



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF
 DRIFTLESS ORGANICS
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Week #9! The weeks are flying past now and we cruise right along with them. Last week's inch of rain helped us tremendously, but we are still hurting and hoping that this high capacity well that we are digging will be completed very soon. We hope to have it up and running by the end of the week, which means more access to water and better assurance that we'll get some fall crops to germinate and grow big and bountiful.

The lack of water hasn't been the only struggle this season - we've also had some mighty tremendous bug pressure! And, in the spirit of education, I'm gonna talk about some nasty critters that are plaguing us this season. Due to perhaps the warm conditions we had this winter past, or maybe because of the hot and dry conditions we are experiencing now, we have had by far the worst bug year on record.

What bugs bug us the most? Here's some of our biggest offenders:

Stop Bugging Us!

Flea Beetle: What they lack in size, they make up for in appetite. These little flying critters are about the size and color of a flea (hence the name) and they go after anything that is in the brassica family (broccoli, kale, cabbage and even greens like arugula or mustard). We don't mind them so much in the broccoli (broccoli will survive most infestations unless the beetles attack them when they are small seedlings); what hurts us the most is when they go after our kale & arugula. Flea Beetles will chomp little holes all over the leaves, leaving a leaf resembling

a slice of swiss cheese. This of course does nothing to the flavor, it just makes the veggie that much harder to sell.

Striped Cucumber Beetle: This guy, about the size of a raisin with yellow and black stripes is crazy about cucurbits (cucumbers, melons, squash, etc). They go after the young seedlings and attack with unimaginable veracity. We lost a whole planting of a nice heirloom variety of thin-skinned cucumbers due to these buggers. They chomp on both the leaves of the plant and the flowers as well, which causes the scars that you see on many of your cucumbers.

Colorado Potato Beetle: These guys are terrible! They love the leaves of the potato plant and they can whittle a whole crop down to nothing but stalks sticking out of the ground. They come earlier in the year and tend to move on as the summer progresses, so if timed right we can grow our potatoes later and have less pressure from them.

Corn Earworm: Most of you are most likely familiar with this nasty dude after the sweet corn we gave you. Corn earworms are particularly horrible because they go after such a wonderful vegetable. Why can't there be a Rutabaga Earworm, or a Brussel Sprout Earworm? The corn earworm seems to be getting worse with each passing year and I am beginning to think that they are building a resistance to the pesticides used by conventional corn growers (the worm goes after field corn as well as sweet).

this week's box!

- Banana Peppers
- Bell Peppers
- Carrots
- Cilantro
- Cucumbers
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Green Savoy or Sweetheart Cabbage
- Jalapeno Peppers
- Mixed Tomatoes
- Rainbow Chard
- Yukon Gold Potatoes
- Sweet Onions
- Sweet Peppers
- Yellow Summer Squash

Cabbage Looper: Another nasty worm that we hate not so much because of what they eat, but more so for what they leave behind. I mean, they do chomp holes in your broccoli, cabbage and other brassicas but what is worse is they poo all over the place leaving some yucky vegetables that need some serious washing.

Now, we do have some tools up our sleeves to deal with these critters, including floating row cover, beneficial insect habitat, silver plastic mulch, organically approved pesticides and crop rotation practices. There's no silver bullet for any of these bugs and we try to do everything we can before employing the pesticides that we are allowed to spray on them. I tell you what though - a long, cold winter does wonders in keeping the populations down. One good thing about winter, eh?

--Mike



Flea beetle



Colorado Potato Beetle



Cabbage Looper



Striped Cucumber Beetle

Carrots - try the carrot recipe, below, or just eat these sweet beauties raw!! They're so good this year! Keep in plastic in the fridge.

Cilantro - keeps best in the fridge, in plastic with a paper towel in it to absorb extra moisture.

Cucumbers - Slice 'em up and use in place of crackers for dips, cheese, meats, etc.

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.

Green Beans - there's a bounty of green beans! Yummy fresh or blanched for a couple minutes & added to salads, or stir-fried, sautéed, simmered, or roasted, as in the recipe below. Keep in plastic in the fridge & try to use up within a week. They also freeze nicely, either fresh (use within 6 months) or blanched (keeps up to a year). Or track down some pickling dill & make dilly beans! Refrigerator pickle recipes abound online.

