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Fresh Picks Newsletter

July 17, 2021

For our New Members

If you've never participated in a CSA, let alone an *organic* CSA, you may have some questions:

Where's the variety? Why are my veggies so dirty? Are those holes in my beet greens from bugs? Are they still ok to eat?

Yes, and yes. Bugs love tasty veggies, too! As a certified organic farm, we're limited in what we can do for pest control. Personally, I prefer eating veggies that insects can survive on versus those that use toxic chemicals to kill them. The holes are not harmful - just be sure to wash your produce thoroughly before you eat it. We wash our produce to remove the worst of the mud/dirt, but over-washing it will cause it to break down faster. Most produce will keep better if you wait to wash it till you're ready to eat it (see storage tips below).

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) membership often means eating "seasonally", or what's in season for your local area. In WNY, we're limited by our climate that includes long winters and cool springs. In the first month of our CSA, offerings are limited to varieties that can withstand the cooler weather. As it gets consistently hotter, more varieties will thrive. Here's a look at what's coming:



Baby Pepper



Purple Kohlrabi



Pickling Cucumber

Farm News

While we do have some standing water in our fields, most of our crops were not significantly impacted by the excessive rain this week. We received 2.5 inches this week, after last week's 1.5. We're very fortunate that our fields weren't flooded. After a very rainy season a few years ago, we needed to dig ditches and lay drain tile in order to save our crops. This was a huge expense, but thankfully it continues to pay off! The soil was thirsty, and organic soil tends to hold more water. Other area farmers were not as fortunate: Local wheat farmers went weeks without any measurable rainfall, which accelerated the drying of the wheat crop. As farmers were looking forward to a bumper crop, the rain started to fall. And kept falling! Coupled with the heat, the grain started sprouting in the field, while some was completely lost to mold. Sprouted wheat is unsuitable for milling for flour. The alternative to milling is to sell it as "feed wheat" for livestock or animal feed. Just another example of how fickle Mother Nature can be.

The daily rainfall made it challenging to work in our fields this week, but we were able to weed, cultivate, transplant and harvest. Our veteran staff led the crew in staking over 200 tomato plants this week and they look amazing! (Photo below). Staking tomatoes is very time-consuming, but worth the effort: Keeping the fruit off the ground alleviates excess moisture that can cause rot, mildew, and bug infestation. It also keeps the fruit cleaner so we're not too abrasive with our washing.



Beautiful staked tomatoes! Many thanks to our veteran crew!

In the Bag

- Cucumbers
- Red Onions
- Beets
- Red Leaf Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Zucchini
- Yellow Squash
- Potted Herbs*

*Small Shares will receive basil
*Full Shares will receive parsley

Full vs. Small Shares - please know that we keep track of different varieties offered to each share to ensure everyone will receive our various herbs.

With all the rain this week, your veggies may be dirtier than usual - please take extra care to wash them thoroughly before refrigerating.

Storage Tips

Beets

Cut the stems off the greens, leaving about 2 inches attached to the beet. Place the beets in a storage container or bag and keep in the produce drawer of your refrigerator. They will keep up to 2 weeks in your refrigerator. Take the greens and store them in a separate storage bag or container in your produce drawer. They will keep for about 5 days.

Cucumbers

Wash and thoroughly dry cucumbers before refrigerating. Once completely dry, wrap them in a paper towel and place in a plastic bag poked with small holes for airflow. Cucumbers are susceptible to "chill injuries" and should be stored in the middle front of the refrigerator (since the bottom and back tend to be colder). Do not store cucumbers near ethylene-producing fruits or veggies (bananas, tomatoes, melons) as they are very sensitive to ethylene and will ripen too quickly.

Zucchini/Yellow Squash



Store - Hours

Wednesday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

After you grab your share, check out what's available:

- Porter Farms All-Natural ground beef & lamb
- Local honey & maple syrup
- Elderberry syrup
- Organic soaps
- Fresh potted herbs
- Porter Farms gear
- Tote bags created by 4-H kids

Chef's Corner

Need fresh ideas on how to use your share? Join Chef Daniel Riggs each week in our store as he shares samples from his kitchen!

Here are the recipes from the samples Daniel shared last week:

[Porter Farms Zucchini & Summer Squash Pasta Aglio e Olio](#)

[Merquez Sausage Zucchini Boats](#)

This week: Zucchini Bread Pudding
Daniel is offering pudding with or without nuts.

Do NOT wash them before storing in your refrigerator. They are best stored in a zip-lock bag with small holes poked in it for airflow. Store in your produce drawer and they'll stay fresh for about a week.

Recipes

[Cucumber and Red Onion Salad](#)

[Zucchini Chip Cookies](#) we substitute raisins and white chocolate chips

[Stuffed Yellow Squash with Bacon](#)

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