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Box #14
Even Box
27 September 2023

Contents
Cilantro
Beans: Green & Yellow
Beets: Orange
Broccoli
Eggplant: Couple Shares Only
Lettuce: Romaine or Red Leaf
Peppers: Anaheim, FlavorBurst, Red Bell, Red Carmen
Tomatillos: Family Shares Only
Winter Squash: Acorn

New Stuff: acorn squash, eggplant, tomatillos
Choice Box: peppers and ??

The winter squash is ripening, so today's **acorn squash** is just the first one you'll receive.
We just harvested these on Tuesday, so they've not been cured at all. This means the stem has been freshly cut and not dried. We recommend you bake this squash soon.
In a normal year, we start cutting winter squash stems when the plants begin to die and the squash is ripe and fully formed. We either leave squash in place, or move them to the side of the field to dry in the sun. This gives stems a chance to dry up nice and hard, making it difficult for fungus to infect the stem and work its way downwards to the inside of a squash. We plan to cut stems and let them dry for the rest of our winter squash.
Winter squash contains far more vitamin A than summer squash, is an excellent source of potassium, high in fiber and complex carbohydrates.
Here are some hints for storage: check the skin before storing winter squash: if there are any holes, blemishes or soft spots, plan to use that squash soon and cut out the soft spots first, as the deterioration will only spread.
The best way to bake winter squash is to wash the outside, cut off the stem, then cut the squash in half. Set your oven at 400 degrees, line a half-sheet pan with aluminum foil to make cleanup easier, and place the squash on the foil, cut side down. **Do not remove the seeds** yet—they give the roasted squash more flavor. Bake for 30-60 minutes, or until the squash is soft when you poke it with your finger. Remove from the oven, flip over and scoop out the seeds using a large spoon. Drizzle with melted butter, add a little brown sugar, terrific.
It's a bit of a fluke that we're putting eggplant into a CSA box: we haven't grown it in any quantity in several years. As it happens, we accumulated enough eggplant between last week and this to have just enough for the Couple Shares. I'm a big fan of grilled eggplant, and the grilling sauce (Newsletter #5) I use makes it taste like beef.
Altho **eggplant** is low in calories and high in fiber, it does not contain large amounts of vitamins or minerals. It is available in many, different cultivars, from the pear-shaped, Italian variety, the long slender Asian, the small white "chicken egg", to others that are pink, green, lavender, striped and so on. This year, we planted a small number of Asian-style eggplant plants, and they're producing really well. The Asian variety has a tender skin and sweet flesh.
Always cook eggplant before eating as it contains a toxic substance called solanine. This is the same, bitter material that makes green potatoes taste bad. Cooking eggplant changes the solanine chemically so it's safe to eat. Store eggplant in the vegetable drawer in your fridge, but use it within a week.
One of our CSA members sent me this recipe way back in 2016:
Mediterranean Ratatouille Chicken
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into large strips
1 clove garlic, crushed and minced
1 cup eggplant, cut into ½ inch cubes
1 small zucchini, thinly sliced
1 medium onion, sliced
1 small green pepper
1 14 ½ oz. can diced tomatoes
2 tsp. capers, drained
4 tsp. Parmesan cheese
12 oil cured olives
8 leaves fresh basil, chopped (or ½ tsp dried)
2 Tbsp. olive oil or olive oil cooking spray
Spray a 10 inch frying pan with cooking spray (or use the 2 TBSP Olive Oil). Heat to medium hot and put chicken strips in frying pan. Add garlic. Turn chicken once when lightly browned.
Add all other ingredients except Parmesan cheese. Cover and simmer for 15 min or until vegetables are tender.
Sprinkle cheese on top and serve immediately with pasta or bread sticks.
Tomatillo means "little tomato". It is shaped like a small, green tomato enclosed in a papery husk. The fruit starts out small and is completely hidden by the

thin, green husk. As it grows, the fruit fills the husk and eventually splits it open. Tomatillos are a member of the nightshade family (solanaceae), as are tomatoes and potatoes. It's Latin name is *physalis philadelphica*. Another *physalis* member is the ground cherry, smaller, sweeter, and often used to make jams and pies.

