



# LOON ORGANICS

www.loonorganics.com

August 2, 2008

## This Week's Box:

**Sweet Corn-** Pure Yum

**Spring Mix** – Baby lettuces

**Striped Eggplant or Green**

**Bell Pepper-** Eggplants are a small Indian variety—very tasty!

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

**Fresh onions-**They are sweet Walla Walla onions

**Summer Squash/Zucchini-**

Includes zucchini, yellow summer squash, and zephyr summer squash (green + yellow).

**Cucumber-** Refreshing

**Greentop Carrots-** Separate tops and roots when storing.

**Greentop Beets-** Beet recipes on page 2. Raw beets are also good juiced or shredded to make a raw salad or garnish.

**Assorted Cherry Tomatoes-**

Sungold Orange or Red Cherries. These are the first ones picked just for the CSA.

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

**Basil-** pesto on page 2

**Parsley-** great in a salad

**Hungarian Hot Wax**

**Pepper-** Yellow hot peppers are milder than jalapeno, but still have a bite. **Not** a banana pepper.

**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: More sweet peppers and tomatoes.**

## Week 7: That Garlic Time of Year

Most people don't imagine that garlic bulbs are harvested in July in Minnesota, but similar to other bulbs, the garlic is planted in October and begins to root itself in the soil shortly thereafter before essentially going into dormancy during the winter. In March, garlic is one of the first green things sprouting up through the soil and it continues to grow vigorously upright, reaching a height of 2-3 feet by June. In mid-June, the garlic pops out a flower stalk, the lovely edible scape that we snap off so that the garlic puts its energy into making a bigger bulb, instead of concentrating its energy into flowering. After spending 10 months in the ground, a couple leaves on the plant begin to brown and dry up. It's at this point when you start harvest. Each leaf (there are 6-8) represents a bulb wrapper enclosing actual bulb and cloves, and once a leaf has dried that corresponding bulb wrapper has also dried. We like to have at least 5-6 wrappers intact, so that after we hang up and cure the garlic, we can clean the garlic and lose a few wrappers while still protecting the bulb.

All of the garlic we grow is hardneck garlic, one of two subspecies of garlic. Most garlic in the grocery store is softneck garlic because that variety is well-adapted to the California climate and it also stores for many months. Hardneck garlic grows best in Northern climates, will not store as long (although it will still store up to 4 months), has larger cloves and stronger, more complex flavor. It also is quite similar to wild garlic in character and flavor; softneck varieties actually evolved from the hardneck varieties but the soft variety became more popular due to higher productivity and storage time. Hardnecks are making a comeback among small-scale, organic growers though! They are much preferred by chefs and cooks alike for their pungent flavor and big cloves.

We harvested approximately 6,000 garlic bulbs in the past week (that is one 200 foot bed; 5 rows of garlic per bed, each bulb 6 inches apart) and there is another bed to go. This year, our mind was blown by a new "root digger" we bought this spring. Attached to the back of our tractor, it slices 8 inches underneath the bed and loosens the soil so that we can easily pull out each garlic plant. In previous years, we were hand digging each individual bulb—all 12,000 of them. We still hand pull each plant, but the time savings are amazing!

For those ½ share members that didn't read the newsletter last week, we inquired about people's attitude towards beets. Fearing that we may have been overloading our boxes with beets, we asked what you thought. So far, the feedback on beets is decidedly positive! We have many fellow beet lovers, and it was encouraging to hear that some just started eating and appreciating beets since joining our CSA. My favorite comment from one of our toddler members was: "I reawly love beets...fresh from the farmers." Awww!! I included two beet recipes to hopefully inspire others that don't include them as a favorite. And if you didn't put in your two cents, we'd love to hear whatcha' think.

## What Laura would do with your box:

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

If it is too hot in your kitchen to cook, experiment with some raw dishes, eggplant aside. (Raw eggplant contains mildly toxic compounds and should always be cooked.) Raw sweet corn right off the cob is, true to its name, sweet and almost milky, and us farmers eat raw corn in copious amounts! Raw watermelon and cucumber gazpacho is to die for (recipe at [epicurious.com](http://epicurious.com)) and a raw beet, carrot, apple, and ginger slaw is also a nice side. You might turn your oven on once to roast a batch of veggies—in fact, I recommend doing that over the weekend and then you have roasted veggies to toss in dishes and salads all week. We love eating sweet corn roasted in the husk in the oven or on the grill—around 400 for 15 minutes or so. You smell the corn and then you know it's done soon. Try eggplant parmesan or eggplant and summer squash lasagna. Or briefly roast eggplant/pepper, zucchini and whole garlic cloves to top a roasted veggie pizza with basil, olives, goat cheese, and cherry tomatoes!

