



LOON ORGANICS

Laura Frerichs & Adam Cullip

23229 200th St Hutchinson, MN 55350

Phone: 320.587.0140

loonorganics@hotmail.com

www.loonorganics.com

What's in the box 8/13:

Jimmy Nardello Sweet Pepper: SWEET! Not hot. These are red and look like a cayenne, but are sweet. Use raw or sauté up for a sweet, fruity flavor.

Eggplant: Globe or Japanese types. Recipe on page 2 and info. in last week's newsletter.

Red Watermelon: cut in chunks and mix with muskmelon for a nice snack or summer dessert.

Muskmelon: Various varieties range from larger to small-sized. Yellow/orange color to the rind and fragrant smell means ready to eat. If not quite ripe, leave on counter for a day or two.

Carrots: Take the green tops off to keep the carrots crisp for longer storage over a couple days.

Walla Walla Sweet Onions: Fresh, sweet onions are great in everything. Just one more week or two of these.

Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash: Finally winding down.

Cherry Tomatoes: Mixed heirloom and sungold varieties.

Beefsteak and Heirloom

Tomatoes: All types are great for fresh eating. The heirlooms are all different colors. When slightly soft to touch, they are ready to eat.

Broccoli: Peel stem and add it to stir-frys.

Cucumbers: Make refrigerator or freezer pickles. Recipes on our website.

Green Beans: "Provider" variety.

Jalapeño: Medium heat

Fresh Garlic: Perfect for salsa

CSA: Week Nine (*Half Share Green Week*)

Time flies by and somehow we are mid-way through our CSA deliveries. Hope you all have been enjoying the vegetables so far. We are into prime summer eating with the melons coming in all at once despite cool nights. Most of the crops are doing well and we are busy trying to keep our heads above water as we harvest, harvest and try to fit in other farm tasks like cultivating and tomato trellising. August is really the peak of the year for vegetable farmers—the time of year we dream and talk about all winter and spring as we look at seed catalogs and drool over photos of ripe melons and tomatoes. The pictures don't do justice to the delicious tastes of the actual fruits though. The watermelons in your box are a red variety we are very fond of called Starlight. All of the watermelons we grow have seeds. We find the seeded watermelon to have much more flavor than seedless varieties. Plus, the seedless watermelon is a really tricky thing to grow as you are essentially upending Mother Nature's desire to propagate. The seedless watermelon seedlings are bred to be sterile and not able to pollinate and produce melons on their own (thus no seeds). In order to get melons from the plant, you have to plant seeded watermelon varieties next to the seedless plants so that they can cross-pollinate. We don't mind the seeds ourselves and perhaps you've heard me mention it before, but watermelon seeds are actually edible and nutritious. Like many other types of seeds, watermelon seeds contain zinc, iron, and some protein, and if you eat them, they won't grow out of your belly! ☺ If you don't like the seeds, they are also fun to spit out as Eli very much enjoys trying to do. We aim to pick the watermelons ripe. They won't keep ripening now that they have been picked, so eat them within a week and keep them in your fridge if you have room. If you happen to get a bad watermelon, let us know and we'll set aside an extra one for you next week.

There are a couple varieties of muskmelons that are ripening now, and they all have that sweet perfume-y flavor of muskmelon. You will know your melon is ready to eat if the rind has a yellow hue to it and is fragrant at room temperature. Some melons should be eaten within a few days (and kept in fridge in meantime), while others need another couple days on the counter to reach their peak sweetness. There is one variety that is very small, but it has the best flavor. Many more muskmelons to come.

We expect to have sweet corn in next week's box. After a couple years of talking about it, we decided not to grow corn this year and instead buy it from another reputable farm. There were a number of reasons for not growing it; mainly because corn takes up way too much land for the amount of corn that you get, and we can grow many more sequences of yummy crops like carrots and salad mix in that same ground. Luckily, Jeff Nistler of Nistler Farms in Delano grows great sweet corn and is going to provide us with freshly-picked corn for the next few weeks. Nistler Farms sells at the Mill City Farmers Market where we have a booth. While not organic, his corn is non-GMO and not sprayed with chemical pesticides. I actually started eating Jeff's corn over a decade ago now when the roadside stand I was working for would sell it in the fall. Back then, I'd eat it raw straight from the cob it was so good, but it was also pretty spectacular roasted in the husk on the grill or oven. **Next week's box:** sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash (last wk?), watermelon and/or muskmelon, garlic, onions, purple/yellow carrots, broccoli, beans?, sweet peppers, eggplant

Have a good week. Your farmers, Laura, Adam, & Eli

Produce Storage: Tomatoes should NOT be refrigerated. Leave on your counter out of the sun—some may need a few days to ripen to perfection. Eggplant is a cold sensitive, so leave it on your counter or put it in a dish towel in your fridge. Watermelons can either go in fridge or stay on counter. Muskmelons should go in fridge if very ripe, otherwise on the counter. Eat the eggplant soon. All other produce this week should be stored in the fridge in plastic bags, if it isn't packed in one already.

