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Newsletter #14
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Contents

Broccoli
Cantaloupes
Celery
Green Beans
Lettuce: Green Boston
Peppers: Colored Bell, Carmen
Tomatoes: Juliet, Red Slicers, Old German
Winter Squash: Aunt Thelma's Sweet Potato
Zucchini: Green, Zephyr

New Stuff: celery, Italian sweet pepper: Carmen, Aunt Thelma's Sweet Potato squash.
Choice Box: tomatoes ?

Altho celery is 94% water, it does contain vitamins A, B complex, C, some E and K along with many minerals and plenty of fiber. This celery will look very different from the stuff you buy in the supermarket, being much smaller with narrow stems and large leaves. The taste is a little stronger. Use and store as you would supermarket celery, adding a bit less to adjust to the more intense flavor.

Carmen is an Italian pepper, **sweet** and delicious. We prefer to pick these when they're completely red as they have the most flavor that way. Some of you may get Carmens that are still turning.

You might think you've gotten another spicy pepper because of its shape: long and pointy. If you still have an Anaheim to compare it to, you'll notice that the top of your Carmen pepper is wider than the body, while the Anaheim is about the same width along its body until it tapers to a point.

Carmen Italian peppers are great in anything you use peppers for, but they are especially good grilled.

Aunt Thelma's Sweet Potato is a lovely squash we've grown for several years now. It tastes good (yes, a little like sweet potatoes) and yields well on our farm. It looks like acorn squash, but is pale beige on the outside with orange flesh.

Store all winter squash between room temperature and 40°F in a dry place. Sun will not affect its color. Do not wash the squash before storing it. Many winter squash varieties actually improve with aging: the sugars increase. Check the outside for any damage that pierces the skin: this is where mold and bacteria will enter first. You can still store winter squash that has some damage, but keep an eye on it: if you see any mold or moisture at that site, use the squash ASAP. Be sure to wash the outside before you use it, no matter what its condition.

Most people bake winter squash. You'll get more flavor from it if you leave the seeds in. To bake, wash the outside, cut the squash in half, and place the cut halves down on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Set the oven for 400°F, and bake until the squash is soft when you poke it with your finger. If you like to add butter and brown sugar, flip the halves over, scoop out the seeds and drop in whatever you prefer.

Cream of Fresh Tomato Soup *Serves 5-6*

In a heavy-bottomed pot, over medium heat, put:
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 ½ cups onion, red if possible
2 carrots, unpeeled and chopped
-Sauté until onion and carrot are very tender.
Add: 1 Tbsp. garlic, minced
-Cook for about a minute.
Now add: 4 lbs. ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped
1 Tbsp. tomato paste
¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
3 cups chicken stock
Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
-Bring contents of pot to a boil, lower heat and simmer, uncovered, until tomatoes are very tender and contents have reduced somewhat, about 30-40 minutes. Stir occasionally. Remove pot from heat and puree with a hand blender, regular blender or food processor, being careful not to burn yourself. Return pureed soup to pot (if necessary).
Add: 1 cup heavy cream
-Stir together over low heat to bring cream up to temperature. Taste for additional salt and/or pepper. Garnish with more chopped basil, croutons or grated Parmesan cheese.

Nancy has found us another **very** helpful hint:

One of the pests showing up in many kitchens these days is the fruit fly. As always, prevention is better than a cure. Prevention includes wiping the produce and/or putting it in plastic in the refrigerator. But if the critters have already set up house keeping, there is an effective, inexpensive and safe way to combat them. Pour about one inch of apple cider vinegar in a glass. Add a few drops of dish detergent and stir. Cover the glass tightly with plastic wrap and poke a few holes in the wrap with a toothpick. The fruit flies are attracted to the cider vinegar, but the detergent affects their wings and they can't effectively find their way out. Simple and effective.

I tried it, and it works. Happy day!
The rain has splashed these low-growing green beans pretty severely. We've given them an initial washing, but you should wash them again before using.

Field Notes
Celery has always been an experiment for us. It requires plenty of moisture and rich soil. We planted it in our lowest, moistest field with a good dose of chicken manure, then left it alone. This summer has generally been good for rain, and celery puts down a deep root system. Another application of Chickitty Doo Doo, and a little cultivating might have encouraged it to grow bigger. There's always a choice to make when you grow as many different crops as we do: should I cultivate this crop, plant those transplants or spray for flea beetles? Time is precious and limited, and setting priorities is vitally important. One has to resign oneself to not being able to do everything.
The fall greens, kale, collards and turnips, look pretty good out there, as does the chard. Look for these soon, especially chard. That patch needs to be picked.
Chuck has been happily cultivating crops this week. Tuesday he was in the next broccoli field, Thursday he'll likely work on the leeks. Yes, leeks, one of Nature's tastiest alliums. There's nothing like a nice pot of leek and potato soup.

Farm Day is this Sunday, Sept. 29th. We'll start at 2pm and end about 5pm. The afternoon includes tours of the farm, fields and orchard as well as cider-making in the barn with our own apples.
I'm going to give you directions to the farm because many map programs and GPS devices will run you to the corner of Cty. S and Cty. P, which is about 4 miles too far west. **Google Maps** locates us correctly, however.
From Milwaukee: take Hwy. 41/45 north. Where Hwy. 41 and 45 split, take Hwy. 41. Exit onto Cty. K, go west/left to Hwy. 175, turn north/right onto Hwy. 175. A few miles up, you'll come to Cty. S, turn west/left onto Cty. S, go 2 miles to the corner of Cty. S and Crooked Rd. The farm is on the corner (T-stop) of Cty. S and Crooked Rd. Just past Crooked Rd. is our driveway. Turn in and park on the grass next to the driveway where other cars are parked. Walk to the basement of the barn where we'll be gathering and starting to make cider.
If you're driving from Oconomowoc, Delafield area, coming north on Hwy. 83 is the easiest. Just follow Hwy. 83 north thru Hartford. About 6 miles north of town you'll see Cty. S. Turn west/left onto Cty. S, go 2 miles to the corner of Cty. S and Crooked Rd. The farm is on the corner (T-stop) of Cty. S and Crooked Rd. Turn in and park on the grass next to the driveway where other cars are parked.
Our website contains a Google map, which is correct.
We hope to meet as many of you as possible on Sunday afternoon. So far, the weather looks good, especially the afternoon.
See you soon,
Terry & Chuck