

ONE POTATO



TWO

NEWS FROM THE FIELDS OF
DRIFTLESS ORGANICS
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THE BOX

The weeks are just rushing past like crazy, but by now we are used to the craziness of the season. The weather for the week is more like the summer that we have yet to experience and crops like tomatoes and watermelons are responding, finally! I see no reason why there shouldn't be some tomatoes in your box next week and for many weeks to come. It is about time!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "CERTIFIED" ORGANIC?

With our 2009 certification papers finally arriving in the mail from our certifier, acknowledging that we are once again for another year "certified" organic, I ask myself this.

Using my best dictionary speak, here's a definition for you: "Certified Organic" means that the farm and the products produced adhere to strict, uniform standards that are verified by independent state or private organizations. Certification includes inspections of farm fields and periodic testing of soil and water to ensure that growers and handlers are meeting the standards which have been set.

A few of these standards include:

- * avoidance of most synthetic chemical inputs (e.g. fertilizer, pesticides, antibiotics, food additives, etc), genetically modified organisms, irradiation, and the use of sewage sludge;
- * use of farmland that has been free from chemicals for at least 3 years
- * keeping detailed written production and sales records (audit trail).
- * maintaining strict physical separation of organic products from non-certified products;
- * undergoing periodic on-site inspections.

To us, the meaning of organic goes above and beyond this textbook definition. We'd like to think that the guidelines laid out by the USDA and the National Organic Program or NOP (the federal regulatory framework governing organic food) are a point in which to start from.

A few of the other things we try to do:

Cover crop and taking time off: if it doesn't have vegetables growing on it, then it should have a cover crop! That's our motto for our fields and that is what we strive for. Cover crops, like rye, oats and vetch add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Plus, they protect the soil from wind and erosion. We also like to give our soil some time off by not planting vegetables in every single field, every single season.

Keeping things local: growing our own cover crop seed, buying as many supplies as we can from local sources and other small steps add up to keeping the production cycle smaller and a bit more sustainable.

Rotating: Don't be fooled - most organic farmers have their own arsenal of pesticides - ones that are approved for use in organics. Even as such, we try to minimize their use (a pesticide is a pesticide after all) by rotating our crops and putting some distance between

- ARUGULA
- CAULIFLOWER
- CUCUMBERS
- GARLIC
- GREEN BEANS
- GREEN TOP CARROTS
- ICEBERG LETTUCE
- MINI SWEET PEPPERS
- NAPA CABBAGE
- RED BEETS
- YELLOW ONION
- YELLOW SQUASH
- BONUS: BASIL AND GREEN ZUCCHINI

the vegetables and where the pests are. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

Oh, if only I had pages and pages, I could write and write and write about this stuff. But alas, time to get back to work. Enjoy your week, everyone!



A fine looking certified organic potato field.

A REMINDER TO YOU:

Please try to bring back your empty boxes the next time you pick up your box, as we would love to reuse it again. The boxes are a bit tricky to get apart - just remember, don't force it because it may rip and once it's ripped, they are no good to us!

THANK YOU to everyone for your help in keeping costs (and resource use) down.

YOUR BOX

ARUGULA - is such an exciting addition to sandwiches & tacos & pizzas... During a recent visit my mom (your drop-site hostess in Minnetonka) made crab salad sandwiches that we topped with arugula - it was out of control delicious! Just make sure you use it up quick - it's not a long keeper. Try it in the Moosewood cucumber recipe, below.

CAULIFLOWER - if you didn't get a chance to try the nummy roasted cauliflower recipe from last week, make sure to look it up & make it this week. Store in crisper drawer of fridge for up to a week - if the tips start to turn brown, just trim it off.

CUCUMBERS - if you're getting sick of cukes, try the salad recipe with arugula dressing, below for something really unique...

GARLIC - This is some of our "German Red" garlic. A great garlic with a little more kick than the milder porcelain. You can go ahead store this as you would any store bought garlic.

GREEN BEANS - are best eaten within a few days, while they've still got their snappy texture - that's when they're most delicious raw or lightly steamed & topped with butter or olive oil & lemon juice. Or, stir-fry them with fresh garlic in sesame or peanut oil & top with a drizzle of soy sauce. This will be your last installment of the green beans for a while.

NAPA CABBAGE - or "Chinese cabbage" can be eaten raw in salads or cooked in stir-fries. It's a great source of calcium & crunch. Store it in plastic in fridge & try the Asian Napa Salad recipe, below.

GREENTOP CARROTS - toss the tops right away for better

storage of the roots, which should go in plastic in the fridge.

ICEBERG LETTUCE - still is the only reliable mid-summer lettuce. Full of crunchy sweetness, it should be stored in plastic in the fridge & eaten up within several days.

RED BEETS - are high in minerals & vitamins A & C; you should leave their skins on if possible. They'll keep in plastic in the fridge for weeks. Enjoy them fresh grated on salads or made into slaw (if you're into juicing, try adding a big wedge of a beet to a glass of carrot-apple-ginger juice - the color is amazing!) or boil, steam, or best yet - roast them whole until just soft (it can take up to 45 minutes), slip from skins, slice, & marinate them. Or, my favorite way to eat them: Slice unpeeled beets into thin half-moons. Toss with olive oil, garlic, salt, & a bit of water. Roast at 450 degrees, turning a few times & adding water if necessary, for 30-40 minutes until they get all caramelized & delectable.

SWEET MINI PEPPERS - Rolling around your box are some of our colorful mini peppers! A signature crop of our - they are a wonderful addition to a salad or if you can stir fry them. If you do cook them, never mind cleaning out the insides - just chop up the whole darn thing and away you go. Store in fridge for a week or so.

YELLOW ONION - a great all-purpose onion for sandwiches or for cooking with. Store in the fridge, as these onion are not cured.

YELLOW SUMMER SQUASH - Before you get angry with us for putting yet another helping of summer squash in your box, try out the cookie recipe we've provided. It is super good!

CUCUMBER SALAD WITH ARUGULA CAPER DRESSING

- 3 cups cucumbers, cut into half-moons
- 2 slices French or Italian bread, crusts removed
- 2 Tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 c. fresh arugula
- 1 Tbsp. capers
- 1/3 c. olive oil

In a small bowl, pour vinegar over bread slices & let soak for a few minutes. Place cucumbers into a serving bowl & set aside. Place arugula, capers, & olive oil in blender or food processor. Add vinegar-soaked bread slices & puree on high speed until dressing is smooth. Add about half of dressing to cucumbers in serving bowl & toss to coat. Store the remaining dressing in a container & use on other salads within a week.

NAPA CABBAGE SALAD

- 1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 3 tablespoons sesame or peanut oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 pound Napa cabbage (1 small or 1/2 large head), thinly sliced or shredded
- 2 carrots, grated
- 3 Tbsp. onion tops or scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro (optional)
- Freshly ground pepper

In a bowl, mix the oil, vinegar, soy sauce & sugar. Add the cabbage, carrots, onion tops/scallions (& cilantro if using) & toss. Add the almonds & season with pepper. Toss again & serve.

YELLOW SQUASH COOKIES

- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 3 Tbsp. butter, soft
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup grated yellow summer squash

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, combine first 7 ingredients and mix till smooth. Fold in grated squash. Drop mixture, 1 Tablespoon at a time on to a greased baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes or till browned. Remove to wire rack to cool.