

Featherstone Fruits and Vegetables



The week of July 27, 2009

This Week - Likely In the Box

Blue Potatoes
Bunched Carrots
Cucumbers
Summer Squash
Bunched Onions
Fennel or Parsley
Beans
Basil

Please note: This list is only a guess. Weather and other conditions are very unpredictable.

Next Week - Likely In the Box

Beans
Summer Squash
Sweet Corn
Cabbage
Cucumbers
Parsley or Cilantro
Beets (maybe)
Garlic

Please note: This list is only a guess. Weather and other conditions are very unpredictable.

Mid-season Crop Update

I've had an opportunity to visit all fields at Featherstone Farm recently- the high ridges, the sandy field north of town, even the big squash planting up at the old Zephyr farm- and I'm happy to say that most crops look better than I've ever seen them.

This is quite remarkable, given the real drought that's gripped the area for the past 6+ weeks, and the marginal soil quality in some areas held over from before the flood. To compare the crops on the best irrigated land near the new shop with those elsewhere, is to feel complete vindication of our efforts to relocate in the past year. The difference in yields- quantity and quality- between A- and A+ cropland is unbelievable. Thank heavens we'll be bringing more and more of the latter into production (and certification) in the next few years!

With sufficient irrigation we can deal with drought, but what happens when the mercury hovers in the low to mid 70s for weeks on end in June and July? Answer: the fruits of high summer are delayed. The **peppers, tomatoes** and **melons** are all healthy and loaded with fruit, but they're just not ripening up. They appear to be fully 2 weeks later than usual, but when they come on, you will see at least the normal volume of crop in your boxes (and quality will be better than ever). The same is true of **sweet corn**, which should be starting next week.

Cool weather also means that several holdouts from early summer will be nicer than ever in August, including **broccoli, salad mix** and **summer squash**. Normally we wait until September to revive them for production, but this year (sensing a cool pattern) I seeded lots more of these for August harvest than usual. You will also see **bok choy, cabbage** and **eggplants** within a week or two.

Looking into the fall, I would say that the winter squash looks better than ever, along with fall favorites such as **cauliflower, broccoli** and **napa cabbage**. We have tremendous looking plantings of **carrots, beets, turnips** and the like, some of which will make their way into September-October boxes, others of which will be held long term for *winter shares**.

Of all the crops out there, only the **garlic** is disappointing, not for lack of quality (it's wonderful, as you've seen two weeks ago), but for lack of quantity; many of the cloves froze in the ground over the winter, so we had way too few that matured into full bulbs for harvest two weeks ago.

Finally, the **fresh herb** situation is mixed. There will be lots of **basil**, **parsley**, **dill** and **cilantro** in the next few weeks, but **perennial herbs** such as **thyme**, **sage** and **oregano** will not be available this year at all. Amanda has made substantial plantings of the latter for next season, and we will be working with Rock Spring Farm to supplement supplies as well, but they will have to wait until 2010. The same is true of **raspberries**; a beautiful crop is in the ground for the future, but the plants need a full year to establish themselves.

This is a general overview of what's in store for the second half of the season. If you do not see a particular crop listed, fear not! Chances are we're growing it and you will see yields for at least a week or two (of celeriac or rutabagas, of tomatillos or leeks to name just a few).

I'm also attempting to get around to drop sites, to meet as many of you as possible. I'm very curious about how the cool season's crops are working out for you; *please give us your feedback*- for better and for worse- so we can build a program that suits you better for the future.

As always, thanks for your membership and your support!

Gratefully,

Jack
Featherstone Farmer

**winter shares:* The program we offered last year delivered a huge box every other week, twice in November and twice in December. The contents were mostly storage vegetables (carrots, onions, potatoes, garlic, winter squash, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, cabbage, diakon radishes). However, greenhouse plantings allowed us to provide several other items (salad mix, spinach, bunched radishes, kale). And the mild start to winter preserved and sweetened many crops that often disintegrate from freezing temperatures, frost and snow (broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, kale, parsley, arugula). Feedback on this program was overwhelmingly positive. We intend to offer a similar program this season and will announce the details (and allow current shareholders an early sign-up option) as soon as they are finalized.

