



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF
 DRIFTLESS ORGANICS
 volume six • issue seven
 july nineteen - twenty one
 two thousand twelve

Week #7! Well, we are certainly into the swing of this CSA season and I do hope that you are all enjoying your veggie boxes.

We were surprised by an earlier than normal sweet corn harvest, and this has prompted us to talk a bit about corn and recent introduction of GM sweet corn onto our supermarket shelves.

First off, what is GM food? GM, which stands for genetic modification or genetically modified, is the technique of changing or inserting genes. Genetic modification is done either by altering DNA or by introducing genetic material from one organism into another organism, which can be a variety of either the same or a different species. For example, genes can be introduced from one plant to another plant, from a plant to an animal, or from an animal to a plant.

What is the point of genetic modification?

There are three reasons that scientists genetically modify plants:

- a) By using genetic modification, a gene with a particular characteristic, such as resistance to a specific herbicide, can be introduced into a crop. When that herbicide is sprayed on the field to kill the weeds, it will not hinder the growth of the crops.
- b) Genetic modification can be used to reduce the amount of pesticide needed by altering a plant's DNA so it can resist the particular insect pests that attack it.
- c) Genetic modification can also be used to give crops immunity to plant viruses or to improve the nutritional value of a plant.

What is an example of a GM food?

1) Insecticide (Bt) sweet corn
 Scientists have genetically modified sweet corn so that it produces a poison which kills harmful insects. This means the farmer no longer needs to fight insects with insecticides. The genetically

modified corn is called Bt-corn, because the insect-killing gene in the plant comes from the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis*

Advantages: The farmer no longer has to use insecticide to kill insects, so the surrounding environment is no longer exposed to large amounts of harmful insecticide.

The farmer no longer needs to walk around with a drum of toxic spray wearing a mask and protective clothing.

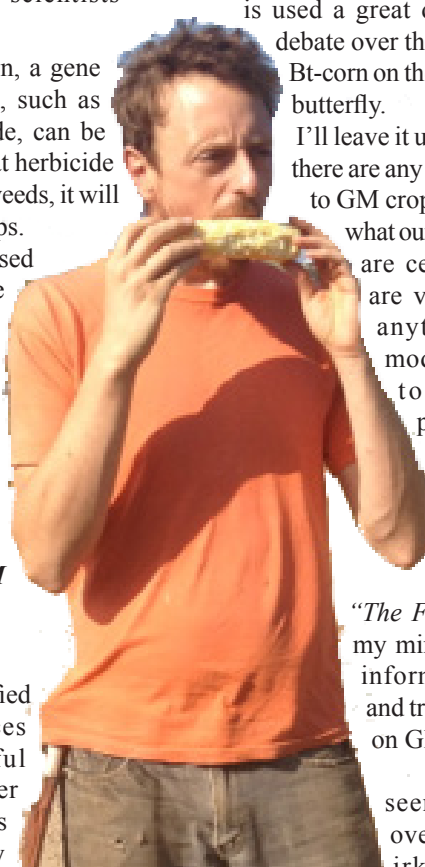
Disadvantages: This type of genetically modified corn will poison the insects over a longer period than the farmer who would spray the crops once or twice. In this way the insects can become accustomed (or resistant) to the poison. If that happens both crop spraying and the use of genetically modified Bt-corn become ineffective.

A variety of insects are at risk of being killed. It might be predatory insects that eat the harmful ones or, perhaps attractive insects such as butterflies. In the USA, where Bt-corn is used a great deal there is much debate over the harmful effects of Bt-corn on the beautiful Monarch butterfly.

I'll leave it up to you to decide if there are any more disadvantages to GM crops. You can imagine what our stance is on it. They are certainly those who are vehemently against anything genetically modified, and I have to say that they provide some pretty good arguments. I would highly

recommend tracking down and watching "The Future of Food". In my mind, this is the most informative, legitimate and truthful documentary on GM food.

One thing that seems to always get overlooked and what irks me maybe the



this week's box!

- Banana Peppers
- Bok Choi
- Broccoli
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Garlic
- Green Leaf Lettuce
- Green Top Carrots
- Green Zucchini
- Lemon Balm
- Red Leaf Lettuce
- Sweet Corn
- Yellow Onions
- Yellow Summer Squash

most is the fact that it is not required to label genetically modified food. In fact, giant corporations like Monsanto are fighting *against* mandatory labeling. Not surprising, our politicians are siding with these corporations and passing legislation that allows GM foods to go unlabeled. What that means for sweet corn is that you just have no idea whether or not you are eating an ear of sweet corn that has insecticide in its genes. Some super markets won't carry GM sweet corn, and GM ingredients are strictly forbidden in organics, but what about those beloved and quintessential road side stands? I'll let you decide on that one.

So, onto our sweet corn in your CSA box. It is most certainly NOT genetically modified. And those little corn worms that the GM stuff kills? Yeah, they are there, about one in every ear. But they aren't harmful; and with one quick cut with the knife you can remove the worm and the damaged part of the ear. You can do this before shucking so you don't even have to see the worm. We are sorry that our corn has worms. We should have sprayed. And we could have sprayed (the same bacteria that is in GM corn can be sprayed onto the corn and it is approved this way by organic standards). But we chose not to. We chose to keep the butterflies and other flying insects alive in our corn patch. We hope that you agree that dealing with a little worm is a small price to pay...

