



LOON ORGANICS

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What's in the box 8/16:

Jimmy Nardello Sweet Pepper:

Looks like a red hot pepper, but it is SWEET. One of our favorite sweet peppers to eat raw or cook with.

Arugula: Not the prettiest arugula, but it is great for cooking or processing into pesto.

Fennel: More recipes on Page 2 for using the bulb and fronds!

German Extra Hardy Garlic:

Very strong flavor when raw, but not too hot. Good for roasting.

Red Beets: Beet chocolate cake recipe on our website.

Zucchini and Summer

Squash: Roast with garlic, eggplant, basil and a tomato for a delicious and easy dish!

Cucumbers: Make a greek tzatziki sauce with plain yogurt, garlic, and shredded cucumber to top veggies, falafel, or lamb.

Red New Potatoes: Try a potato salad with fresh pepper added in.

Tomatoes: Red slicing tomatoes from our hoop house. Various stages of ripeness.

Cilantro: Perfect for Salsa.

Red Onions: Milder onion can be used raw or cooked. These aren't dried so keep in fridge.

Eggplant: Globe eggplant. Roast or grill to top your fennel pasta.

Jalapeño Pepper: green, small pepper. Medium heat. Great for salsa. Be careful when handling.

Green Pepper: great for that first batch of salsa. Try our simple recipe on page 2.

Green Beans: Finally a great crop of beans. Enjoy!

Week 9: Weather Heaven

The weather this week had all the components of near perfect-ness: light breeze, mix of sun and clouds, temps in the 70's, and no rain for the week! We were able to get a lot done: We harvested 3 days a week for the CSA pick-ups. We tackled some major overdue weeding projects in the eggplant, peppers, tomatoes, fall broccoli, romanesco, and cabbage. We got all of the rest of our onions harvested and curing in our greenhouse. We planted a couple beds of late broccoli and cauliflower and put in a late crop of basil in the hoop house. Adam mowed, disced and cultivated several fields to work out weeds and get them prepped for fall. It was a good week.

By this time of the season, we are entering the beginning of what we call "the fall slowdown". We basically stop planting and seeding anything much after mid-August because there just isn't enough sunlight and heat units to mature late-planted crops before the frost comes. We still have a few more seedings of fall spinach to put in and a late planting of head lettuce, but anything planted much after next week is always a gamble. This fall slowdown always sneaks up on us but we notice it in slowed down crop growth, dark mornings, and earlier evenings. The difference between crop growth in early Summer versus fall is summed up about like this: A day in Spring is like a week in fall. Well, we didn't have much of a Spring to speak of this year, so we had to wait until June to get that kind of daily crop growth we are used to.

The farm crops still seem a little bit behind schedule to us because of our delayed start this year and in general it has not been a stellar growing season due to the late Spring and then intense heat and humidity throughout July—a crucial growing month. Many of our crops have just seemed really stressed this year, even though we have babied them with ample amounts of compost and care. In general though, we have good amounts of produce for our CSA boxes as you all are our first priority and we set aside produce for your boxes first before we sell it at market or anywhere else for that matter. There are also certain crops like sweet corn, watermelons and muskmelons that we grow exclusively for our CSA members only. Melons we hope to have for next week's box even! The red watermelons are getting pretty close. Yay!

So our goal is that our CSA members still get great boxes even in a tough year. To meet that goal, we plant about 25% extra above and beyond what we think we need for the CSA. As a good CSA farmer, you must plant more than you think you need and then have a strategy for any excess that arises. Our plan is that we sell our extra produce at market and through the Harvest for the Hungry Program. The extra produce is a real buffer for us in our CSA production as it helps to compensate for some of the weird weather, pest or disease issues that may affect our yields. This year we are grateful for that buffer as we have needed a lot of more acreage of crops to get the same amount of veggies we are used to for our boxes. Along with most other farmers, we are hoping for a long, mild fall so that we have ample time for the fall veggies to ripen up and mature before a hard frost.

Best guess for next week's box: all the same stuff except salad mix instead of arugula, more tomatoes and peppers, and (keep your fingers crossed) the first watermelon!

Produce Storage:

All produce this week should be stored in the fridge, EXCEPT for Tomatoes and Garlic. Eggplant and potatoes can either go in the fridge or out on the counter. Potatoes should be in a paper bag either way, as the light can turn their skin green and green potatoes are not good for you to eat. Eggplant can be stored in the fridge for a couple days or at room temperature out of the sun. The garlic is pretty dry now and should be left out of the fridge. Store everything else (zucchini, cukes, beans, onions etc) in plastic bags in the fridge, if it isn't packed in one already, to keep in moisture and prevent greens from wilting. Eat the eggplant first as it is most perishable! Everything else should last over a week if stored properly.

