



NV Ranch

CSA Share Notes

WEEK TWELVE

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THIS WEEK'S HARVEST

Each produce share this week contains some of the following items in quantities according to share size (not all shares contain all items):

- Eggplant
- Sweet Corn
- Peppers
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini
- New Potatoes
- Okra
- Green Beans
- Cantaloupe
- Cucumbers

HOW TO STORE YOUR HARVEST

- Handle eggplant carefully; they bruise easily. Store eggplant unwashed in the warmest part of your refrigerator (like the crisper drawer if it is away from the freezer unit) until use. The large varieties will keep best for around four days and the long skinny (Asian) types for five or six days. You can also store them at room temperature for about two days before they will begin to shrivel.

- Store sweet corn in their husks in the refrigerator for three to four days to preserve crispness. For longer storage, simply remove husks, cut any unwanted parts, freeze and store whole or in halves. You can also remove the kernels with a sharp knife run down each side and freeze.

- Store peppers unwashed in a plastic bag in your refrigerator. They can also be stored for longer periods by first removing the seeds, slicing and then freezing them for up to a year; they will not be as crisp but they will still be fine for adding to chilies, soups, stews, and any other recipe that calls for

chopped peppers.

- Store tomatoes in a cool place (around 55 degrees), but do not place in the refrigerator. Refrigeration causes tomatoes to lose their flavor. Store cut tomatoes in the fridge to avoid spoilage.

- Zucchini should be stored in a dry plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Do not wash them until you are ready to prepare. They should store for up to a week in the fridge but are at their best if used within 3 to 5 days

- Store potatoes in a cool, dark place with ventilation. Aim for 45-50 degrees F (but preferably not in the fridge); any warmer and the potatoes may sprout and shrivel.

- Store okra whole and unwashed in a paper bag or paper towel in the refrigerator for up to three days. Trim the stalk again before use, since it begins to turn brown almost immediately after cutting. For longer storage, blanch whole and then freeze.

- Store unwashed beans in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to five days. After that, they will begin to lose their crispness but will still be good for cooked dishes, like stews and soups, for up to two weeks.

- Store cantaloupe at room temperature until ready to slice. If it starts to get too soft before you use it, place it in the refrigerator to stop the ripening process. Once sliced, wrap unused portions tightly in plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator for up to a week.

- Store cucumbers unwashed in the refrigerator crisper, where the higher humidity will help keep them crisp. Use them within a week or so or wrap tightly in plastic wrap (which helps seal in moisture) to keep them longer.

ABOUT OKRA & EGGPLANT

Okra is a tall-growing vegetable related to the hibiscus. They are very pretty when blooming since the flowers are similar to the hibiscus flowers. Okra is a powerhouse of nutrients, nearly half of which is soluble fiber along with vitamin B6 and folic acid. It's long been used as the base for Louisiana Creole gumbo, but also compliments tomatoes, beans, onions, corn and shellfish. It's also great fried!

Eggplant comes in many shapes, sizes and colors. They can be large and bulbous, long and skinny, white, purple, and even orange or striped. Two varieties we successfully grew this year are the Ichiban, a Japanese variety, and the Classic. Both are a good source of vitamin B6, folic acid and potassium. Used worldwide, popular dishes featuring eggplant include France's ratatouille, Arabian moussaka and Italian eggplant parmesan. The Asian varieties are perfect for stir-fry or sautéing.

OKRA WITH CORN AND TOMATOES

Serve this Carolina favorite over a bowl of long-grain rice with a piece of hot cornbread.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons each butter and canola oil
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced into rounds
- 1/2 teaspoon each thyme, red pepper flakes and basil
- 1 bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 3 tomatoes seeded and chopped
- 2 cups corn kernels
- 2 cups okra, cut into 1/4-inch-thick rounds
- 1/2 cup water or chicken stock
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

In a heavy skillet, heat olive oil and add onions, thyme, basil, and red pepper flakes. Sauté, and stir until onions are limp; add bell pepper and continue cooking until onions are translucent. Add tomatoes, okra, water, salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low, and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add corn and cook 5 minutes longer. Taste, adjust seasoning if needed. Serve hot.

EGGPLANT PARMESAN

Use either variety of eggplant to make this baked version of the famous dish.

Ingredients

- 1 eggplant, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1-3/4 cups Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 3 cups spaghetti sauce
- 8 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Dip eggplant slices in egg, then in bread crumbs. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 5 minutes on each side. In a baking dish spread spaghetti sauce to cover the bottom. Place a layer of eggplant slices in the sauce. Sprinkle with mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses. Sprinkle basil on top.

Bake in preheated oven for 35 minutes, or until golden brown.

WHAT'S GROWING

We have another batch of corn that we hope survived the storm early this week and will be ready this week or next, okra and eggplant coming on strong and more of the heirloom tomatoes finally ripening so we can get each of you some of these tasty goodies as the weeks progress. We are also ready to begin harvesting spaghetti squash soon and an heirloom variety of cantaloupe known as Minnesota Midget. These cute little melons are just the right size for one or two people and are nicely sweet. We're also pulling lemon cucumbers now and you'll begin to see a few of these cuties in your baskets, too.

It's only halfway through the season, but now is the time for us to begin planning for fall harvest. We are already planting spinach, carrots, radishes, more green beans, cabbage and a variety of lettuces. The summer squash plants have finally died off and the zucchini will soon follow, but more goodies lie ahead so keep your stomachs ready!