Next week we begin our new method for informing you of what you can expect in your boxes ~ a monthly overview which will be posted on the website. We will have photos and brief descriptions ~ and in time tips and links to additional reference material. This is a new way of looking at communication about box contents, so please be patient as we work to improve the information available to you about the specific fruits and vegetables you receive. And, please, let us know how it works or doesn't work for you. Thanks.



Peggy Hanson is a food writer, local food advocate and aspiring food coach who lives in Lanesboro, Minnesota. This column originally appeared in the Fillmore County Journal on August 7, 2006.

Peggy welcomes your questions and comments.

Contact her at [mjhanon50@gmail.com](mailto:mjhanson50@gmail.com).

REAL FOOD

Miracle. Phenomenal. Incredible. Bodacious. Divinity. Delectable. Ambrosia. Quick now – what do all these words have in common? Clue – they are not names of race horses.

These are all names of some sweet corn varieties recommended by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. My, all those plant geneticists or whomever gets to name corn – they do seem quite enthusiastic about their work product, don't they?

I share their enthusiasm. My idea of a perfect August meal is a few ears of sweet corn, with just a bit of butter (NOT margarine) and salt. And a BLT made with homegrown tomatoes, homemade toasted bread, good bacon, a generous smear of mayo and lots of fresh leaf lettuce. And refrigerator pickles made with garden cucumbers and onions, sliced very thin, on the side.

Now that I think about it, that is not only a perfect August meal, that just might be THE perfect meal. If I had to choose between fresh sweet corn and a homemade BLT and a four course meal complete with sauces, coulis, glazes and reductions, I would not hesitate. Sweet corn wins. You can take the girl out of the country but you can't take the country out of the girl.

So – what advice do I have for my faithful readers, who by now might be getting all worked up at the prospect of preparing their very own sweet corn at home?

Start with good sweet corn. Learn about the varieties. When it was picked and how it was stored matter. If you don't grow it yourself then find a reliable local corn supplier – a grower or a grocer. Most of us have a dedicated family doctor, a trusted insurance agent, a skilled car mechanic, a sympathetic hair stylist. Makes sense to me to add reliable sweet corn grower to our list of valued relationships.

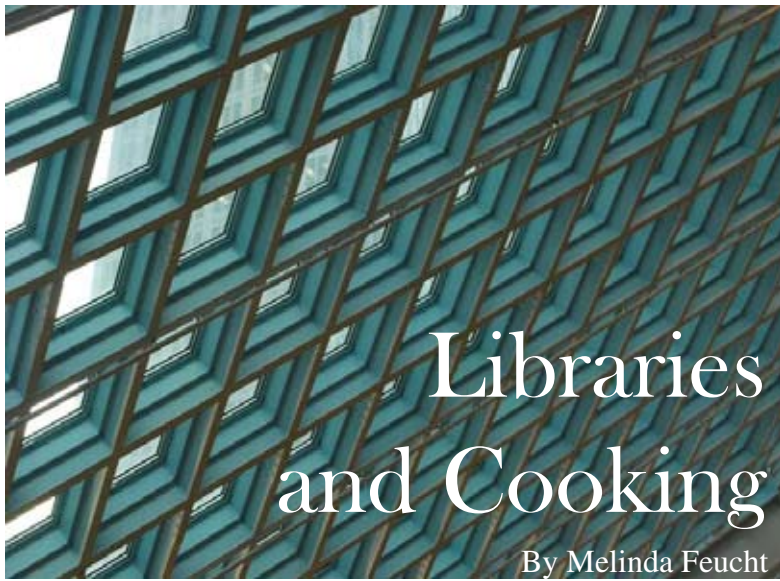
You know, if we all decided that we would eat, freeze and can only sweet corn grown in Fillmore County, we could have a dandy local economic development project and we wouldn't even have to apply for government subsidies or pander to pork barrel politicians. There are about 8228 households in Fillmore County, with an average of 2.5 people per household. If each household consumed an average of one ear of corn a week that is 427,856 ears of corn. I know that at least 324 ears of corn were sold at the Lanesboro Farmers market on July 29. Only 427,532 ears to go.

At 25 cents an ear, local sweet corn growers could gross \$106,964 a year. Even after expenses, that could send some kids to college. Now if the County Fair and the restaurants and the town festivals and the schools and the nursing homes all participated, then we could be talking real money! We could call this Operation Eat Our Own Corn. Let the Jolly Green Giant take care of the city folks who can't do it themselves. We would only need about 25 acres for this project – there would still be plenty of corn ground for livestock and the ethanol plant. But I digress.

