



LOON ORGANICS

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This Week's Box:

Spring Mix – Baby lettuces

Striped Eggplant- These are a beautiful Italian variety that is a bit smaller than traditional purple eggplants. Info on pg. 2

Mixed Beans- Purple, green, wax, and rattlesnake (striped) beans. Cook like regular green beans.

Fresh baby onions- Can be used like scallions or cook the bulb like regular onions. They are sweet Walla Walla onions

Summer Squash/Zucchini- Includes zucchini, yellow summer squash, and zephyr summer squash (green + yellow).

Cucumber- Prolific in this weather!

Greentop Carrots- Make a great slaw with raw shredded carrots, beets, and cabbage.

Greentop Beets- Raw beets are also good juiced or shredded to make a raw salad or garnish.

Cabbage- from the great farmers at Gardens of Eagan

Watermelons- Also from GOE, you may receive a red, orange, or yellow melon! They are all delicious.

Basil- added to your bean bag.

Fresh Garlic- you will have to peel the thick skins off the clove since they haven't dried yet.

New produce we might have next week: Peppers, sweet corn, maybe tomatoes?

Week 6: Flying by

It is always amazing how quickly the summer months pass each year, and I always get the urge around this time of mid-summer to try and slow down (while still working very quickly) and enjoy the sun, the heat, and even the sticky humidity that I end up dreaming about in February. Farming this summer seems especially “easy” to us and that has everything to do with the weather. At this point last summer, we were already in a pretty intense drought. The few notes I had time to make in my farming journal complain of the heat, the wind, and the unnerving lack of moisture. It really affected the crops too—we have, for the most part, abundant and beautiful produce so far this season, while last year we always felt like we were struggling to find enough produce for our CSA and market. This year, we are enjoying a Sunday off every once in awhile!

We are still receiving a rain at least once a week, which has allowed us to take almost a complete break from watering. There is a fair amount of field work to do with the tractors and another round of planting that has been delayed by the wet conditions, but Adam was able to get out on Tuesday afternoon and disc some of the old salad mix, lettuce, and Swiss Chard back into the soil. The peas finally petered out, but the longevity of the climbing plants is quite remarkable. Normally the non-climbing peas don't do much by the end of June before we feel like we've got our fill of them. I think this was just about right, and we've got the first crop of various climbing string beans to take the place of the peas. FYI—if you cook the colored beans more than a couple minutes, they will turn green. Kinda fun to watch them turn color though.

There has been a lot of discussion the past weeks with workers, members, and other farmers about the ubiquitous presence of beets in our CSA. Spurred by a comment from another CSA farmer who mentioned that their members “hate beets” suddenly we wondered if we put too many beets in **our** CSA boxes!/? What do you think? I haven't yet heard from anyone that they have beet overload, in fact I've heard that many of you enjoy the beets. Maybe you don't need them every single week of CSA though. We do go gaga for beets, I'll admit, what with the beet and blue cheese salad, beet cake, or just plain steamed beets n greens. Green top beets have become one of our signature Loon crops now, and we can easily sell over 120 bunches at market. Perhaps, unknowingly, we have weeded out those members who are non-passionate about beets? Let us know your beet opinion, if you have one—we're curious. Beets most famous (and entertaining) cameo may be in Tom Robbin's Jitterbug Perfume: “The beet is the most intense of vegetables... Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious. The beet is the melancholy vegetable, the one most willing to suffer. You can't squeeze blood out of a *turnip*... The beet is the ancient ancestor of the autumn moon, bearded, buried, all but fossilized; ...” Now that is some beet passion.

What Laura would do with your box:

Everything should still be refrigerated, except for the basil and eggplant.

Because the garlic is fresh, and not yet cured and dried, it should be refrigerated. Keep things in plastic to prevent dehydration and if you aren't using your carrots and beets right away, you'll want to remove the tops so that the roots store longer.

As I mentioned last week, due to pest pressure, our summer squash season will be ending very soon, so get your fill of zucchini bread, cake, or however else you prefer. One of our meal highlights last week included cooking up a whole chicken (from our friends at Sunshine Harvest) stuffed with lots of fresh garlic cloves, fresh herbs, and cooked in a pan on a bed of whole carrots, baby onions, fresh garlic cloves, beets, and fennel pieces doused in olive oil and herbs. This is maybe the easiest, but tastiest meal out there. By the time the chicken is done, the vegetables were caramelized and glazed from the juices. The garlic was a sweet undertone of its raw self, and it would be worth baking the whole clove alone to make a fabulous roasted garlic spread. We served the chicken with a chilled cucumber salad with a tangy yogurt dressing and some fresh basil and dill. Eggplant, summer squash, onions, garlic, carrots and beans make for a beautiful grilled veggie sandwich. For dessert, try chilled watermelon.

