches), but it is not ideal for the tomatoes. What can ya do? Not much. Due to so much tomato picking, when I close my eyes at night to go to sleep, I see images of cherry tomatoes waiting to be picked. Sometimes if I'm really tired, I'll unconsciously start to make the motions of picking tomatoes as I drift off to sleep. It does feel like we spend all our 24 hours of the day with tomatoes sometimes!! As we start September and kids head back to school, we will begin to move towards the fall vegetable horizon: potatoes, leeks, winter squash, more colored carrots, parsnips, celery root (one of our favorites), and fennel if we are lucky. I meant to write about GMO seeds this week, but I'll have to leave that for next week, hopefully when I'm writing the newsletter in the morning hours with a fresh mind versus the end of a long August harvest day.

What Laura would do with your box:

Everything should still be refrigerated, except for the basil, eggplant, tomatoes, garlic, and onions. Keep refrigerated things in plastic to prevent dehydration and if you aren't using your carrots/beets right away, you'll want to remove the tops so that the roots store longer.

I'm all about roasting your veggies this week; all at once for your weekend meals and to use later in the week. Roasting vegetables is an easy way to intensify and deepen their flavor. Roasted tomatoes can be cooked further in a soup, sauce, or frozen. Roast sweet peppers for a roasted pepper hummus or a roasted pepper quiche. If you have some leftover Swiss Chard or beet tops from last week, sauté those down to add into the quiche. Try cutting one of your big heirlooms in half, sprinkling halves with parmesan and herbs and broil until cheese melts and bubbles. You know what to do with salad mix. Watermelons have been divine—like pure sugar, but better of course. We always eat them before we make them into anything, like watermelon gazpacho. But maybe you have a little more self-restraint and patience than we do! GOE melons are available at all the food co-ops—they have picked the last batch and will probably only be available another week. This may be the last time you see them in your box this year.

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Recipe corner

Tomatoes are on the brain here. It's basically the only thing it feels like we're harvesting and the only thing we're eating for lunch and dinner (in some form). And we haven't even started canning! Still not sick of eating them yet though. Hope you aren't either...If you have been feeling bored with tomatoes, read on.

You know Black Cat Foods from the Market—they are near the entrance with intoxicating smells wafting from their grill, and focused on local and organic prepared foods. Their gazpacho recipe may be one of the best.

Black Cat Gazpacho

2 lbs very ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped, plus about a cup of tomato juice
1 medium sweet onion, coarsely chopped AND 2 large scallions, coarsely chopped
1 large cucumber, peeled and coarsely chopped 1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 red bell pepper, chopped 3 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil (no substitutions!) 4 tablespoons good quality
Balsamic vinegar 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon Italian red wine vinegar 1 teaspoon cumin
White pepper and sea salt to taste

Prepare all the vegetables and stir together in a large bowl. Add the garlic and extra-virgin olive oil. Stir together. Blend the gazpacho with a hand blender or in 2 cup batches in a standing blender until finely chopped and slightly emulsified, but not pureed. Return the mixture to the bowl. Add vinegars, cayenne, & cumin. If using fresh tomatoes, add tomato juice until desired consistency is achieved. Season to taste with sea salt and white pepper. Chill soup overnight if possible. Serve very cold with fresh minced herb garnish or avocado garnish.

[Chez Pannisé Vegetables](#) cookbook by Alice Waters has made it into my top five favorite cookbooks ever. Especially this time of year, I appreciate the simplicity of many of her dishes, and the cookbook itself is gorgeous. It's worth a checkout from the library in the least. A few recipes below...

Greek Salad

Combine sliced cucumbers, red onions, tomatoes, crumbled feta cheese, and black olives, and dress with fruity olive oil, roughly chopped marjoram or oregano, and black pepper.

Tomato Salad

When tomatoes are plentiful, this salad is on the menu every day, varying slightly with the many possible garnishes. Garlic croutons are always present—slices of levain bread or torn-up bite-size pieces, oiled, toasted, and rubbed with garlic while still warm from the oven. They are best mixed in with the tomatoes so that they absorb the juices. Choose the best tomatoes you have that are fully ripe but not too soft. Slice large tomatoes in wedges or slices, cherry tomatoes in half. Moisten with balsamic vinegar (how much will depend on the sweetness and acidity of the tomatoes), season with salt and pepper, and drizzle generously with fine olive oil. Mix gently to keep the tomatoes intact and garnish with any of the following, singly or in combination: basil leaves, torn, cut into a chiffonade, or left whole; garlic croutons; slices of fresh mozzarella; sliced red onion; brandade and tapenade croutons.

Linda Halley, the manager at GOE, was at the State Fair on Sunday handing out samples of kale salad with tomatoes and sweet corn. It was a hit.

Here's essentially what they made: Sauté onions in olive oil, add chopped kale, chopped tomatoes, and sweet corn kernels cut off the cob. Cook for around 5 minutes (or until kale is wilted and tender) on med-high heat. Season with salt and pepper.

If you are ever feeling overwhelmed with hot and/or sweet peppers, they freeze like a breeze. Just de-stem, de-core, and cut into manageable pieces, put into a plastic bag or container and freeze. They can then be thrown into dishes you're cooking this winter. Roasting peppers and then freezing is also really nice.

Have a great Labor Day weekend! —Your Farmers, Laura and Adam