Once you have secured your fresh and local sweet corn – the rest is easy. Just boil, microwave, grill or steam. Then eat and enjoy your phenomenal, miraculous, incredible, bodacious, divine, delectable and ambrosial corn.

Simple boiled corn on the cob

Bring one gallon of water to a boil. Husk corn while water heats. Unless you have a super sweet variety, add 4 teaspoons of sugar. Don't add salt. Add four ears of corn to boiling water. Boil five minutes, remove ears and serve with butter, salt and pepper. Cook more batches as desired.



Libraries and Cooking

By Melinda Feucht

The downtown Seattle Public library has sparked some controversy over the last few years, namely over its design. Sadly, the rubik's cube-like facade has gotten more attention than the treasure that lies within. Between biking past it the other day and talking with my sister about her recent cookbook pickup at her local Iowa library, I wanted to remind and encourage you to use your library to help you with your CSA box.

The last few years have seen a spike in cookbooks about seasonal produce and vegetables in general. The 'green diet' is

profitable for a lot of publishing companies right now and greatly benefits us by giving us greater resources.

I know I'm not alone in not wanting to drop \$30 on a cookbook, especially when it can only be used a few months out of the year. You'll be surprised that in little time you won't be using a cookbook, after gaining techniques and expertise through your newfound treasure trove.

There's nothing like cooking with a hard-copy book on the counter, licking your fingers for a taste while thumbing through the few pages you're using. But now that these aren't yours – watch for the splatters! Look for cookbook stands or splatter guards in garage sales or retail stores.

Library cookbooks can also expose you to different culture's cuisines you normally wouldn't have the resources to explore. With Italian or French cookbooks from the library, if the tastes don't suit your family, you're only out a trip back to the library, and maybe an upset stomach. (In a recent Italian cookbook I rented, I discovered that Italians put a bit of chocolate on some rustic bread for breakfast. I could get used to that!)

Food magazines can also be found at public libraries. These are even harder to justify buying, so it feels especially good to rent these. The pictures, storage tips, and entertaining ideas move beyond home cooking – adding to the overall experience of dining well. The pictures can be very inspiring.

Cookbooks frequently found at libraries:

[Martha Stewart Living Cookbook](#)

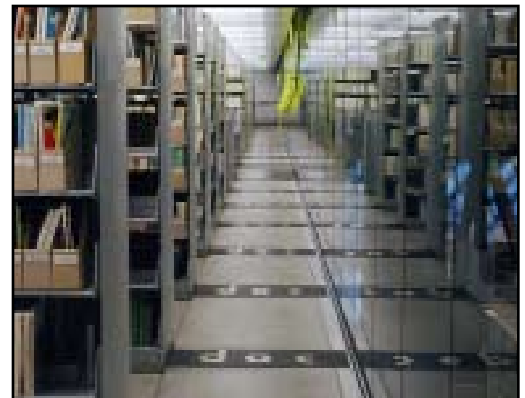
[Local Flavors - Deborah Madison](#)

[Chez Panisse Cafe Cookbook - Alice Waters](#)

[Joy of Cooking - Irma S. Rombauer](#)

[Food & Wine Annual Cookbook](#)

[Mastering the Art of French Cuisine - Julia Child](#)



*As always, questions and comments
welcome at feucht22@gmail.com*

Mark your calendars!

Saturday, September 19th, we are again inviting CSA members down to the farm. We are having a harvest and anniversary celebration to thank everyone who has played a part in making our farm the success that it is today. There will be music, food and fun starting in the afternoon and going into the evening. We want to celebrate what the farm has to offer with family friendly activities for everyone. One artist we already have lined up is Willy Porter. Check out his website, www.willyporter.com to learn more about him. We will be sending you more detailed information and a formal invitation in the coming weeks. The events on Saturday, September 19th will be a great opportunity for you to make it a weekend long trip. There are many things to do in the scenic bluffs and valleys of Southeastern MN where our farm is lucky enough to be located. As the details come, so will the regional guides on places to see, stay, eat and relax. Can't wait to see you here!

Chelsie Glaubitz, event organizer

Q&A...

What can one do with carrot tops? Are they edible?

