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News from the Fields of Driftless Organics

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Week #12! Day by day is our motto at the moment and as much as this isn't sound farming (or living for that matter!) practice, it is where we are at, at the moment. Call it the mid-summer slump, if you will. BUT, we are as excited as ever about the box this week and we never cease to learn as we go. That's the thing about vegetable farming, it is IMPOSSIBLE to get bored, as there is always something new to learn, a new vegetable to grow or a new method of production to experiment with. I believe that a true vegetable farmer is one that isn't satisfied with the same 'ol day to day - they have to try something new year after year.

Well, Josh is the prime example of this, with his giant sunflower experiment. Josh wasn't quite satisfied with vegetables alone, and thus he ventures forth unto new fields. Sunflower fields, that is. Well, I DO agree that the fields look incredibly beautiful and the oil that he has produced is top notch. I am personally impressed AND inspired by Josh's relentless and very independent pursuit of new venues of farming.

Hello there all, this is Josh at the helm of the old typewriter. I'm not necessarily a literary genius but



bare with me as I attempt to enlighten you on a new venture here at Driftless Organics. Last year I got the idea I wanted to try and grow some sunflowers for oil. Somewhat spurred from high gas prices and also for the fact that sunflower oil is a great cooking oil. So I found some seed in South Dakota and planted about six acres. Well they all came up great and were looking wonderful until this valley of ours filled up with water last August. After that I had about an acre of dismal looking

sunflowers in a rather muddy field. So I harvested what I had and came up with enough seed to get a trial run of oil pressed and bottled. Well that was kinda neat I had some fresh expeller pressed cooking oil on my hands. So this summer I'm trying it for real I rented some ground out of the valley and put in nearly forty acres of them and boy is it cool to gaze out over that many sunflowers all in full bloom. I don't know what will become of this or where I will sell all this oil but it has sure been an interesting experience growing all these flowers of the sun.

the box!

Broccoli
Cucumbers
Garlic
Green or Purple Beans
Heirloom Tomatoes
Jalapeno Peppers
Red Leaf Lettuce
Red Slicer Tomatoes
Roma Tomatoes
Sungold or Grape Tomatoes
Sweet Corn
Sweet Peppers
Sweet Onion
Zucchini & Summer Squash

BONUS ITEM: Basil



CREAMY FRESH TOMATO BASIL SOUP

- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. fennel seed, crushed (optional)
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 8-10 medium tomatoes, paste type or other red, quartered
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3+ Tbsp. cream, half & half, or condensed milk
- salt & pepper to taste
- splash of red wine or balsamic vinegar (optional)
- 20+ large basil leaves, rolled like a cigar & thinly sliced

Saute onion in olive oil on medium heat until translucent. Add fennel seed & garlic & saute another minute or two, stirring often. Add tomatoes, cover, & simmer for about 20 minutes. When tomatoes have broken down, add cream, salt, pepper, wine/vinegar & puree with immersion blender or in food processor until smooth. Return to stove, add basil leaves, bring back to simmer, & serve. Makes about 5 cups. Serve with French or foccacia bread.



YOUR BOX!

BROCCOLI - SO... one of the downsides of organic farming is from time to time you end up with some little worms that like the veggies as much as we do. We apologize for this, but some of your broccoli may have some green worms on them. This is an assurance that it is hasn't been sprayed with nasty chemicals! If you do see worms, simply soak your broccoli in salt water for 10 minutes and then rinse thoroughly. This broccoli tastes great and there will be more to come this fall!

CUCUMBERS - Remember - there's no need to peel a fresh organic cucumber! Most of a cuke's nutrients lie in or just under its skin. Sick of cucumbers on salads? Make some fresh spring rolls or nori rolls with long strips of cucumbers, blanched beans, sweet peppers, & red onions. Or use slices of cukes instead of crackers as vehicles for seafood salads, soft cheeses, etc.

GARLIC - fully cured now, so store in a cool-ish spot in kitchen out of direct sun.

GREEN &/or PURPLE BEANS - remember that the purple beans turn green when you cook them, so best to eat them fresh. They look lovely chopped up on salads or on a veggie & dip tray.

JALAPENO PEPPERS - Different from the sweets (duh?!), these are a great addition to salsa. They are the peppers in your box that are more oblong and range from green to red. Remove the seeds for less intense heat.

SUNGOLD OR GRAPE TOMATOES - If you have a dehydrator, either of these are a snap to turn into very sweet, faux sun-dried tomatoes - simply cut them in half the long way (through the stem end) & place them cut side up on the tray & dehydrate until dry (you can also do this in a warm oven).

SWEET PEPPER MIX - There's a jumble of mini sweets swimming around in your box (we're trying to cut down on the pints), plus a pimiento of chocolate. All are sweet, except the Jalapenos, that are ALSO floating about.

SWEET ONION - a bit sweeter than yellow, red or white onions, sweets make delicious additions to salads, salsa, dips, or sandwiches. They're also great for caramelizing.

VARIOUS HEIRLOOM TOMATOES - There's a mix of Cherokee Purple (reddish purple and sooooo good); Nebraska Wedding (yellow/orange & round; Plum Lemon - bright yellow and lemon shaped; Green Zebra - small, green and zebra striped (eat when soft and yellowish-green); and maybe even a Brandywine (big, reddish-pink and super tasty).

SWEET CORN - This is the last of our patch and despite being small, it is tasty. The worms think so too, unfortunately. If you do find a worm, simply cut off the offending end with a sharp knife. My favorite way to cook corn is on the grill, but boiling it for a minute or two works well too. Put on mayo, salt, lime and parmesan cheese and you have elote!

ZUCCHINI & SUMMER SQUASH - zukes/ yellow summer squash are perfect veggies for grilled shish-kabobs! Beautiful on a skewer alternated with sweet onion & colored peppers - (add some mushrooms & meat if you eat it!).

BONUS: BASIL - put it on sandwiches, in salads, make it into pesto, or as in today's recipe - in soup! Stores best like a cut flower in a glass of water on the counter (will turn black quickly in the fridge).