

The Com Post

A weekly Post for our Community Supported Agriculture Members

August 25, 2016

Volume 11, Issue 12

Week B

PLANNED for
This week in the box:

Flat Italian Beans
Hot Pepper Mix
Sweet Onions
Swiss Chard
Green Peppers
Colored Peppers
Cucumbers
Tomatoes
Cherry Tomatoes
Fennel
Sun Jewel Asian Melon
Eggplant (maybe)

Next week's box—
Our best guess!

Sweet Onions
Peppers
Beans?
Cucumber
Tomatoes
Garlic
Kale
Eggplant
Melon
Basil
Potatoes?

On the Farm

MAGNIFICENT MELONS!

By Nicole

The Planting of...

This season we planted nine different varieties of melon.

We start all of our melon plants from seed in our greenhouse in late April and early May. The young 3 to 4 week old plants were then transplanted out into the field in late May.

Melons can be challenging to grow due to their susceptibility to disease and insects. They also like it really hot (No problems with that this summer!)

To help the melons have a better chance in the typical cool Wisconsin summers, all of our melons are planted in agricultural plastic mulch. This mulch helps retain moisture and heats the soil which the melons really like. Holes are made in the plastic and the melon plants are planted directly into the soil in space made.

The Harvesting of...

Even when we plan for the melons to arrive at different times, sometimes the weather is just right (or just wrong) and several varieties mature at the same time.

We choose to grow smaller varieties so that they can fit in your box.

There are three different watermelon varieties growing in the GEF field this season, two cantaloupe varieties, and four specialty mel-

ons. You'll see some of these over the next few weeks.

Choosing just the right melons at just the right time can be tricky. Unripe watermelons will not continue to ripen on your counter, so we need to make sure they are fully ripe when they're harvested from the field. It's too bad that watermelons don't jump out and shout "We're ready!" like a red tomato. Their signs are much more subtle.

Cantaloupes, on the other hand, are not quite as challenging. A ripe cantaloupe is much easier to recognize. Plus, it will ripen on your counter if picked a little under-ripe.

Melon Storage

- For the fullest flavor, keep melons at room temperature away from direct sunlight and consume within 1 to 2 days.
- Refrigerate after cutting. They will last refrigerated for about a week.
- Not ready to eat your melon right away? Refrigerate whole melons and use within a week. Before eating bring to room temp. for fullest flavor.

Sun Jewel Melon





PLANNED for this week in the box: Details & Descriptions

Crop	frig?	Storage Specifics	Comment
Italian Flat Beans	Yes	In the bag in the crisper drawer	These flat beans are in various states of maturity and can be used in all of them. The outer pod can be eaten like a green snap bean. If it is too mature, take out the beans inside and eat them!
Hot Pepper Mix	Yes	In a bag in the crisper drawer	A wonderful bag of mixed hot peppers! Inside you will find the following varieties: heirloom Beaver Dam pepper (medium to hot heat), chili pepper (mild to medium heat), jalapeno pepper (hot heat)
Sweet Onions	No	On the counter or in a cool dark place	These Walla Wallas are sweet yet strong! They are amazing when cooked/sautéed/roasted to bring out there super sweetness.
Swiss Chard	Yes	In the bag in the crisper drawer	Looking for a simple yet delicious meal for your Swiss chard? Try page 4! Curried Red Lentil and Swiss Chard Stew---It's easy, good and good for you, too!
Sweet Peppers Green & Colored	Yes	In the crisper drawer	Colored pepper and green pepper(s). Some really big green peppers are maturing this week! They have thick, juicy walls and a nice full flavor.
Cucumbers	Yes	In the crisper drawer	More interesting cucumber recipes have been found! Check out page 3 for a sweet cucumber nut bread .
Tomatoes	No	Leave on counter for best flavor	Slicers, romas, plus a lovely heirloom or two.
Cherry Tomatoes	No	Leave on counter for best flavor	Cheese and cherry tomato muffins.....page 4! Have you ever had cherry tomato kabobs? Skewer a cherry tomato, a mini mozzarella ball, a piece of basil, repeat! This is a pretty and tasty appetizer.
Baby Fennel	Yes	In the crisper drawer	This is the only time we will be giving fennel this season. We know some of you love it and some of you.....well.....feel the other way. We hope you will try it again a new way if you are not fond of it. You never know! See Page 5 of the newsletter for lots about fennel: how to store and how to use and for the recipes Fennel egg salad and Fennel Cucumber Salsa.
Sun Jewel Asian Melon	See note		If you're going to eat your melon quite soon, leave it on the counter. If you won't get to it for a day or two or longer, refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before eating to get fullest flavor. Sun Jewel is one of the first melons to mature. It's a sweet little gem of goodness!
Eggplant (maybe some shares)	Yes	In the crisper drawer	Some shares might get eggplant, it all depends on the harvest results!



