



# LOON ORGANICS

Laura Frerichs & Adam Cullip

23229 200<sup>th</sup> St Hutchinson, MN 55350

Phone: 320.587.0140

[loonorganics@hotmail.com](mailto:loonorganics@hotmail.com)

[www.loonorganics.com](http://www.loonorganics.com)

## What's in the box 8/1:

**Basil:** wash right before using.

Basil and tomato salad!

**Fresh Red Torpedo Onions:** mild, fresh onions! Great on the grill or on kebabs. They are fresh onions—store them in your fridge.

**Green top Carrots:** Remove the tops if you will not eat them right away. Steam them up and serve with a yogurt dill sauce.

**Golden Satina Potatoes:** soft and buttery yellow potato. Good cooked up in just about any way.

**Garlic:** with mashed potatoes?

**Parsley:** Add parsley to your basil for a basil parsley pesto or chop up and sprinkle on sliced cucumbers.

**Cucumbers:** freezer pickle recipe on page 2.

**Summer Squash/Zucchini:** not as overwhelming quantity of these guys this week.

**Broccoli:** Don't forget to eat that stem! Use a paring knife to peel and reveal a SWEET stem.

**Tomatoes:** Rainbow colored cherry tomatoes, red slicing tomatoes, and some small heirloom tomatoes. Some may need a day or two to ripen to perfection.

**Green Beans:** Back and better than before!

**Eggplant:** purple, lavender, striped globe varieties or Asian eggplants. Try our lasagna recipe from last week.

**Jalapeño Hot Pepper:** be careful when handling. Good to wear gloves when cutting up

## CSA: Week Eight

Have you been enjoying the broccoli this season? We have been eating at least a few heads a week along with you guys. It tops the list, along with kale, of one of our favorite crops to grow. We learned how to grow great broccoli (and many other crops) from Martin and Atina Diffley at Gardens of Eagan. Adam and I both worked for Gardens of Eagan nearly a decade ago as interns, and eventually rented land from them to start up Loon Organics in 2005. The rest, as they say, is history. We found great farmers and mentors in the Diffleys. They taught us to love kale, to eat raw corn on the cob straight from the field, and to listen for the tone of a ripe watermelon. Most importantly, they taught us how to improve and sustain our soil's life in order to grow productive, delicious, healthy, AND organic crops.

Atina Diffley just wrote an incredible memoir called *Turn Here, Sweet Corn: Organic Farming Works*. It is one of the best books I have read all year, and you all really must read it. The writing is beautiful, skillful, and nuanced. The book offers "a master class in organic farming, a lesson in entrepreneurship, a love story, and a legal thriller. In telling her story of working the land, Atina Diffley reminds us that we live in relationships—with the earth, plants and animals, families and communities. A memoir of making these essential relationships work in the face of challenges from weather to corporate politics, this is a firsthand history of getting in at the ground-level of organic farming." —from <http://atinadiffley.com>

Adam and I make a few cameo appearances in the book, which you might enjoy reading. But really the book is worth reading to get lost in Atina's riveting prose and spellbinding personal story. You can purchase the book at many local bookstores, through Atina's website (<http://atinadiffley.com>) or check your local library to see if they have a copy yet. From the first page, you will be hooked! I spent many a night this spring staying up way too late reading before bed—it is that kind of good.

**A few crop and weather notes this week:** Green beans are back and rockin'! This will be the last week of broccoli for a month or so. Cherry tomatoes are ridiculously prolific—I expect we'll have a quart of those for your boxes each week now. The multi-colored heirloom tomatoes in your box should be ripe or nearly ripe. If you are unsure about ripeness, gently squeeze the tomato to see if it has that slight give to it when it is truly ripe. If it needs a little more time, set the tomato on your counter or windowsill to ripen up for a couple of days. The garlic crop is better than we thought, but still below average. It's been confirmed by a U of MN scientist that garlic crops in MN, SD, and western WI was infected with a disease transmitted by the leafhopper insect, and this disease stunted and deformed many of the garlic bulbs. The disease doesn't affect eating quality of the garlic, but it does mean that we won't be able to save many garlic bulbs this year to re-plant. We will end up ordering several hundred pounds of seed garlic to plant this fall. We'll also have to forgo selling garlic at the garlic festival in Hutchinson on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Oh well, we'll just have to go to the festival for the garlic ice cream! We should have enough garlic for your boxes into fall. **Next week's box looks like:** Satina potatoes, cukes, summer squash/ zucchini, eggplant, tomatoes, fresh onions, garlic, green beans, garlic, peppers, sweet corn!, herbs

**Produce Storage:** Basil, potatoes, and tomatoes should NOT be refrigerated. Leave on your kitchen counter out of the sun. Basil and tomatoes are cold-sensitive; basil will turn black in the fridge (below 45 degrees). Garlic should sit out at room temp. Eggplant can go either in the fridge or on the counter. Wrap in a towel if going into fridge to protect it from cold. All other produce this week should be stored in the fridge in plastic bags, if it isn't packed in one already, to keep in moisture and prevent greens from wilting. Everything should last over a week if stored properly. The basil and eggplant are best if eaten within 5 days.