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## Recipe corner

A recipe that uses both the beets and the greens comes highly recommended by a farmer's market customer!

### *Spaghetti De Vino with Beets*

3 medium red or golden beets (save greens) 8 oz spaghetti  
2 Tablespoon olive oil 1 large sweet onion  
2 cups finely sliced beet greens 4 garlic cloves (chopped)  
¾ cup merlot wine ¼ cup dried currants  
½ teaspoon fresh ground pepper 2 Tablespoons lemon juice  
¼ cup toasted pine nuts crumbled feta cheese for garnish

Bring salted water to boil. Add beets and reduce heat to medium. Cover and simmer 30-45 minutes til tender. Remove skins when cool and cut beets into strips. Cook spaghetti 2-3 min. less than package suggests—should be al dente. Heat oil in large sauté pan over high heat. Add onion, cook until translucent. Add beet greens and garlic. Stir until greens wilt. Add beets, wine, dried currants, salt, and pepper. Cook 5 minutes. Add lemon juice. Drain pasta—return it to pot and add beet mixture. Stir over medium heat until spaghetti absorbs wine and turns red. Add pine nuts. Top with feat. From [Spirited Vegetarian](#) by Paulette Mitchell

Inspired by a similar concoction that a GOE intern made for a birthday celebration this past week, I found a genuine recipe for these lovely watermelon drinks. Skip the alcohol for a non-alcoholic/ kids friendly drink. It hits the spot on a hot day or night! Crystallized ginger is also a fantastic garnish.

### *Watermelon Cucumber Margarita*

1 1/2 cups 1-inch chunks rindless watermelon  
6 (1/8-inch-thick) slices cucumber 15 large fresh mint leaves  
1/2 cup tequila 1/4 cup fresh lime juice  
3 tablespoons [Simple Syrup](#) (at [epicurious.com](http://epicurious.com)—basically a sugar syrup)  
1 tablespoon orange liqueur (optional in our mind)  
2 cups ice cubes, divided  
2 small watermelon triangles, each skewered with 1 cucumber round (for garnish)  
2 fresh mint sprigs (for garnish)

Place first 3 ingredients in medium bowl. Press firmly on solids with muddler or back of wooden spoon until mashed. Mix in tequila, lime juice, [Simple Syrup](#), and orange liqueur, then 1 cup ice. Stir to blend well. Strain into large glass measuring cup. Divide remaining ice between 2 tall glasses. Pour Margarita mixture over. Garnish with watermelon skewers and mint sprigs.

A note about your **beans**: we were previously harvesting your standard green bean, a very early “bush” type variety. Now we have moved on to the climbing pole beans that tower above our heads. This is our first season growing pole beans, primarily out of space constraints, and we are trialing many fun varieties. Besides the traditional green bean, there is a rattlesnake (green with purple stripes) that has the best flavor out of them all (I think), a purple bean and yellow wax bean that are both juicy and succulent. Purple and purple-striped beans will turn green when you cook them, FYI.

### *Basil Parsley Pesto*

2 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves 1/3 cup loosely packed fresh parsley  
3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed ½ cup olive oil  
½ cup grated Pecorino, Parmesan, or Romano cheese  
1/3 cup pine nuts (or raw walnuts, almonds, cashews)

Place the pesto ingredients in a food processor or blender, and puree (if you're using a blender, first chop the basil and parsley and add a tablespoon of water). Suggestions: Pesto pasta. Or make a platter of cooked green beans, potatoes, olives, hard-boiled eggs, and thinly sliced onion. Mound pesto in the center and serve. Pesto recipe and salad idea from [Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home](#). Pesto also freezes incredibly well, and with the price of basil in the winter, you'll be glad to have it. Make pesto for freezing **without** cheese, and freeze in containers or in ice cube trays. Put pesto cubes in a plastic freezer bag. Happy eating! Your farmers, Laura and Adam