Mixed Beets - some red beets, plus our famous "Chioggia" beet - a bright red heirloom variety that is slightly milder in flavor than the regular beet and even a few gold beets - my favorite. If you don't like beets that much, this would be a beet to try! Try a fresh beet salad: grated beets, minced sweet onions, garlic, fresh orange juice & zest, a bit of Driftless sunflower oil, a pinch of chipotle or cayenne powder, some dried cranberries, & cilantro. Or just roast them with garlic & some fresh rosemary if you've got it. Keep in plastic in the fridge.

New Yukon Gold Potatoes - Yum! Yukon new potatoes are divine steamed or boiled whole & eaten with butter, salt & pepper. Or made into

a simple potato salad (perhaps with some blanched green beans?). Or slice them & toss with some onion & garlic & oil & grill in a foil packet.

Rainbow Chard - a delicious & versatile cooking green. Use to replace spinach in any cooked recipe. The stems are delicious, nutritious, colorful, & add nice juicy crunch to stir-fries, curries, & casseroles - just add them earlier than the leaves as they take longer to cook.

PEPPERS:

Banana: yellowish green, look kind of like a banana: **SEMI-HOT**. Good in salsa, but also stuffed with cheese and minced onions and grilled. Spicy but tasty!

Jalapeno: dark green, small: **HOT**. Combine minced jalapenos, onions, garlic, fresh tomatoes, cilantro, & lime juice for a basic pico de gallo (fresh salsa). Will keep in the fridge for a couple weeks.

Mini Sweet: small, look kind of like a jalapeno but are red, orange or yellow: **SWEET**.

Bell: Green but maybe also red or yellow. **SWEET**. Add to salsas, salads, stir-fries, pizzas, sandwiches, scrambled eggs, curries, sauces...

Sweet Onions - the nicest onions for salads, sandwiches and burgers. Store these almost-cured onions on your counter or in the pantry.

Summer Squash - Try the recipe to the right! It is a tasty twist on a vegetable that you are probably getting pretty sick of.

Sweetheart or Green Savoy Cabbage - either one is much more sweet & tender than your average head of green cabbage. Use in slaws, salads, on tacos, or braise or stir-fry them (you can even cut them into wedges, brush with oil, & grill cabbage). Keep in plastic in the fridge.

Tomatoes, Mixed - A mixed bag of tomatoes varying in ripeness and variety. An ill timed rain (I can't believe I am saying that about rain) went and caused some of our tomatoes to split! Store tomatoes upside down on the counter until soft to the touch. That's when you know they are ripe and ready to eat.

Carrots with Garlic & Cilantro

- 3 c. carrots, cut into 1/2" pieces on the bias
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. olive/sunflower oil
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice or apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped

Barely cover carrots with water in a small sauce pan & bring to a boil, covered. Reduce heat to a simmer & cook until almost tender, about 8 minutes. Uncover, add salt & pepper, & cook another 6-8 minutes uncovered, until liquid is reduced. Add garlic, oil, & lemon juice/vinegar & cook another minute. Stir in cilantro & serve warm or hot (equally good with basil, mint, or parsley).

Roasted Green Beans with Parmesan Cheese

- 1 1/2 lb. green beans, stems snapped off
- 2 Tbsp. olive or sunflower oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Zest & juice of 1 small lemon
- 1/4 c. Parmesan, grated

Heat a large sheet pan in 450 degree oven. Toss beans in oil, salt, & pepper. When oven is up to temp, slide the oiled beans on the super-hot pan (Sizzle! Spat!) & roast for about 5-7 minutes, until beans are starting to caramelize on the outside. Immediately stir in garlic & lemon zest, then sprinkle with fresh lemon juice & Parmesan right before serving.

Moroccan Grilled Eggplant & Summer Squash Salad

- 1 medium eggplant, sliced into 1/3" thick rounds
- 1 large summer squash, sliced lengthwise into 1/4" thick planks
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil + some for brushing vegetables
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp. hot paprika or 1/2 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1 Tbsp. each chopped fresh mint & parsley
- Salt & pepper to taste

Brush eggplant & zucchini slices with oil, sprinkle with salt & pepper, & grill over high heat until softened & grill marks appear. Let cool slightly, chop coarsely, & mix with remaining ingredients. Serve warm or room temperature with crusty bread or toasted pita.