

Wholesome Harvest CSA

Fort Atkinson, WI – veggies@wholesomeharvestcsa.com – www.wholesomeharvestcsa.com – Issue 11: August 26th/28th

Melon Mania

As indicated by the weight of and number of melons in your box last week, melon mania is upon us!! We have been harvesting melons of all varieties for the last 10 days plus as our melon crops are in full bloom right now!

Melons are actually close relatives to other hard outer shell items like pumpkins and squash varieties. Melons are indeed considered a fruit because of the blooms that are produced on the melon plants. Most variety of melons, including all of ours here at the farm, are vine plants that grow out and all around their roots. We plant our melon plants in mulch plastic (more on this later). This allows the melon plant to absorb and retain heat which is ideal for their growth. Many melon varieties originated in more desert like climates which is why they love the heat of the summer. The plastic mulch also allows the melon plant to get firmly rooted and begin growing outward with its vines as weeds are subdued under the plastic.

We often get the question, “How do you know if the melons are ripe?” This is a great question but unfortunately not at all an exact science! We have three main indicators, along with some general indicators, we look at when harvesting the melons. The three indicators are the melon color, especially the color of the melon where it was sitting on the ground, a curled and dead tendril, and we also do a sound check (though this is quite difficult). With these three indicators, we shoot for harvesting only the ripest melons in the field. Don't hesitate to use your melon in a smoothie or some other recipe if it seems immature or over ripe.

We hope you all have enjoyed the melons in your box so far and will enjoy this week's too! Please remember to be careful when picking up your box as to avoid any melons dropping on your toes ☺!!



What's in your box?

This list is tentative and subject to change. The official list will be updated continuously on our website's homepage.

Full Shares/Half Shares

- * Green Beans
- * Onion Varieties
- * Sun Jewel Melon
- * Watermelon
- * Slicing Tomatoes
- * Heirloom Tomato OR Grape Tomato Mixture
- * Cherry Tomatoes
 - * Leeks
 - * Carrots
 - * Sweet Corn
- * Pepper Variety

Greens Share

- * Swiss Chard AND/OR Kale
- * Head Lettuce Variety(ies)



Above: Sun Jewel Melon
Left: Watermelons laying among their vines in our watermelon field.

What are all these veggies in my box?

Green Beans: You will find beans in your box again this week. Our crew has been hard at work harvesting beans as it is one of the most labor intensive jobs around the farm.

Onion: You will receive two varieties of onions this week. You will receive either gold or red cipollini onions. You will also receive a large white onion. White onions last the least amount of time of all the onion varieties so don't hesitate to use it sooner rather than later.

Carrots: Another great week of carrots! The green tops will be on 99.9% of them.

Cherry Tomatoes: You might see red, yellow, or the orange variety or a mixture of them all in your box.

Tomatoes: The normal red slicing tomatoes will be in your box again this week. In addition, everyone will receive either an heirloom tomato or a mixed container full of small heirlooms/grape tomatoes.

Sweet Corn: We feel extremely blessed to have this second week of sweet corn!! Growing sweet corn organically is quite difficult, not only because you don't have the same pest and weed control, but because the seed is not altered much like conventional corn seed can be. Remember, don't be alarmed if you find a few pieces of dirt or bugs in the top of your sweet corn. This is normal and to be expected as we do not open many of the ears so as to avoid faster spoilage.

Pepper: Some of you will see a bell pepper in your box this week while others will see a sweet conical pepper. The conical pepper is a longer, thinner variety of pepper. They are sweet like their name indicates and can be used in similar recipes that call for bell peppers.

Leek: We are excited to be able to have another week of leeks. Remember, the leeks are the long and slender vegetable in your box. They have a white bottom and large, thick green leaves continuing off the white bottom. Some of us like to say they look like oversized scallions (green onions). You could see varying sizes of leeks in your box.

Melons: This week you will find a watermelon and a sun jewel melon in your box. The watermelon will be a red watermelon for most of you though a few might receive the yellow watermelon instead. Cantaloupe is also a possibility for some or all sites. Please remember to carry your box carefully as they will be quite heavy.

Magic Carrot Cake Bars (with pineapple yogurt!)

Who doesn't want to try some dessert??

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1-1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup (6oz) Pineapple Chobani Greek Yogurt
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 4 eggs
- 4 cups peeled and shredded carrots (about 5 medium carrots)

For the cream cheese frosting:

- 1/2 cup butter, at room temperature
- 8oz 1/3-less fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 5 cups powdered sugar

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Continued: Magic Carrot Cake Bars

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees then spray a 9x13" pan with nonstick spray and set aside. Sift together flour, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl then set aside.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, mix sugar, Greek yogurt, and canola oil until combined. Add eggs one at a time, mixing until combined before adding the next one.
3. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients in three batches, mixing until just combined before adding the next batch. Fold in shredded carrots.
4. Transfer batter to prepared baking pan then bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool completely then frost with cream cheese frosting. Store leftover bars in the fridge.
5. **For the cream cheese frosting:** In the bowl of an electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, cream butter, cream cheese, vanilla, and cinnamon together until smooth. Add 2 cups powdered sugar then cream until smooth. Continue adding 1 cup powdered sugar at a time, creaming until combined before adding the next cup. Spread over cooled carrot cake bars then slice and serve.
6. **Tip:** Refrigerate frosted Magic Carrot Cake Bars first to make cleaner cut lines.

Adapted from iowagirleats.com

BLT (Beef, Leek and Tomato) Salad

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO), plus more for drizzling
- 4 small 1- to 1-1/2-inch-thick strip steaks, at room temperature
- Salt and pepper
- 8 slices bacon
- 4 leeks, white and light green parts only, sliced 1/4 inch thick*
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 hearts romaine lettuce, coarsely chopped
- 2 tomatoes, thickly sliced

Preparation:

1. Preheat a grill or grill pan to medium-high. Drizzle EVOO over the steaks and season with salt and pepper. Grill the steaks, turning twice, 12 to 15 minutes for medium-rare. Let rest for 5 minutes.
2. In a large skillet, cook the bacon over medium-high heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels and let cool. Pour off all but about 1 tablespoon of bacon drippings from the skillet, then add the leeks, cover and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until wilted, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper; set aside.
3. Crumble the bacon and transfer half to a food processor. Add the Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, mustard, some pepper and a splash of water. With the machine on, pour in the 1/2 cup EVOO in a steady stream.
4. Arrange a bed of the romaine and tomatoes on each of 4 plates. Slice the steak against the grain and layer over the tomatoes. Scatter the leeks over the steak and pour the bacon dressing on the salad. Top with the remaining crumbled bacon

Servings: 4; adapted from rachelraymag.com