



LOON ORGANICS

www.loonorganics.com

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This Week's Box:

Carrots- Danvers

Bush Beans –
purple/green.

Fennel or Kohlrabi- the
magical bulbs are back!

Cilantro – make a last
tomato salsa, or try a
cilantro/basil pesto.

Sweet Peppers – Bell
(asst. colors), Lipstick
(medium size red ones)

Hot Peppers – jalapeno,
super chili (tiny but hot),
habanero (orange, very
hot) for a salsa.

Mesclun Mix- Mizuna,
Tatsoi, Purple Osaka
greens. More info. on
page 2.

Salad Mix – This cooler
weather grows
sumptuous salad mix.

Basil for Pesto- isn't the
prettiest basil we've had,
but it's some of the last,
and will taste great in
your pesto.

Tomato- Cherrys,
Romas, maybe stray
heirloom

Onions-Yellow Storage
Copra or Red Mars

Garlic – Inchelium Red.

Week 14: The priceless value of a couple tractors.

Hello Hello! Each week as Adam or I start to write the newsletter we could easily blab on and on about the weather and its weekly vagaries. A most interesting topic for us, but sometimes we need to get our heads out of the clouds and back to the soil at hand. Indeed. Let's turn to tractors and the associated implements we use to carefully turn, aerate, and prep the soil.

In the past couple years of farming, Adam realized that tractors and mechanics are one of his fortes (thank goodness because they are not mine), and he has aptly picked up operating and maintaining the machines. Quite a good mechanic he has turned out to be, and it is a necessity of any farm. Farm budgets and schedules are too tight to allow for hauling in the tractor on a trailer to the John Deere shop. We have two tractors. A John Deere 2640, 70 horsepower, from the 1970's. This is our primary workhorse tractor, big enough to do or pull anything we will ever need to do. It is a mid-sized tractor (much smaller than the huge JD's in corn and soybean fields) and we use it to dig our field, rototill beds for planting, or to till crops back into the soil at the end of the season. Our second tractor is a yellow International Harvester 140 from the 1950's (IH 140 for short). The 140 is a favorite tractor of Martin Diffley, and both Adam and I got our introduction to cultivating at GOE on the IH 140s. We use our 140 to cultivate our row crops and pre-fertilize our beds for greens. It is an old tractor, but has many benefits: reliability, simplicity, and ease of operating and fixing. Additionally, Martin's got a couple old school buses filled with cultivating shanks, ties, and shoes (among many other parts) for the 140 so if something breaks we know where to go.

Tractors and the implements that go along with them (diggers, rototillers, seeders) are one of the most expensive parts of farming, and carry a price tag that I as a novice farmer am still getting used to (how many zeros behind that??). I will say that the work that they save you is worth the price, and our wish list of implements and tractors grows longer each season. I'm looking forward to getting a basket weeder that can be attached to our 140; Rolling "baskets" made of spring wire thoroughly weed the top inch of soil without moving soil into the crop row saving us from the hours and hours of hand weeding we usually have to do in our salad beds. We're also looking forward to buying a chisel plow for the John Deere. The chisel plow has a heavy construction that allows it to till very deeply, aerating soil and improving water infiltration. This would be especially useful for us in the spring and fall before planting our summer crops and our winter green manure: hairy vetch. Never thought I would be so interested in farm implements, but after a couple years of manual farm labor, their utilitarian value becomes apparent. -Laura

Meet your tasty Asian Greens....



Tatsoi



Mizuna



Purple Osaka Mustard

Experiment with different pesto flavors from this week's box. Cilantro/basil/lemon is fresh and tangy on sandwiches and omelettes. Mesclun pesto (substitute greens for basil) is one of our favorites on pasta. Traditional pesto with added fennel fronds and a bit of the chopped bulb gives it a deep creamy flavor and is another favorite when we have fennel around.

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Recipe Corner

Your **Mesclun** greens are an assorted combination of baby mustard greens, quite spicy in nature. Brethren of radishes, bok choy, kale, and cabbage, and prized by the tenacious flea beetle, notice that this week's crop got away with no bullet holes on the leaves from the aforementioned pests! If the mesclun is too spicy for you to eat alone, mix it with your baby lettuces. The mesclun also tastes wonderful if it is lightly braised, sautéed, or stir-fried. Cook lightly--only 2-3 minutes!!

Salad Greens with Chinese Salad Dressing

1/3 cup sesame or olive oil 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon minced garlic 1 teaspoon sesame seeds
1-2 teaspoons grated fresh gingerroot or ¼ teaspoons powdered ginger
Salad greens (mesclun, lettuce, or combo) dash of cayenne
Mix all ingredients (except greens); toss with greens. This is also good with bok choy, snow peas, or cucumbers. Makes about ½ cup dressing. From Oak Ridge Farm

Red peppers are so versatile and divine in so many things. To roast red peppers, grill (or broil in oven) until skin is blackened. Once they are cool enough to handle, peel off skins. Slice and decore peppers before roasting, or roast whole in a pan to collect tasty roasted pepper juice. This Greek red pepper dip made my mouth water at 8 a.m. Herbed Chevre Stuffed Peppers will have to wait until next week.

Tyrokafteri (roasted red pepper and feta dip)

2 or 3 roasted red peppers 1 pound of feta cheese
¼ cup olive oil 1 or 2 jalapenos, or other hot peppers
2 tblspns lemon juice
Combine feta and 2 tablespoons olive oil in blender/food processor and mix until creamy. Add roasted and jalapeno peppers and black pepper to taste and pulse until well combined, gradually adding the remaining olive oil and lemon juice. Serve in a large bowl with fresh pita bread, carrot sticks, fennel or kohlrabi pieces, what have you. Eat until you are stuffed. I found this recipe on www.everything2.com

Our **cilantro** was finally ready just in time for the end of the tomatoes. Cilantro and tomatoes are great cooking companions, but not great growing companions; tomatoes like heat, cilantro prefers cooler conditions. We always add a bit of basil and parsley to this salsa recipe from the Café Brenda Cookbook.

Basic Salsa

½ cup finely chopped onion 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
1 green pepper, finely diced 2 cups finely diced tomato
3 jalapenos, minced 1 small head of garlic, minced
2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped Juice of ½ lemon
Juice of 1 lime 2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt to taste cayenne pepper (optional)
Combine all ingredients, adding cayenne or more jalapeno to taste. The flavor of this salsa improves as it sits, so make it in the morning or the day before serving. Makes 3 cups.

Carrot Fennel Orange Soup

2 tablespoons butter 4 cups water, veg. or chicken broth
1 medium fennel bulb, thinly sliced ½ teaspoon salt or more to taste
(reserve a few of the fronds) 4 cups sliced carrots (app 1 ½ lbs)
1/3 cup orange juice 1 garlic clove, sliced thin
¼ cup sour cream
Heat butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add sliced fennel and cook, stirring often, until soft and beginning to turn golden. Add carrots and garlic; cook and stir for a minute or two. Add water or broth and salt; bring to a simmer, cover, and cook until carrots and fennel are tender, about 20 minutes. Puree mixture in a food processor or blender, or with an immersion blender. Stir in orange juice and sour cream until smooth and creamy. Reheat on low heat, but do not boil. Serve each bowl garnished with fennel fronds. Makes 4 servings. From Edith Thayer in [Asparagus to Zucchini](#).

That's all she wrote! Enjoy your veggies. Your farmers, Laura and Adam