We wash the produce, but so should you!



RECIPES & IDEAS

FREEZING PRODUCE

If you can't use it now, freeze it! Even if it is just a little bit: a half cup of chopped pepper, one cup of corn, etc. Even little bits can be useful.

“When fruits and vegetables freeze, the water that is contained in each cell turns into ice crystals. The size of these crystals depends on how rapidly the produce is frozen: Quick freezing yields smaller crystals; slow freezing creates larger crystals. As these ice crystals form, they rupture cell walls and internal cell organelles, which release enzymes from their locked compartments. When thawed, these enzymes cause produce to develop off-flavors and turn brown and soggy.

In vegetables, these enzymes can be deactivated by blanching. Because fruits are too delicate to blanch, sugar or sugar syrup is used to reduce the formation of ice crystals during freezing. In high concentrations, sugar acts as a barrier between fruit and oxygen. When cooking with frozen vegetables, it is typically better to use the vegetables without thawing first. This is especially true for moist heat cooking methods like steaming and boiling, or when the vegetables will be added to soups, stews, and sauces.”

from Cook's Illustrated

Cucumber Nut Bread

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups peeled, seeded, and shredded cucumber
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

A recipe from allrecipes.com

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Grease 2 5x9-inch loaf pans with oil.

Place shredded cucumbers into a colander and let drain for about 30 minutes.

Stir eggs, vegetable oil, sugar, vanilla extract, drained cucumber, and pecans together in a large bowl.

Whisk flour, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, baking powder, nutmeg, and cloves in a separate bowl.

Stir dry ingredients into the cucumber mixture until batter is thoroughly combined. Spoon batter into prepared loaf pans.

Bake loaves in the preheated oven until lightly browned and a toothpick inserted into the center of each loaf comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let loaves cool in pans for 10 minutes before removing from pans to finish cooling on wire racks.





RECIPES & IDEAS

Curried Red Lentil and Swiss Chard Stew

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 5 teaspoons curry powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 14-ounce cans vegetable broth (or similar)
- About 4 - 8 cups Swiss chard leaves and small stems, coarsely chopped (remove larger stems and save for another use)
- 1 pound red lentils (about 2 1/4 cups)
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained
- Plain yogurt



DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil in heavy large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté until golden, about 13 minutes. Mix in curry and cayenne. Add broth and lentils. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until lentils are almost done. Add chard and garbanzos; cook until lentils are soft, and garbanzos are heated through. Makes 6 servings. Option: Chop the larger stems of the chard and sauté with the onions.