Preserving Tips: Zucchini and summer squash can be grated and frozen for use in baked goods later on. To freeze beans, steam until bright green (2-3 minutes) then cool and put in freezer bags. You can do the same with carrots, but they need to be cooked for 5-10 minutes. Tomatoes can be de-cored, quartered, and frozen raw for use this winter in soups, chilis, and sauces. Peppers also can be chopped raw and frozen for winter use.

Other Recipe Ideas from our Website:

- [Freezer Cucumber Pickles](#)
- [Refrigerator Pickles](#)
- Lasagna with Chard, Pesto, and Eggplant Tomato Sauce in our [Week 7 2012 Newsletter](#)
- [Eggplant Dengaku](#) (eggplant with miso sauce)
- [Creamed Eggplant](#)
- [Grilled Eggplant Spread](#)
- [Zucchini Carrot Bread with Ginger](#)

Elsewhere:

-[Watermelon Lemonade](#) on www.smittenkitchen.com

-[Cold Rice Noodles with Peanut-Lime chicken](#) (uses lots of cukes, carrots, and other veggies) on www.smittenkitchen.com

Contact us:

Laura and Adam
h: 320.587.0140/ c:763.464.4714
loonorganics@hotmail.com
www.loonorganics.com

Recipe Corner

This gratin tastes like the essence of summer to us. You can make the whole dish at once, or cook all the vegetables first and finish the dish when the time is right for you. From Deborah Madison's cookbook *Vegetable Literacy*.

Eggplant, Tomato, and Summer Squash Gratin

1 large Globe-shaped eggplant 3 Tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, sliced crosswise 2 large cloves garlic, smashed with knife
3 medium red slicing tomatoes (about 1-1.5 pounds), quartered
3 Tablespoons chopped parsley
2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried oregano
Freshly ground pepper
2 smallish/medium summer squash or zucchini
2 teaspoons tomato paste (we used 2 Tbsp. of pizza sauce instead)

Finishing touches:

1 large clove garlic Sea Salt
2 Tablespoons chopped basil 2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons chopped oregano, or a scant teaspoon dried
4 ounces mozzarella cheese, sliced 1 cup bread crumbs (we used panko)

Quarter the eggplant lengthwise, then cut each quarter crosswise into slices about 1/3 inch thick. (Since you are using fresh eggplant just picked from the farm, there is no need to salt it. If you're eggplant has been sitting on the counter for a week or is store bought, then salt the slices lightly and set aside with you prepare the other vegetables, then blot dry). Heat the oven to 375°. Lightly oil an 8 by 10-inch or 10-inch oval gratin dish. Heat the oil in a wide skillet with a lid over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic, eggplant, tomatoes, parsley, and oregano and season with salt and pepper. Cover the pan, turn the heat to high, and when the vegetables begin to sizzle, turn the heat down to medium/med-low. Lay the summer squash/zucchini over the top of the vegetables, cover, and cook at a low simmer for 20 minutes (it took us closer to 35 minutes for vegetables to cook down and get soft). By this time, the vegetables should be soft. Using a slotted spoon, turn the vegetables into the prepared gratin dish. Stir the tomato paste into the liquid remaining in the skillet, then pour the liquid over the vegetables. To finish the gratin, pound the garlic with a few pinches of salt in a mortar until smooth. Add the basil, oregano, and oil and work together, forming a paste. (Alternately, you could do this with an immersion or regular blender if you don't have a mortar and pestle). Spoon the paste over the vegetables and then intersperse the cheese among them. Cover the surface with the bread crumbs. Bake until the bread crumbs have browned and the vegetables are hot and bubbling, about 35 minutes. Let the gratin settle for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Now that we have a good amount of cherry tomatoes, this is what I like to do with them and add in some slices of larger tomatoes too.

Oven-Candied Summer Tomatoes

2-2.5 pounds of ripe tomatoes (cherries are very good here, but you can use any type of ripe, delicious tomato)

1 cup extra-virgin olive oil Salt
Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Core the tomatoes (unless you are using cherries, and then no need to core) and halve vertically. Do not seed. Leave small tomatoes in halves; cut slightly larger tomatoes in 4 wedges, medium ones into 6, and large into 8. In a half-sheet pan, or two 2 ½ quart shallow metal baking pans (not glass or enameled metal), arrange the tomato wedges cut side up, next to each other but not overlapping in the pan. Coat the tomatoes with the oil. Sprinkle with salt. Bake 30 minutes, then lower the heat to 350 degrees and bake another 30 minutes. Turn the heat down to 300 degrees and bake 30 more minutes, or until the edges are slightly darkened. If the edges are not yet colored, turn the heat down to 250 degrees and bake another 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the tomatoes from the oven. Cool 20 minutes. Transfer them to a shallow glass or china dish or glass quart/pint jar and pour their oil over them. Let mellow, uncovered, at room temperature 4 to 6 hours. Layer the tomatoes in a storage container, pouring in their oil, and refrigerate. Or freeze the tomatoes in their oil in sealed plastic containers up to 3 months. Serve at room temperature. They will keep in the fridge for up to 6 days. Serves 4-8. From *The Italian Country Table* by Lynne Rosetto Kasper.