Preserving Tips: Shred and freeze zucchini/summer squash for use in muffins, cakes, breads and cookies. Eggplant can be roasted, grilled or baked, and then frozen for adding to pasta sauces, baba ghanouj, or soups. Beets, beet greens, and green beans should be steamed before freezing. Peppers can be chopped and frozen raw for adding to soups, sauces and pizzas this winter. Arugula can be turned into pesto and frozen.

This is a favorite side dish of ours.

Green Beans with Fennel

1 bag green beans (1 pound)
1 fennel bulb, sliced thinly
1 red onion, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
2-3 Tbsp Olive oil
Snap off string ends of green beans. Heat olive oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Add minced onion and garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add beans and fennel, stir frequently and sauté for 5-10 minutes until beans are tender and soft. Add more olive oil or butter during the cooking process to coat beans, if desired. Season with salt, pepper, and a bit of lemon or balsamic vinegar. Serve immediately, but beans are also good cold.

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Recipe Corner

****A note about the Tomato Ripening:** there are varying ripeness levels of some of the slicing tomatoes. If you want your tomato to be more ripe, it will take just a day or two on your kitchen counter or windowsill for them to darken up and develop a little more flavor. Usually when the slicers are a deep red color and the skin will give a little when squeezed, they are at perfect juicy ripeness.**

CSA Member, Peg Carls, sent us this recipe from www.recipeinterrupted.com. Top your fennel pesto pasta with some fresh tomato or sautéed eggplant. Here's an excerpt from the blog: "This is a pesto that I learned to make during my externship at Craft (restaurant in NYC). The fennel bulbs were used for dishes on the menu, and all the fronds were left over. They were put to good use in this pesto that, at first glance, looks like the more common basil pesto. The taste is not unlike basil pesto, in that it has garlic, olive oil, nuts and parmesan cheese. But the fennel fronds have a fresh, green, and lightly anise-scented flavor that distinguishes it from the richly perfumed taste of basil."

Penne with Fennel Pesto

1/3 cup pistachios, toasted or whole raw almonds
1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
1 ounce (about 1/2 cup) freshly grated Parmesan
1 teaspoon salt, plus more for pasta water
Ground black pepper, to taste
2 cups lightly packed fennel fronds optional: 4-5 mint leaves, torn
about 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil juice of 1/2 lemon, or to taste
1 pound penne pasta (used whole wheat) 1 cup frozen peas

If using almonds, process alone in a food processor before adding garlic, cheese, salt and pepper. If using pistachios, you can process along with the garlic, cheese, salt, and pepper. Pulse a few times to grind slightly. Add fennel and mint, if using, to the food processor. With the motor running, drizzle in the olive oil until the mixture is reduced to a paste and has a spreadable, but not greasy consistency. Taste and add salt if necessary. Squeeze in a little bit of lemon juice to taste. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Salt the water generously and cook the pasta until al dente. While the pasta is cooking, set up a colander in the sink and put the frozen peas in it. When the pasta is done, drain the pasta in the colander. Return the pasta, along with the peas, into the pot. Stir in the pesto until pasta is lightly coated and flavorful. Squeeze in a little lemon juice, to taste. Serve hot or at room temperature. Makes 4 servings, plus leftover pesto for sandwiches or brush onto grilled fish.

Another fennel idea: <http://millcityfarmersmarket.org/recipes/agroducce-pickled-fennel-bulb/> Farmers Market chef, Nick Schneider, pickled fennel at market on Saturday for the cooking demo. The recipe and details are on the website above. Pickled fennel makes for a wonderful addition to a holiday cheese and meat platter this winter or a unique gift for a foodie friend.

It's Salsa Time! We have all the ingredients for a fresh salsa in your box this week.. We should have cilantro for you next week. We often make this salsa recipe and add basil along with the cilantro (or use basil if we are out of cilantro). Still delicious! Remember to be careful when handling the jalapeño—wear gloves and avoid touching your face or eyes after cutting and handling the hot pepper. Recipe adapted from the *Café Brenda Cookbook*.

Basic Fresh Salsa Recipe

3 medium ripe tomatoes 1 medium onion
2 cloves garlic cilantro or basil (or both)
1/2-1 jalapeño 1 Jimmy Nardello Sweet Pepper
1/2 Green bell pepper Salt to taste

Optional additions: corn, lime juice, tequila, black beans, parsley or basil. Dice tomatoes. (We leave the skins on.) You can drain your tomatoes in a strainer for an hour if you don't want a "juicy" salsa. Chop and dice onions, garlic, cilantro/basil, herbs, and peppers. Use 1/2 a jalapeño for a milder salsa and use the whole jalapeño (or more) for a medium to hot salsa. Mix all ingredients together and salt to taste. Can be refrigerated for up to a week. This salsa cannot be canned! It does not have enough acid to can safely.

Have a great week! Your farmers, Laura & Adam