



August 8, 2012
Volume 4, Issue 13

PRAIRIE SUN FARM

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The Overwhelming Box

The box last week was 16.4 pounds. It was a beautiful box. There was a lot of variety in the box and many different tastes to explore. This is expected for mid-season boxes but having a good year helps. It's hard to believe we are half way through the CSA season already. This week the melons start coming. They make the box even heavier. We start the year at about 10 pounds per box and by the second half of the year they often reach 20 pounds. We do get comments sometimes about the amount of vegetables. Some people have no idea what they're going to do with everything each week. That's OK. One of the goals of a CSA share is to get you thinking about cooking, making meals and using the bounty of a local harvest. Being a CSA member you get to enjoy this every week. For those of you that get overwhelmed by it all we suggest getting a good cookbook like *From Asparagus to Zucchini, A Guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce*. We have some of these for sale if you're interested. There are also some great websites out there for recipes and ideas. Google your vegetables and it's amazing what you'll find. But it does require some planning and thinking each week. If you don't finish all your vegetables that's OK too. Some last a long time because they are picked right before you get them but if they are going bad get them out of the refrigerator and compost them. Everyone should have a compost bin outside that they can throw expired vegetables and dead houseplants in. The box shouldn't be overwhelming or intimidating. Think of it as a Christmas present each week with surprises. Get excited, get knowledgeable, be creative and go eat. It's all good no matter what you do with it. Enjoy!

WEEK 9 BOX CONTENTS

Cantaloupe: Sweet and juicy. Great for breakfast, desert or snacking.

Cucumbers: Use sliced cucumber in your sandwich or on top of your snack cracker for extra crunch.

Yukon Gold Potatoes: Beautiful golden color with a rich buttery taste. Steam, roast or boil.

Cherry Tomatoes: Mix of mostly sungold with some red and purple cherry tomatoes.

Tomatoes: Mix of heirloom and round red. Some are ready to eat now and others will continue to ripen on your counter.

Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash: Cut into long slices, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and put right on the grill.

Ailsa Craig Onions: Very sweet and mild. Good raw, grilled or sautéed. Keep in the refrigerator and enjoy soon.

Garlic: The garlic variety is called 'Music' and has huge cloves. It's one of our favorites. Store on your kitchen counter.

Yellow Wax Beans: Steam or simmer fresh beans in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Watch for beans to brighten in color and become tender, but not soft or mushy.

Sweet Peppers: Bell peppers or red 'Carmen' peppers. Carmen peppers look like big chili peppers but are sweet and delicious.

Eggplant: Blend cooked eggplant with lemon juice and seasonings of choice for a dip or spread.

Anaheim Peppers: Medium Hot. Green pepper that is longer than the Jalapeno. Adds a nice flavor to salsa.

Farm News

We were a little worried this week when a storm blew threw on Friday night. It shook the farm house pretty good. Luckily the sweet corn was the only thing that really had damage. Unfortunately about half of it was lying on the ground. We'll see how much it recovers. We picked a lot of vegetables this week. The cooler is full. Bingle, Chris and Cat continue to help us on Tuesdays when they can. The newsletter didn't get emailed on Tuesday this week because our computer is not working correctly. Luckily it recovered, for now. We hope things go smoother the coming week. If you have a chance go to Hutchinson this weekend for the annual MN SFA Garlicfest. It's always a good family event with presentations, music, food and fun. We're enjoying the cooler weather. We had a nice 1 inch rainfall too with the storm. It sure made the grass grow. We continue to mow, weed and maintain the gardens. Soon we will be planting our fall cover crop so we've got that to think about. The changing of the seasons is coming!

From the Kitchen

MIXED GRILLED VEGETABLES WITH WARM BALSAMIC DRESSING

Note: Other veggies can be added to this dish

Ingredients

3 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/3 c. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp. dark brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt, divided
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 sweet bell peppers
- 1 large or 3 baby eggplants, cut into 1/2 -in. slices on the diagonal
- 1 or 2 large yellow crookneck squash, cut into 1/2 -in. slices on the diagonal
- 1 or 2 large zucchini, cut into 1/2 -in. slices on the diagonal
- 1 large onion, cut into 1/2 -in.-thick slices
- 2 tbsp. parsley, chopped
- 2 tbsp. basil, chopped

Directions

In a medium skillet, slowly cook the garlic in the olive oil over very low heat for about 2 minutes, or until barely colored. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Whisk in the vinegar, brown sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Set aside until ready to serve.

Preheat grill (medium-high heat). Grill the peppers whole, turning several times with tongs, until skins are blistered and charred on all sides. Transfer peppers to medium bowl and cover with plastic wrap; let steam to loosen skins. Remove skins; core and seed peppers. Brush the remaining vegetables with some of the dressing and season with remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste. Grill vegetables until tender, turning once, should take about 5 minutes for eggplant, squash and zucchini and 10 minutes for onion.

Transfer all the vegetables to a serving platter. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and sprinkle the parsley and basil over the top. Serve warm or at room temperature.