



LOON ORGANICS

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What's in the box 7/13:

Strawberries: We pick them ripe and ready to eat and their shelf life is short. Eat 'em up.

Summercrisp Head Lettuce:

The perfect summer lettuce.

Crispy, sweet and hefty leaves make awesome salads, BLT's, and wraps. A Loon favorite.

Fennel: White bulb with green stems and fronds. Tips and prep info on page 2.

Basil: First harvest for a pesto batch or pasta salad.

Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash:

Mix of zucchinis, yellow summer squash and scalloped patty pan squashes. All are used the same—slice and leave skin on for grilling, sautés, and baked goods.

Sugar Snap Peas: Some of the peas have browning on their pods but it doesn't affect flavor. We're not sure why this is..currently investigating. Edible sweet pod and pea. Snap off top and pull string down off side,

then eat raw or sauté up.

Broccoli: Florets and stem are delicious raw or lightly cooked.

Peel stem before using.

Napa Cabbage: Also known as Chinese cabbage. Info on page 2.

Garlic Scapes: Flowers of the garlic plant. Chop up raw and use wherever you would use garlic. Delicious!

Dill: Try a creamy dill dressing for your cucumbers

Cucumbers: Sweet and tender first pick.

CSA: Week Four (*Half Share Blue Week*)

The dry, hot weather has been a boon for crop growth and weed control. With the addition of zucchini/summer squash, cucumber, and the pea harvest, we have our hands full on harvest days and it finally feels like the dogs days of summer. There was certainly no shortage of cucumbers or summer squash for your box today. We loaded you up as the first ones are always the best and you all aren't sick of them yet. ☺ Broccoli is just trickling in—hard to get enough for today's box. CSA farming would be a heck of a lot easier if all the crops would ripen up in the exact quantities for our CSA harvest three days a week! In reality, most crops trickle in and out, and we sometimes have to add them to boxes in mid-week or substitute things out for another crop as we see fit. For the most part, we strive to have all boxes be the same for all pick up locations and to also repeat favorite crops two weeks in a row so that all half share members receive that item as well.

I can say with certainty that this will be the last week of strawberries, and maybe peas. We are having browning on the pods and are not sure quite what it is. Flavor doesn't seem to be affected at all, so hopefully it is just cosmetic damage, possibly from the extreme heat/sun lately? It is last week also of garlic scapes. Sweet onions and scallions are on the horizon, plus carrots and beets! We found the first ripe cherry tomato in the hoop house last week, and larger quantities should be ripening up in the next week or two, so those will be in the box soon! Slicing tomatoes from the hoop house are not far behind. The potatoes are flowering, and starting to form small new potatoes. We will have those for the first time in your box in 2 weeks, after our CSA tour where member's help us dig up the first harvest at the **Baby Potato Dig on Saturday, July 20th from 1- 3 p.m.** Mark your calendars for that, if you haven't already. Hutchinson will also be having their excellent music festival, [RiverSong](#), that same weekend. We hope that you'll come out for the potato dig and then head on over there after to see some great bands.

We had 14 dry days in a row (before our Wed. thunderstorm)—our longest dry streak since mid-March according to Paul Huttner, one of our favorite MN meteorologists. Yes, we have favorite meteorologists, don't you? ☺ We don't watch much t.v. at our house, but we do have our favorite websites to check in with. Every day we religiously read Huttner's weather blog [Updraft](#), and check in with [Bob Weisman](#) of St. Cloud State (although he is inconveniently out of town this month). When a 2nd or 3rd opinion is needed, I read [Paul Douglas](#). The highlight of Friday mornings comes at 6:50 a.m. when we listen in to [Mark Seeley](#)'s weather roundup on Public Radio. Multiple (seems like hundreds!) of times a day we check the [hourly weather graph](#) forecast and the local and regional satellites by the National Weather Service. At this point in life, I can't imagine living without that hourly weather graph. Oh yeah, and we have a weather radio too for those middle of the night storm alerts. After all of this, we try to put on our own meteorologist hat to predict conditions for our own microclimate of 40 acres. The weather affects almost every aspect of farm operations and crops. So please do forgive us then when we slightly obsessively talk about seemingly mundane weather details each week in the newsletter because in reality we ARE obsessed! ☺ **Next week's box:** sugar snap peas, cucumbers, beets, carrots, red or green cabbage, zucchini/squash, scallions or sweet onions, fennel, broccoli, and more. Have a great

Produce Storage: Do not refrigerate fresh basil. Leave on counter in the bag it came in. All other produce this week should be stored in the fridge in plastic bags, if it isn't packed in one already. Eat strawberries and basil first.

