



PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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Experience the Onion

According to Wikipedia, the onion is the most cultivated species of the genus *Alium* in the world. Over 74 million tons are produced globally with China being the largest producer. Our Godchild Daven came to visit last week and has been experiencing first hand the wonders of the onion. He got to help pick and clean 150 Cippolini onions. The Cippolini variety has an Italian origin and is a sweeter, flatter onion that is not commonly found in stores. It is one of our favorites for its mild flavor. It is great on pizzas, kabobs, in pasta dishes and grilled. It caramelizes nicely and is not as pungent as typical storage onions. That doesn't mean you won't shed a tear when cutting them. All onions give off a gas when sliced that irritates the eyes. Goggles or a fan can help eliminate this tear jerker or cutting them when they are cold and with a sharp knife also helps. Cutting the roots off last also will delay the tears as this is where the enzymes that create the gas are most heavily concentrated. Daven didn't get to experience any of the tear causing gas because he was only cleaning them and removing the outer layers but his hands still smell like onions. The onion has been cultivated and eaten for thousands of years. In ancient Greece athletes ate large quantities of onion because it was believed to thin blood. Roman gladiators were rubbed down with onion to firm up their muscles. In the Middle Ages onions were such an important food that people would pay their rent with onions and give them as gifts. Doctors were known to prescribe onions to facilitate bowel movements and erections, and also to relieve headaches, coughs, snakebite and hair loss. We don't recommend any of these uses but we encourage you to experience the onion.

WEEK 6 BOX CONTENTS

- Tomatoes:** Sun Gold cherry or round red/pink slicing.
- Golden Beets:** You can peel and chop these without getting your hands stained. Roast with olive oil and salt/pepper on the grill until tender.
- Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash:** Simply rinse off - no need to peel. Keep in the refrigerator. Enjoy raw or cooked.
- Savoy Cabbage:** Sweet tender cabbage with crinkly leaves. Cooks quickly and doesn't have the strong odor associated with cooked cabbage. Can also be used raw in salads.
- Cippolini Onions:** Flat sweet Italian onion. Eat fresh, fried, broiled, grilled, or baked. Use in salads, salsa, and sauces.
- Cucumbers:** Cucumbers are 95 percent water. A light cooling vegetable helps us replenish the fluids and minerals lost in our perspiration, leaving us "cool as a cucumber"
- Basil Bouquet:** Mix of basil varieties including lemon, thai, cinnamon and purple types.
- Lettuce:** Red summer crisp variety perfect for a salad or sandwich. This is the last of the head lettuce for a while.
- Fennel:** Feathery fronds can be chopped and added to salads to add a nice anise flavor. Bulb can be cooked or eaten raw.
- Kohlrabi:** Peel and slice. Enjoy as a nice crisp snack with dip or add to a salad.
- Kale:** Remove stems from leaves by folding the leaf in half lengthwise and slice away the thick stems. Saute in olive oil, garlic and onions.
- Green Pepper and/or Eggplant:** We hope to have enough of both for each box but if we don't some will have one or the other.

Farm News

It was another hot week at the farm. We mowed, picked weeds and planted when the heat allowed us to. We watered a lot too. No rain this week. But with almost 4,000 feet of drip irrigation and some overhead sprinklers we were able to keep everything watered. The plants continue to thrive in this heat and humidity. Daven, Bingle, Chris and Cat all helped us out last week pick weeds, kill bad bugs, harvest vegetables and get produce ready for the box. We try to get picking done in the morning and get the vegetables in the cooler as quick as possible. Even the tomatoes need a little less heat after they're picked. No need to put them in the refrigerator but they ripen much faster when they are exposed to 80 plus degree temperatures after picking. The tomatoes in the greenhouse are growing like crazy. We had to put some fencing up to keep them from overtaking the peppers. The cucumbers in the greenhouse are slowing down but the field cukes are picking up. The fennel is fantastic this year. We kept it in the fence away from the deer and if you like an anise (liquorice) flavor you will love fennel to cook with. Enjoy!

From the Kitchen

Cucumber Fennel Salad

A cool, crisp salad for those hot summer days.

A hint of dill and lemon nicely seasons this crunchy cucumber salad that makes a great cool addition to any summer meal.

Ingredients

3 large cucumbers, sliced
1 medium sweet onion, thinly sliced
1 small fennel bulb, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons olive *or* canola oil
3/4 cup teaspoons dill weed
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon grated lemon peel

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the cucumbers, onion, and fennel.
2. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the remaining ingredients; shake well.
3. Pour over cucumber mixture and toss to coat. Refrigerate until chilled.