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Box #9
Newsletter #9
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Packed in separate boxes

New Stuff: Green bell peppers, cauliflower, eggplant, tomatoes, watermelon.

Peppers tend to be high in vitamins A, C and E, and also contain iron and potassium. Hot peppers and red (mature) peppers have even more A and C. **Fun Fact:** capsaicin, the compound that makes hot peppers hot, is soluble in alcohol and milk, but not water. This means that you should be able to drink anything with alcohol (like beer), milk or eat yogurt to tone down a too spicy dish. It's always good to have a Plan B.

Peppers will store well, unwashed, in your crisper drawer for a week or 2. I like to keep them inside a plastic bag.

Cauliflower contains a large number of the proteins we all need to survive, as well as vitamin C, B_6, folic acid and several minerals. To get the most nutrition from cauliflower, eat it raw, or cooked *al dente*, overcooking destroys most of these beneficial vitamins. Organic cauliflower tends to be mild and sweet, not dry and bitter. Store cauliflower in a plastic bag in your vegetable drawer in the frig. It will keep for several weeks, but eat it soon for best flavor.

The cauliflower always starts out slow, then picks up steam. As you've seen, we sometimes give Couple or Family an item we don't have enough of. In a week or 2, everyone is likely to be getting cauliflower. A little rain would certainly help. Meantime, the rest of you will find broccoli in your box.

Huge, purple and pear-shaped: that's what most of us think when we hear "eggplant". In reality, eggplant colors range from white to green to rose to that glossy hue we love or hate. If you read seed catalogs, you've probably seen a picture of the plant with the perfectly shaped "eggs" growing on it, and a strategically-placed hen posed in front: yep, eggplant. And, that's probably the cultivar that gave the culprit its name. Eggplant is high in fiber and low in calories—nutritionally, these are its best features.

Eggplant, another member of the *solanaceae* family, along with tomatoes, potatoes, peppers and tomatillos, needs a longer time in the ground before it matures (as does cauliflower). When it does, these beauties are a mainstay in Asian and Middle Eastern cuisine.

Store eggplant in your vegetables drawer, unwashed. It should keep for about a week or more, altho the flavor is best shortly after harvest.

Most people have a love-hate relationship with the flavor of this vegetable. I did too, until I ate some grilled: wow! Grilled, eggplant has a full, robust flavor, a little like beef, or grilled portabella mushrooms. I have a sauce I use on it, which adds even more flavor. Here it is:

Grilling Sauce for Eggplant

In a small bowl, whisk together:

¼ cup olive oil
1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
salt & freshly ground pepper

Soy sauce helps to emulsify the vinegar and oil. Wash the eggplant(s), and cut off the tops—do not peel. Slice them into lengthwise slabs, ¼"-½" thick. Brush both sides with the grilling sauce. Grease your grate, and grill the slices over the coals, turning as needed. They're done when you can't see any whitish streaks, and the slabs are moist and limp. Alternatively, you can roast them in your oven at 350 degrees until you reach the same doneness as above. This is a better way to cook eggplant for Eggplant Parmesan, since it cuts way back on the amount of oil.

Another use for grilled eggplant is as an hors d'oeuvres. Cut the slabs into sections about 1"x3", grill, then spread them with cream cheese mixed with herbs and roll up. Wonderful!

Finally, some tomatoes. The fruits are turning red much quicker: they love this hot weather!

Store tomatoes on your counter: their flavor and texture is much better at room temperature. Only refrigerate a tomato if it cracks, or you didn't use all of it.

We're growing a number of cultivars, both cherry types and larger tomatoes, what we like to call "slicers". This week, you'll find a large, cherry tomato called "Juliet" in your boxes, along with a slicer that's all-red, "Early Girl", or one with a dark red-brown

color, “Black Prince”. Juliet is not very juicy, and great in salsas or salads. I think we all know what we like best with a larger tomato. If you haven’t tried a slice of fresh tomato, salt and pepper, and a blob of cottage cheese, you’re missing out. I did not like cottage cheese, I considered it yucky, diet food. Then I ate it on top of a fresh tomato sprinkled with salt and pepper: a marriage made in heaven, like hazelnuts and chocolate.

The watermelon we’re growing this year is called “Peace”. It’s a yellow-fleshed, seeded watermelon. We find that the seeded watermelons taste much better than the seedless varieties. If you look at a slice from the side, you’ll notice there’s an area above and below the seeds that is solid flesh. If you hate seeds, you could carefully cut out the seeded section and eat the rest. Frankly, I don’t want to discard any, edible bit of this delicious melon.

Watermelon Note: Because of their size, we decided not to put your watermelon inside the box, but to pack it separately. Couple Shares: look for the watermelon container(s) labeled “Couple Watermelons”. Family Shares, your container(s) are labeled “Family Watermelons”. We will put the watermelon containers close to the place at your pickup site where you usually find your Couple or Family box. Take one melon. The rest of the booty is in your usual-sized box.

Looks like I was wrong about that green bean patch. After another week of growing, it produced LOTS of beans. So, there you go.

Good news: no zucchini this week.

Field Notes

Chuck and the crew have been madly planting for fall harvest, and Wednesday afternoon will not be any different. Except, perhaps, the drip tape that will go alongside those small plants to ensure they have a good start in this hot weather.

We tried our first cantaloupe this week, and they were pretty good. Depending on how many ripen, some or all of you will get them soon.

And now, I must decamp to the barn and sort broccoli. Pray for rain.

Peace,

Terry & Chuck