Fennel: We leave part of the fennel stems and fronds attached to the bulb, as all parts of the plant are edible and can be eaten. The white bulb is the most prized part of the fennel. We prefer to thinly slice or shave the bulb and top our salads or sandwiches with the shavings. Fennel is in the same plant family as dill, carrots, and celery, and fennel is an easy substitute for celery in recipes. We also like to chop the bulb and add it to tomato pasta sauces with sausage. Chop the feathery fronds and add them to salads or as a garnish. You can also use a handful of fronds and add to 2 cups boiling water for a calming, delicious tea with honey. Stalks can be used on the grill as a bed for fish, chicken or veggies and will impart a lovely flavor. There are two favorite fennel recipes on our [website](#): Fennel Egg Salad and Fennel Antipasto.

Preserving Tips: Zucchini and summer squash can be grated and frozen for use in baked goods later on. Basil can be made into pesto (leave cheese out) and frozen. Broccoli florets and stem can be steamed until bright green (2-3 minutes) then cooled and put in freezer bags. You can do the same with the snap peas, although the quality of frozen peas never compares to the fresh ones. Fennel can also be sautéed or steamed and frozen for later use in tomato pasta sauces.

Other Recipe Ideas:

[3 Zucchini/Squash Recipes](#) on our website's recipe page: bread, cupcakes, and fritters
[Cucumber Salsa](#) on our recipe page.
[Garlic Scape Pesto](#) on our recipe page.

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Recipe Corner

Napa Cabbage (also known as Chinese Cabbage) can be used interchangeably in a recipe that calls for "regular" cabbage. It does have a lighter, fluffier leaf texture than green or red cabbages, so it lends itself very well to cabbage rolls, fresh salads, and light sautés or stir-frys. For a delicious cabbage roll recipe, try Asian Cabbage Rolls with Spicy Meat Filling from our [Week 5 2012 Newsletter](#). We included a favorite Asian slaw with sesame dressing adapted from Beth Dooley's cook book, **Minnesota' Bounty**. Great way to use up your cilantro from last week, if you haven't already. The slaw is a perfect salad for summer picnics or parties.

Asian Slaw

1 head Napa cabbage, thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, seeded, deveined, and thinly sliced
1 bunch garlic scapes or green onions, thinly sliced
1 cup chopped cilantro
2 Tablespoons sliced mint
¼ cup vegetable oil (we used olive oil) 2 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil
2 Tbsp. rice vinegar 1 Tbsp. grated ginger
1 tsp. soy sauce, or to taste 2 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds
Toss the cabbage, bell pepper, garlic scapes/onions, cilantro, and mint together in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the vegetable oil, sesame oil, vinegar, ginger, and soy sauce. Toss the vegetables with the dressing, cover, and refrigerate overnight. Serve sprinkled with the toasted sesame seeds.

Use your dill bunch in this creamy, yummy dressing that is a great dressing for potato salad or for a cucumber and summercrisp lettuce salad. We added in a little grated fennel into the dressing and it blends in quite nicely. Adapted from Bon Appetit (www.epicurious.com). Makes about 4 cups.

Creamy Dill Dressing

1 1/4 cups mayonnaise 1/2 cup sour cream
1/3 cup chopped fresh dill 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice 4 teaspoons grated fennel bulb
4 garlic scapes, minced or 1 garlic clove, minced
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
Whisk mayonnaise and sour cream in medium bowl until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Cover; chill 1 hour to blend flavors.

This is a favorite cake, and it is even better topped with fresh strawberries! Use zucchini or any of the summer squash in your box—they will all work great. We put those larger squashes in your box with this cake in mind. From: www.culinate.com

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter at room temperature, or ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus 1 pat butter or teaspoon olive oil for greasing
2 cups all-purpose flour ½ cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
1 tsp. baking soda ½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. fine sea salt 1 cup light brown sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract 1 tsp. instant coffee granules (optional)
3 large eggs 1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
2 cups unpeeled grated zucchini or summer squash
-Powdered sugar, whipped cream or melted bittersweet chocolate (optional)
Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a 10-inch springform pan with butter or oil. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. In a food processor, process the sugar and butter until creamy (you can also do this by hand, armed with a sturdy spatula). Add the vanilla, coffee granules, and eggs, mixing well between each addition. Reserve a cup of the flour mixture and add the rest to the egg mixture. Mix until just combined; the batter will be thick. Add the zucchini and chocolate chips to the reserved flour mixture and toss to coat. Fold into the batter and blend with a wooden spoon: don't overmix. Pour into the prepared cake pan and level the surface with a spatula. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Transfer to a rack to cool for 10 minutes, run a knife around the pan to loosen the cake, and unclasp the sides of the pan. Let cool to room temperature before serving. Sprinkle with powdered sugar, glaze with melted chocolate, or decorate with fresh strawberries and whipped cream.