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Box #5
Odd Week
28 July 2021

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Broccoli
Carrots: Orange / Purple
Cucumbers
Green Beans
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Zucchini

New Stuff: cucumbers, sweet corn
Choice Box: ?

Cucumbers are high in vitamin E (probably why they're so soothing on the eyes), and low in calories. Few vegetables are as satisfying on a hot summer day for replenishing liquids and filling you up.
Here's how I store cucumbers so they won't get mushy: I **DO NOT** PUT CUCUMBERS INTO A PLASTIC BAG. I put them in my refrigerator's vegetable drawer, cut or uncut. They'll keep for at least a week. I discovered this by mistake one night, when I was too tired to dig up a plastic bag. I just tossed a half-used cucumber into my vegetable drawer, letting it fend for itself. 3 days later, I opened my frig to find a cool cucumber whose cut end was only slightly dried out, skin perfect. And, it was a thin-skinned, burpless variety, the kind that can go mushy overnight. I was amazed.
We're growing our cucumbers outside this year, on plastic mulch. The plan is to try a few ways of trellising them, and see which works best. One method is to plant 2 8ft. galvanized pipes in the ground (the verticals), then fasten another across the top, tie a string at the bottom between the 2 verticals, then tie strings from the top, horizontal bar to the string at the bottom. Train the cucumber vines up the strings by twining the vines up the vertical strings as the vines grow. This had worked well for me in the past, but I haven't tried it outside on a large scale.
Another method is to use large tomato cages to support the vines and make the fruit easier to pick. We've done this in the past and it's worked very well with our square cages.

Sweet corn is one of summer's treasures. Who doesn't love a freshly-cooked ear, dripping with butter and sprinkled with salt and pepper?
Corn has been around for tens of thousands of years, and seems to have originated in Central America. Early varieties were small, brightly colored, and a popcorn-type. Over the centuries, strains have been selected for size and sweetness, as they are today. Altho not as nutritious as older varieties, today's sweeter corn still contains vitamins A, B-complex, phosphorous, potassium, vegetable proteins and complex carbohydrates. Combined with most beans or dairy, it forms a complete set of proteins.
Sweet corn is best eaten as soon after harvest as possible—this was picked Tuesday. The longer you keep it, the more sugar will change to starch. Store sweet corn in its husk in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.
You may find that some of the ears have ends with very small, immature kernels, and, a little further down, the kernels are suddenly much bigger. This is a result of uneven fertilization. Corn silk is a conduit that helps each kernel of corn develop. If some of those strands are not pollinated, some of the kernels will not form. Bugs can also interrupt fertilization when they eat the corn silk, which is why commercial farmers spray insecticides.
This year, we have 2, large (for us) plantings of sweet corn. The fields were planted 2 weeks apart, with Allure and Café. Cafe is a smaller plant, but matured before Allure. We picked the 2 beds that were ready, but they didn't yield very much. Never fear, there's more coming. We may have 3 or more weeks of sweet corn. Something to look forward to.
I like to cook my sweet corn with a cup of water in a skillet, a teaspoon of salt, then the husked ears. Bring the salt water to a simmer, cover, and cook for 5 minutes. Turn the ears with tongs, and cook for 5 more minutes. Ready for butter! Save the tasty corn water for soups or other recipes where you need a little stock.
Sweet corn is great on the grill. Leave the husk intact, and soak your corn for about 30 minutes in a bucket of cold water. Prepare the coals as usual, and spread them out over ½ or 1/3 of the bottom of the grill. When ready, place the ears on the grill rack directly over the fire. With a tongs, turn the ears a quarter about every 5 minutes. Don't worry if the husk gets charred, that adds flavor to the corn. When you've grilled all sides, move the corn to the cool side of the grill, and remove the bits of husk and silk from the rack. Now, cook your meat on the hot side. When the meat is almost done, pile the corn on a platter to cool a

bit before serving. When it's cool enough to handle, remove the charred husk and enjoy.



Here's a shot by Worker Share Amy of our 2, other Tuesday morning Worker Shares, Chris and Randa, picking the sweet corn in your box. Some of the broccoli came from the beds in the foreground.

The basil is going strong, at least this week. Now, you won't get enough basil to make 2 cups, but if your plant is still growing, use that. Or, see my recommendations at the bottom of the recipe for other ideas.

Basil Pesto

makes approx. 2 cups pesto

In the bowl of a food processor, put:

2 cups, packed, fresh basil leaves, washed and spun/dried
4 medium cloves garlic, chopped coarsely
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly-ground pepper
1/4 cup almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, etc.
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Process all ingredients just until uniform in size. Add more salt, pepper, etc. to suit your taste. You can also freeze this pesto, altho the flavor and texture are better if you leave out the cheese.

Pesto is a pretty potent sauce on pasta, so use sparingly. Start with about 1 Tbsp. per serving, taste, then increase the amount, if desired.

Pesto can be frozen easily. I buy a package of the ½ cup containers and put the finished paste in those. To thaw, take a container out of the freezer the night before and put it into your refrigerator. Do NOT try to thaw it in the microwave: it'll turn black. Basil oxidizes easily, so always cover it when you're not actually spooning some out. If you can, pour a thin film of olive oil over the top of the paste to protect it from the air.

"Pesto" simply means "paste". You can make pesto with other herbs besides basil. People often substitute parsley when they're a bit short on basil for this recipe. I've made delicious herb pestos using tarragon, thyme, parsley, fennel, sage, lovage, oregano, rosemary, marjoram, Summer savory and sorrel. Use one quarter to half as much of the stronger herbs: sage, rosemary and lovage.

Speaking of things to make pesto with, you have some carrot greens, but you'll have to sort thru them to find good ones—they're a mixed bag, shall we say.

The purple carrot is called Purple Sun. We've been trying different cultivars, looking for one with good flavor, and this seems to be it. Purple Sun has a deep, purple outside with a light orange core. Occasionally, one shows up that's purple all the way thru—also very tasty.

We're delighted to give you green beans again this week, altho it's the first time for Couple Shares. The plants are slowing down due to the heat, so we'll see how the next week yields.

And here's the 2nd round of Sunflower Greens. See newsletter #2 for what to do with Sunflower Greens, and how to take care of them.

Field Notes

Chuck's been on the hop moving around drip tape and keeping all our vegetables alive. Just as we heaved a dejected sigh, Mother Nature rained on us Tuesday morning—all of .05" We had heard it might rain, but chances were low, so we dismissed it. Thanks Ma! We'll take anything.

Looking ahead, there's a small chance of rain Wednesday. Fingers crossed.

Our 2nd bed of broccoli is just starting to produce. The first bed was only about half picked, and yielded a good harvest on Tuesday. With the 2nd bed coming on, we'll have broccoli for a few weeks yet.

No lettuce in this week's box, and perhaps not for another week or so. We're between lettuce patches, and the heat and drought are not helping. More drip tape.

A bit of a cool-down is coming, which will be very welcome to those of us out in the field.

Stay Cool,

Terry & Chuck