Ultimate Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Ingredients

- Butter
- 4 slices country white sourdough bread, cut on deep diagonal into 1/3-inch-thick slices (each about 7x3 1/2 inches)
- 4 thin slices prosciutto
- 8 large fresh basil leaves
- 8 (1/4-inch-thick) slices young Asiago cheese or drained fresh mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 (1/3-inch-thick) slices heirloom tomato (from about 1 large)

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly butter 1 side of each bread slice. Place 2 bread slices, buttered side down, on work surface. Top each with 2 prosciutto slices, then 4 basil leaves, then 4 cheese slices. Sprinkle with salt and crushed red pepper. Top with remaining 2 bread slices, buttered side up. Heat olive oil in heavy large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add sandwiches to skillet and cook until golden on bottom, about 4 minutes. Turn sandwiches over; transfer skillet to oven and bake until golden and cheese melts, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven. Carefully lift off top bread slices from sandwiches and insert 3 tomato slices into each, then cover with bread tops and serve.

(Note from the farmer: "Yum! Yum! Yum! We tried this sandwich without the prosciutto for a meatless version and it was delicious!")

Cheese and cherry tomato muffins

Ingredients:

- 8oz flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. ground pepper
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup grated zucchini
- 3/4 - 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 6 oz milk
- 1 egg
- 2 oz olive oil
- 10 cherry tomatoes

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400F.
 2. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, & salt. Add the zucchini and cheddar and mix well.
 3. In a separate bowl, mix together the milk, egg and olive oil. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients and mix well.
 4. Grease a dozen muffin pan and half-fill each with the mix (you should get 10 - 12 muffins).
 5. Prick each cherry tomato (this stops them from popping when they cook) and press one tomato into the top of each spoonful of mix.
 6. Spoon the remaining mixture over each muffin to conceal the tomato.
- Cook for about 20 minutes until golden brown.



Happy August!



Food Feature: Fennel

Fennel's history is as rich as its flavor! For centuries fennel has been utilized as a food, medicine, herb, and even insect repellent. In ancient Greece, fennel played a significant role in celebrations of the gods and goddesses. It was planted in the temple gardens in their honor and worshippers wore crowns of the feathery leaves. In Greek mythology knowledge sometimes came to humans from Mt. Olympus in the form of a fiery coal contained in a fennel stalk.

The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans believed fennel an excellent aid for digestion, bronchial troubles, poor eyesight, and nervous conditions. Today, in India, fennel seed is used for seasoning as well as chewed after the meal as a breath freshener and digestive aid. Nutritionally fennel is very low in calories, but offers significant Vitamin A and calcium, potassium, and iron.

Fennel grows wild around much of the world, but only two varieties are culti-

vated. Belonging to the Umbel family, it is related to carrots, celery, parsley, dill (which it resembles in looks), and anise (which it resembles in flavor).

Cooking Tips:

- All of the fennel can be used: bulb, stalks, and feathery leaves.
- Wash fennel bulb, trimming off any damaged areas of the stalks.
- Try crunching a fennel stem or slice of the bulb to familiarize yourself with the flavor.
- Try substituting for celery in most any recipe.
- Fennel can be baked, steamed, or sautéed with excellent results.
- Try cutting fennel into quarters, drizzle with olive oil, and bake until tender, about 35 minutes.
- Cut raw fennel into slices and use for dipping. To enjoy natural flavor, try dipping slices into a small

bowl of extra-virgin olive oil seasoned with salt and pepper.

- Use the feathery leaves as a fresh herb for seasoning. Try using it in place of dill. Fennel is excellent on baked or broiled fish with butter and lemon.
- Italians use fennel as part of an antipasto platter or for dessert along with a soft goat cheese.
- Add to soups, pureed, or chopped. Slices can be sautéed first to lock in flavors.

Storage Tips:

- Store fennel in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
- The delicate leaves will go limp. Wrap them in a moist towel and refrigerate.

From "From Asparagus to Zucchini"

Fennel Egg Salad

Add 1/3 cup finely chopped fennel stalk, 2-3 T. chopped fennel leaves, 2-4 T. finely chopped onion, 4 T. mayonnaise, 1 1/2 T. white wine vinegar, 2 tsp. Dijon mustard, salt & pepper to taste to 6 large hardboiled eggs (chopped). Mix well.