Tomatillos are a very good source of vitamins C, K, niacin, potassium, manganese and dietary fiber, and a good source of iron, magnesium, phosphorus and copper.

To store tomatillos, pull off the papery husk, wash off any dirt and the sticky residue from the husk under warm water (I roll 3-4 around inside my cupped hands so they bump against each other). Then, drain them briefly and put inside a sealable plastic bag. They'll keep 2 weeks in your vegetable drawer, and still taste good. You can use them raw in salads, put them in stir frys, or in any number of Mexican dishes, like salsa verde or enchiladas.

The cultivar we're growing matures thru green to light green then light yellow, getting sweeter as it gets older. Most Mexican cooks prefer to use tomatillos when they're green, as they believe tomatillos have the best tart-sweet contrast at this stage.

Our tomatillo patch is loaded with fruit—they're just not ripening as fast as we'd prefer. Luckily, we have enough to give the Family Shares a decent quantity to make this:

Roasted Salsa Verde

Makes about 2 cups

Turn on your broiler, or set your oven as high as it will go. Line a half sheet or jellyroll pan with aluminum foil.

Put on the pan in a single layer:

1 lb. tomatillos, husks removed, washed and cut in half

1 Jalapeño, washed, halved, stem, seeds and/or ribs removed

1 small onion, cleaned and quartered

2 lg. garlic cloves, UNpeeled

-Roast until the contents are slightly charred, 5-15 minutes or more, depending on the temperature of your oven. When done, remove from oven and let cool 15 minutes on a rack.

Put into a food processor or blender:

contents of pan—**but peel the roasted garlic first**

1 Tbsp. lime juice (fresh if you have it)

1/3 cup fresh cilantro, loosely packed

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Process until you've reached the consistency you desire: less for a chunky salsa, more for a smooth one. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

You've been getting peppers since Box #9, and are likely to get them in the remaining weeks. If you can't use them all up, here's an easy way to freeze peppers: Wash the pepper, cut it in half and trim away the core, seeds and ribs. Place the pepper half on a shelf in your freezer. Once frozen, put the pepper halves into a plastic, recloseable freezer bag. When you need pepper for cooking, take out as many halves as you need and chop. This method works great for those Scratch & Dent peppers in the Choice Box.

Field Notes

Rain Tuesday, rain Wednesday—it's been dry, so this moisture is most welcome. Rain that falls over a day or two is best because it has a chance to soak into the soil gradually.

Chuck paid a visit to our melon patch and came up a winner: both watermelon and muskmelon are ripening, so expect those in the next 2 boxes. The extended warm weather sure helps.

FARM DAY is this **Sunday, Oct. 1st**. We'll start at 1pm, picking apples in the orchard. You are welcome to take home the better apples you find. The slightly wormy ones can be made into cider. We will provide picking poles and crates.

After gathering a good quantity of apples, we'll move into the barn to wash them, cut them up, grind the chunks into mash, then load that mash into the cider press and press out the juice for cider.

Please bring a gallon or half gallon jug so you can take cider home with you.

Around 3pm, Chuck will lead a tour of our farm. You may dig carrots, pick peppers, or top Brussels sprouts, and you'll get a good look at exactly where your vegetables come from.

Chuck and I invite you to bring your family and friends to enjoy an afternoon in the country. The weather gods are predicting a beautiful day.

Some GPS programs do not locate us correctly, but Google maps knows exactly were we live. Our farm is located at the T stop where Crooked Rd. meets County S, just north of Hartford. The address is 7112 County Rd. S, Hartford. If your GPS sends you someplace else use your map program to find County S and Crooked Rd. Crooked Rd. is distinctive because it looks like a stairway.

We hope to see you soon.

Cheers,

Terry & Chuck