Most people use them for compost or throw them out. Some people don't like the texture, others say they are bitter. However scientific analysis shows there are loads of nutrients in these feathery greens. Some people use them in soups to make the broth and others chop them finely for salads. I've tried this (don't use too much) and it makes the dish pretty and very fresh ~ if not adding so much to the taste.

Here are some interesting comments and a few recipes from online sources:

- <http://www.carrotmuseum.co.uk/recipes.html#tops>
- <http://chowhound.chow.com/topics/422562>
- <http://tribes.tribe.net/vegrecipes/thread/b0796b45-d946-4081-8472-08c1561f69df>
- <http://hubpages.com/hub/Consider-Adding-Carrot-Greens-to-Your-Family-Recipe-Collection>
- <http://cheaphealthygood.blogspot.com/2009/07/veggie-might-carrot-topsno-joke.html>

Mary Benson ~ CSA Manager

R e m i n d e r s :

Picking up your box...

If someone at the dropsite hands you your box, great. But if you are at an unattended dropsite, please be sure to review the checkoff list and note the boxsize. Then please make a mark next to your name (or the name of the box you are picking up). We have had a couple of mixups lately ~ someone taking the wrong sized box; someone taking an extra box because their boxmate had already picked up the box. The list helps us correct these mixups.

And PLEASE, remember to thank your dropsite host ~ just thank anyone you see who is associated!.

About the Boxes...

The waxed boxes we use to deliver your CSA shares are very valuable. As a result we ask you to bring back the empty box the following week when you return for your next box. We've used the term "break down" the boxes. What we mean by that is to VERY gently disassemble them so they lie flat and are manageable for our dropsite hosts. What we don't mean is for the boxes to get torn and damaged. What that requires is to very carefully bend the flaps both on the top and on the bottom to "unhook" them. We really appreciate your help with this.

Mary Benson ~ CSA Manager

Recipes

Chocolate ZUCCHINI Cake

from Lauri Sproule (Featherstone part-time helper)

Ingredients

1/4 cup. oil
1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup applesauce
1 1/4 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup buttermilk
2 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
6 tbsp. cocoa
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
2 cup finely grated zucchini

Instructions

Mix as usual. Bake @ 325 degrees in a 9x12 pan for 40-45 minutes.

Gluten Free ZUCCHINI Bread

from Tonya Sanner (Featherstone CSA shareholder)

Ingredients

1 3/4 cup brown rice flour
3/4 cup sorghum flour
1/2 cup tapioca flour
3/4 tsp xanthum gum
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
3 tsp cinnamon
3 eggs
1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup oil or applesauce
2 1/4 cups white sugar
3 tsp vanilla
2 cups shredded zucchini (about 4 small ones!)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease two 9x5 loaf pans. In a medium bowl sift together the flours, xanthum gum, salt, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon and set aside. In a large bowl beat together the eggs, vanilla and sugar. Once completely mixed, add in the shredded zucchini. Slowly mix the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. At this point you can also choose to add in walnuts, pecans, carob chips or chocolate chips. Pour mixture evenly into loaf pans and place in oven. Bake for 45-60 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the center of the loaf. Allow bread to cool before cutting and serving.



Zucchini Summer Squash

ZUCCHINI Quiche

from creativehomemaking.com

Ingredients

4 eggs, beaten
3 c. zucchini, sliced
1/2 c. onion, chopped
1/2 c. cheddar cheese, grated
1 c. Bisquick
1/2 teaspoon oregano
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients together. Pour into a greased 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Bake for about 45 minutes, until mixture is browned.



Yellow Summer Squash



Patty Pan Summer Squash

Recipes

GREEN BEAN, CARROT and Mushroom Medley

from allrecipes.com

Ingredients

1/2 pound fresh green beans, cut into 1-inch lengths
2 carrots, cut into thick strips
1/4 cup butter
1 onion, sliced
1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper

Instructions

Place green beans and carrots in 1 inch of boiling water. Cover, and cook until tender but still firm. Drain.

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Saute onions and mushrooms until almost tender. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer 3 minutes. Stir in green beans, carrots, salt, seasoned salt, garlic salt, and white pepper. Cover, and cook for 5 minutes over medium heat. Serves 6.