Delicious as a sandwich on bread with lettuce or as a spread on crackers!

Fennel Cucumber Salsa

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cucumbers, diced
- 1 fennel bulb, diced (save fronds for another use)
- 1 avocado - peeled, pitted, and diced
- 1/2 fresh onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup pickled banana peppers, diced
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped (or another herb, if desired)
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

Combine the cucumber, fennel, avocado, onion, banana peppers, cilantro, honey, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Allow mixture to sit 20 minutes before serving.

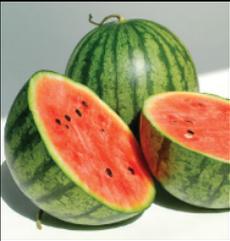
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FEATURING...

THE MANY MELONS AT GOOD EARTH FARM

You will have the opportunity to try a few of the melons we grow on the farm.
Here they are so you know what you've got when you get it!



*"Little Baby Flower"
mini Watermelon*



*"Sugar Baby"
Watermelon*



**"Sunshine"
Watermelon**



**"SUN JEWEL"
asian melon**



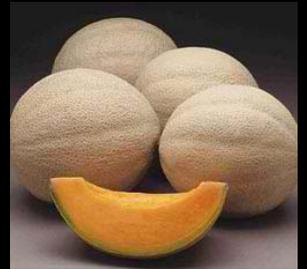
**"San Juan"
Ananas Melon**



**"Arava"
Galia Melon**



**"Brilliant"
Canary Melon**



**"HALONA" and "ATHENA"
CANTALOUPES**





MORE on MELONS

Melons can be hit or miss. Sometimes a melon that comes out of the field isn't the super-sweet amazing tasting melon that we hoped it would be. It may not be great for fresh eating, but it is not a loss - don't throw it out! We've got a few ideas for those "not-super-sweet melons".

Light & Refreshing Melon Water

1/2 cantaloupe melon, chopped small (or whole Sun Jewel)
1/2 cup sugar (or honey— you'll need less)
Juice of 1 lemon
Water

Put all ingredients in a half-gallon pitcher. Stir to dissolve sugar. Let sit for 12-24 hours before serving. Do not strain melon pieces. Let a few pieces drop into the drinking glass as you pour out.

If you want a sweeter, heavier flavor, more of, say, Melon-ade, double the sugar and lemon juice.

Melon-ice Pops

1/2 cantaloupe melon (or whole Sun Jewel)
2 - 4 T. honey
Lime juice

Put melon and honey into blender, add 1 T. lime juice. Blend until smooth. Taste for honey and lime.

Pour into popsicle molds, or reuse any small container (yogurt containers, for example) and put a popsicle stick in. Put in freezer. Eat when frozen for a cool treat!



If you cannot fit fennel whole in your crisper drawer, chop it up, put in a covered container, then refrigerate until needed.

Tomato Storage Tip:

Wash your tomatoes, cut out the stem end, then quarter.

Place in freezer container or bag and freeze.

Simple & Easy!



Happy August!

FEATURING...

Eat Local Longer!

Our 'Autumn-Winter CSA' runs November to February.

Don't be sad when your Summer CSA is over! Getting local organic produce from your Good Earth farmers doesn't have to end just because the warm months have past.



We grow and plan so we'll have veggies available in late autumn and winter. We have the space and capability to store crops for many months.

2 deliveries each month, November through February, for a total of 8 deliveries.

We expect the boxes to include crops like apples, onions, carrots, potatoes, garlic, pie pumpkin, winter squashes, Brussels sprouts, beets, broccoli, kale, lettuce, cabbages, popcorn, greens and/or others in order to "mix it up"— so each box is somewhat different and nourishing and sustaining!

Please note that due to cold weather in the autumn and winter, Autumn-Winter shares might be a different pick-up site than Summer Season Shares.

Autumn-Winter CSA: \$360



NEXT Dinner on the Farm: Saturday, September 17, 2016