**Preserving Tips:** Broccoli, carrots, and chard should be lightly steamed or boiled before freezing. Basil can be made into pesto or just chopped and frozen raw. Summer squash and zucchini is best if shredded and frozen raw and then can be used in baked goods like breads or muffins later on. Make cucumbers into refrigerator pickles and freeze them!

**More Recipe Ideas.....**

**\*On the Loon [Recipe Page](#):**

- Zucchini/Summer Squash and Fresh Herb Fritters
- Chocolate Zucchini Cupcakes
- Summer Pasta (uses pesto and whatever veggies you have on-hand...like eggplant, chard, squash and a tomato)
- Mediterranean Salad
- Grilled Eggplant
- Pesto

**\*Check last week's newsletter for:**

- Chard Lasagna with Eggplant Tomato Sauce
- Summer Squash Tacos

**Recipe Corner**

Feeling overwhelmed with cucumbers? Make pickles and put them in the freezer! Did I just blow your mind? I certainly was bowled over to find out that you can make refrigerator pickles (not canned) and put them in the freezer *for up to a year*. I wouldn't have believed it would be good, but I tried some of these freezer pickles that had been frozen for 9 months and just thawed out of the freezer. The verdict is that they are DELICIOUS! Thanks to our friend and fellow farmer, Irene Genelin, for passing along her grandpa's favorite pickle recipe.

**Grandpa Fritz's Freezer/Refrigerator Pickles**

7 cups of peeled or not peeled sliced cucumbers (slice thin on a cheese cutter if need be)

- 1 cup of sliced onions
- 2 cups sugar
- Chopped dill leaf (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 1 cup vinegar or lemon juice

Stir cucumbers, onions and salt together. Let them stand for 2 hours on the counter, or overnight in the fridge. In a separate bowl, mix together sugar, vinegar/lemon juice, and dill. Drain the cucumbers. Pack into jars and pour liquid over them to 1/2 inch from the top. Label and refrigerate for one week before tasting, or place into the freezer and enjoy within one year.

Thanks to CSA member, Andrea, for sending along this gnocchi recipe. It is a super fast meal to make with a package of gnocchi on-hand. Or try your hand at making your own gnocchi! We subbed some shell noodles for the gnocchi and had a great summer pasta. From the June 2009 issue of *Everyday Food*

**Gnocchi with Summer Vegetables**

- 1 Tbsp olive oil**
- 2 zucchini or summer squash (about 2 lbs total), quartered and sliced**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- Coarse salt**
- Ground pepper**

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add squash and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until squash is crisp-tender, 4-5 minutes.

**1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved**

Add tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until juicy, about 2 minutes.

**1 package (15-16 oz) gnocchi**

Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling water, cook gnocchi according to package directions. Reserving 1/2 cup cooking liquid, drain gnocchi and transfer to skillet. Toss gnocchi, adding enough cooking liquid to create a sauce.

**1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped**

**2 Tbsp grated Romano or Parmesean cheese**

**1 Tbsp butter 2 tsp lemon juice**

Remove from heat and stir in basil, cheese, butter, and lemon juice.

Both the long, skinny Japanese eggplants or Globe eggplants would work well in this recipe. We love grilled eggplant. Adapted from the cook book *Tender* by Nigel Slater.

**Grilled Eggplant with Creamed Feta**

- 1-2 medium-sized eggplants
- 3/4 cup plain yogurt
- chopped basil, parsley, and mint - a tablespoon of each
- feta cheese - 4-7 ounces
- olive oil

Slice each eggplant lengthwise into five or six long steaks. Sprinkle with sea salt and allow to stand for up to an hour or so while you make the creamed feta. This salting will ensure the eggplants soak up as little oil as possible. Crumble the feta into a bowl and mash it with a fork. Stir in the yogurt, 3 tablespoons of water, and the chopped herbs. Season with black pepper, but not salt unless your feta was extraordinarily mild. Rinse the eggplants gently and pat them dry. Brush with olive oil and place on a grill or a hot grill pan, the ridged sort that sits over the burner. When they are tender-a matter of five or six minutes on each side-and appetizingly charred in patches, lift them off the grill and place on a serving dish. Drizzle immediately with olive oil. How much they absorb will depend on the eggplants but make certain they are all thoroughly soaked. Leave them to cool a little, then serve with the creamed feta and flat bread.

**Contact us:**

**Laura and Adam**  
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