Quinoa Tabbouleh

from allrecipes.com

("This tabouli recipe is different. Instead of using bulgur like traditional tabouli, this recipe uses quinoa. It is a grain that is available at health food stores. It looks and tastes better than bulgur. It's a great meal for a hot summer day. The longer it sits the better it tastes.")

Ingredients

2 cups water
1 cup quinoa
1 pinch salt
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 cup lemon juice
3 tomatoes, diced
1 cucumber, diced
2 bunches green onions, diced
2 carrots, grated
1 cup fresh parsley, chopped

Instructions

In a saucepan bring water to a boil. Add quinoa and a pinch of salt. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Allow to cool to room temperature; fluff with a fork.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine olive oil, sea salt, lemon juice, tomatoes, cucumber, green onions, carrots and parsley. Stir in cooled quinoa. Serves 4.

CUCUMBER Lemonade

from recipazaar.com

via Tonya Sanner (Featherstone CSA shareholder)

Ingredients

2 medium sized cucumbers
1 cup lemon juice
3/4 cup sugar
4 cups water

Instructions

Peel and chop cucumbers. Place cucumbers in blender with sugar and lemon juice and blend until very smooth. (It will get really frothy). If your blender is large enough, add the water and continue to blend... otherwise, pour the blended mixture into a pitcher. Add the water to the pitcher and mix well. Pour into a cold glass and enjoy!



CUCUMBER Salad

from Tonya Sanner (Featherstone CSA shareholder)

Ingredients

2 medium size cucumbers cubed (you can peel the cucumbers completely or just partially in strips)
1 large tomato (heirlooms are the best!)
1 small to medium sized spring or red onion
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp good tasting olive oil
2 tsp honey
salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Cut the tomato and cucumbers into cubes and place in medium size bowl. Dice the onion and add to bowl. Mix gently. Add balsamic vinegar, olive oil and honey and stir gently. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Eat salad as a side dish or serve in whole wheat, flour or brown rice tortillas with cheese!

Recipes

Turkey Sausage with FENNEL Sauerkraut & POTATOES

adapted from eatingwell.com

via ReAnn Dargus Robelia (Featherstone CSA shareholder)

Ingredients

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
6 ounces sweet Italian turkey sausage links
3/4 cup 1/2-inch diced potatoes
2 cups shredded cabbage
1 small bulb fennel, quartered, cored and thinly sliced
plus 1 tablespoon chopped feathery tops
1 small onion, sliced
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon fennel seed
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
2 tablespoons white-wine vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoons brown or whole-grain mustard

Instructions

Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook, turning often, until lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Transfer the sausage to a cutting board and slice into 1/2-inch pieces. (The sausage will not be thoroughly cooked, but it will continue cooking later.)

Add the remaining 1 teaspoon oil to the pan and heat over medium heat. Add potatoes and garlic, cook stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Add cabbage, sliced fennel, onion, fennel seed and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the cabbage has wilted slightly, about 3 minutes more.

Add broth, vinegar and mustard. Stir to incorporate the mustard; bring to a simmer. Place the sausage on top of the cabbage mixture; cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook until the sausage is cooked through and the vegetables are tender, 7 to 10 minutes. Stir in chopped fennel fronds and serve. Serves 2.



All Blue Potatoes

Simple ONION Soup

from lovetoknow.com

Ingredients

6 medium-sized onions
3 ounces of melted butter
1 tablespoon flour
1 quart of boiling water
Salt and pepper to taste
Grated nutmeg
2 well-beaten eggs

Instructions

Mince onions very finely. Put in a stewpan over low heat with melted butter. Dredge a little flour over them and shake about until they are soft and lightly browned. Add a quart of boiling water and season with salt and pepper and a grated nutmeg. It should take about half an hour for this soup to cook.

Have eggs in the tureen. After the soup has boiled up, stir in among the eggs and serve at once.

True-Blue POTATO Salad

adapted from cdkitchen.com

Ingredients

2 1/2 potatoes, cooked and cubed
3/4 cup chopped green onion
3/4 cup chopped celery
3/4 cup sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
or cider vinegar
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 teaspoon celery seed
1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese

Instructions

In a large bowl, toss the potatoes, onions and celery. In a small bowl, combine the sour cream, mayonnaise, parsley, vinegar, salt, pepper and celery seed. Pour over potato mixture; toss to coat.

Sprinkle with blue cheese. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before serving. Serves 8.