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Recipe corner

Eggplant- these beautiful and interesting fruits originated in tropical Asia (thus quite a heat-loving crop). I am never much of an eggplant fan, until I have one freshly picked and prepared. When really fresh, they can be delectably mild with no hint of bitterness. Fresh eggplants require no salting or peeling—plus the skins on these variegated *Calliope* variety are too pretty to peel. Eggplants can be tricky to store—they do best in a cool room (around 50 degrees) and it is best not to refrigerate them, if they are fresh. It is recommended to find a cool spot in your kitchen or house to store the eggplant until you use it, and they will taste the best if used within a few days. I like to sauté or roast eggplant coins and put them on sandwiches, but do be careful because sliced eggplant can soak up oil like a sponge. You can bake slices first before sautéing to prevent soggy, oily pieces. Roasted eggplant yields a creamy inside that can be used for spreads, dips, or turned into a savory custard. Along with roasted garlic, it is simply divine. Just wait for the tomatoes and Jimmy Nardello Sweet Italian Frying Peppers—they're right around the corner, and then we will be in true Mediterranean territory.

Roasted Eggplant with Garlic

Make eight or more small incisions in your eggplant and wedge a sliver of garlic into each. Set on a sheet pan and roast at 400 degrees until tender and collapsed, 20 to 40 minutes, depending on size. Remove from oven, let rest several minutes, the slice lengthwise in half. If the shell is fairly intact, you can cut it in half and serve it seasoned with salt, pepper, and a spoonful of olive oil, or a yogurt sauce. If the shells have collapsed, scoop out the flesh, then season it. Both this recipe and one below are from Deborah Madison's [Everyday Vegetarian Cooking](#).

Baked Beet-and-Carrot Burgers

½ cup sesame seeds	1 cup sunflower seeds	2 cups peeled, grated beets
2 cups grated carrot	½ cup minced onion	2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup brown rice	1/2 cup vegetable oil	1 cup grated Cheddar Cheese
3 Tablespoon flour	2 Tablespoons soy sauce	½ cup finely chopped parsley
1 clove garlic, minced	1/8-1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper	

Preheat oven to 350. Lightly coat baking sheet with butter. Place small, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add sesame seeds and stir them on dry skillet until lightly browned, 3-5 minutes watching closely to avoid burning them. Immediately remove from heat and transfer toasted seeds to a dish to cool. Return skillet to heat. Add sunflower seeds and toast the same as sesame seeds. When done, transfer to the same dish with sesame seeds. Combine beets, carrots, and onion in a large bowl. Stir in toasted seeds, eggs, rice, cheese, oil, flour, parsley, soy sauce, and garlic (hands work best). Add cayenne and mix until thoroughly combined. Using your hands, shape mixture into 12 patties and arrange them in rows on the baking sheet. Bake patties until brown on edges, about 20 minutes. Unless they are very large and thick, it should not be necessary to turn them. Serve alone or on buns. [Farmer John's Cookbook](#). These burgers are excellent! Especially if served with blue cheese.

Red Cabbage's color imparts additional antioxidants and more Vitamin C than green cabbage. The nutrients in cabbage are most easily absorbed if cabbage is lightly cooked. There are few things that smell or taste worse than overcooked cabbage—5-7 minutes is all you need. Various varieties of cabbage grow in almost any climate, and cabbage is eaten in almost every country in the world. Like other *brassicas*, it has been used medicinally for centuries to aid digestion and as an intestinal cleanser. We like cabbage wedges steamed, but also can't resist coleslaws. The one below is great.

Red Cabbage Slaw

1 head red cabbage	½ cup apple cider vinegar
1 pound carrots	2 tablespoons salt
1 bunch cilantro	1 tablespoon ancho chili powder
1/3 cup freshly squeezed lime juice	

Quarter and core cabbage. Slice thinly or in food processor. Grate carrots. Chop cilantro. Toss all ingredients. Let stand 1 hour. Toss again. Serve as a garnish for tacos, side dish for sandwiches, or as a picnic salad. From [Asparagus to Zucchini](#)
Happy eating! Your farmers, Laura and Adam