--Mike

Banana Peppers - Look for the 3 yellow-green peppers in the box. They are probably hot, but they can vary. Before using I usually cut the tip off & touch the cut end to my tongue to test it out. If it burns my tongue, I just use a little! Generally if you cut the inner white rib & the seeds out, it will be less spicy.

Bok Choi - delicious in stir-fries or steamed—just chop up the white part & the leaves separately & cook the white parts a bit longer. Very high in vitamin C & calcium with a slightly sweet, slightly mustardy flavor. Store in plastic in the fridge for up to a week.

Broccoli - this mid-summer broccoli will be best steamed or sauteed in a stir fry. Due to the heat and stress, it is quite strong and a bit “spicy”.

Cucumbers – a juicy, refreshing vegetable to eat on a hot summer day. Try the classic cuke salad with yogurt/sour cream, onions, & mint or dill, or try the lighter cuke & lemon balm salad below.

Eggplant - you will be getting 2 types of eggplant: an “Italian” type (the purple-black variety we are all familiar with) and an “Asian” type (long and slender and white/pink in color). Both taste pretty much the same. My favorite way to eat eggplant for sure is to slice it into 1/4” slices, brush with oil, sprinkle with salt & pepper, & grill. Delicious just like that or on crusty bread with grilled zucchini & roasted garlic, or tossed in pasta with cheese. Once tomatoes are coming on I’ll give you a yummy fresh tomato & eggplant parmesan recipe...

Garlic - Our cured “German” variety. Store on your counter or in your pantry. A great all around usefull garlic.

Green Top Carrots – remember, if you are getting sick of carrots (is that even possible?), you can remove the tops and store in a plastic bag in your fridge for quite some time (2-3 weeks).

Green Zucchini - we are trying our damndest to not inundate y’all with zucchini (even though it is coming out of our ears!). Just enough this week to add

to a stir fry or compliment grilled meal. Last weekend we had grilled zucchini on top of our burgers... super YUM!

Green & Red Leaf Lettuce - 2 small heads and probably the last for quite some time. Enjoy!

Fresh Yellow Onions – These fresh onions pack a bit of a punch, but are great sliced up on burgers, or simply used

Lemon Balm - lemon balm is really delicious with cucumbers in salads or as tea – on a sunny day you can just loosely pack a quart jar with it, fill with water, & set in the sun to steep for a couple hours. Strain, add some honey or simple syrup if you wish, & pour over ice. Yum.

Sweet Corn - boil for just a few minutes and drizzle with butter. Or try grilled sweet corn! You can either grill it with shuck in place (soak in water first) or shucked (for a more grilled flavor). Try to eat up your corn tright way, as it is better when it is fresh!

Yellow Summer Squash - See zucchini.

Cucumber and Lemon Balm Salad

- 2 cucumbers (thin strips of skin peeled lengthwise in stripes if you wish), sliced in half lengthwise & seeds removed
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ fresh onion, thinly sliced
- ½ -1 banana pepper, seeds removed & thinly sliced or minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. white wine vinegar or fresh lemon juice & zest
- 1 tsp. honey
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon balm, cut into chiffonade

• Cut cucumbers on the bias into ¼” slices & place in a colander in the sink. Sprinkle with salt & toss & let sit for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, whisk garlic, oil, vinegar, & honey together in a serving bowl. Add onions & banana peppers. Press cucumbers dry with a paper towel & toss with everything in the bowl. Taste & season with salt & pepper. Garnish with lemon balm & serve with crusty bread. Serves 4-5.

Elote (Mexican Grilled Corn)

- 4 ears sweet corn
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon lime juice
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper, chile powder, or chipotle powder (my favorite)
- salt, to taste
- 2/3 cup crumbled cotija anejo cheese (parmesan works too)
- lime wedges
- extra cayenne pepper or chile powder, for sprinkling
- fresh finely chopped cilantro for optional garnish

• Soak corn (in husks) in cold water for 25-30 minutes.

• Prepare a medium-hot grill. Peel back the corn husks leaving them attached at the end. Remove the silk. Pull the husks back up and tie with a spare piece of husk or a small piece of cooking twine. Place the ears on the grill. Cook 20-25 minutes, turning several times to ensure even roasting. The kernels should be soft when fully cooked.

• If you’d like the kernels more charred, then simply follow the above instructions, but cook in husks for 15 minutes only. Then cool ears slightly, pull back the husks (to use as handles) and place the ears directly on the grill (with husks overhanging the side) for 5-7 minutes, or until they reach desired level of charring.

• Place crumbled cheese on a plate large enough to fit an ear of corn. In a small bowl mix the mayonnaise, lime juice, cayenne pepper or chile powder, and salt. When the corn is cooked, brush each ear with some mayo sauce then roll in the cheese. Serve with lime wedges, additional cayenne pepper or chile powder, and fresh finely chopped cilantro.