



Sogn Valley Farm

CSA Newsletter Aug. 1-2, 2017

www.sognvalleyfarm.com

Greetings,

As I watch the recovery from last Tuesday's storms—four inches of rain in two hours in the morning, plus two more inches of rain Tuesday night—I am reminded of the resiliency of nature.

Well, not nature, I suppose—a farm is a managed, human-created landscape, so is, by definition, not *nature*. But plenty of the same mechanisms are in play as the soil drains out excess water, plant roots gain oxygen once again, battered lettuce plant tissues are repaired, and lodged pepper plants re-orient their growing point upward in their new location.

We will, no doubt, suffer some loss from the storm: brittle rainbow chard leaves were torn, fruit on windblown pepper plants got sun-scalded when exposed rapidly to sun, some recently seeded beet seeds got washed away. But on the whole, things are looking good on the farm.

Chile harvest is upon us. As some of you know, we grow a good amount of hot peppers, mainly for a couple of hot sauce/salsa makers in the Twin Cities. These plantings will require mass harvest every two weeks for the remainder of the season. While some of these varieties did suffer serious losses shortly after transplanting due to a mischievous rabbit or woodchuck (never did confirm the culprit 100%), the remaining plants are looking healthy and full of fruit.

Speaking of fruit...I'm excited to see much more lush and healthy melon plants this season. Last year, we saw quite a bit of foliar disease that spread to the fruit and caused premature decay in the field—and a scant harvest. We made some changes in our variety selection, which, coupled with what has apparently been good melon-growing conditions, has produced a healthy looking crop. Wading through the vines this week, I spotted lots of developing fruit. I suspect we'll harvest

What's in the box?

Broccoli: We usually prepare broccoli by steaming it for 2-3 minutes and lightly dressing with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Simple and delicious.

Mixed cherry tomatoes: We've again mixed our three varieties of cherry tomatoes. The orange ones ('Sun Gold') are the sweetest; the red ones ('Sakura') have classic tomato flavor; and the brown/purple ones ('Black Cherry') have an heirloom-like, complex flavor. Use in this week's recipe.

Green kale: A versatile and nutritious leafy vegetable. Add it to eggs, stir fries, soups, or raw in a green smoothie or massaged kale salad.

Cilantro: The perfect herb to accompany scallions, peppers, and tomatoes.

Zucchini and Hurakan summer squash: Growing conditions have been swell and these sized up quickly. Use them to make this week's recipe, or perhaps this is the week for zucchini bread?

Scallions: Finely slice both the white bulb and the green leaves for a zesty topping for a salad, garnish for a soup or Mexican-style dish, or addition to a fresh salsa or cucumber salad.

European or slicing cucumber: After a slow start to the field cucumber season, we had our first harvest this week. You're receiving either a European cucumber, an American slicing cucumber, or both. The slicing cukes have thicker skin than the ones you've been receiving, so you may consider peeling them if you don't like the thicker skin.

Jalapeño peppers: Jalapeños are one of my favorite peppers to grow and harvest...and eat. Use them in a Mexican dish with cilantro, scallions, and tomatoes, or add some heat to eggs or chili. Most of the heat is contained in the seeds and membrane, so scrape these out if you're not crazy about spicy foods. Just make sure to wash your hands with soap after handling (and before you touch your eyes!).

Green bell peppers: Use these in this week's kebab recipe, or in conjunction with the jalapeños to cut the heat a bit.

Tomatoes (full shares only): You're receiving one or more of several kinds of tomatoes that we harvested this week: small 'New Girl' tomatoes, beefsteak tomatoes, and heirlooms.

On Deck

Each week, we'll give some hints about what new items may show up CSA shares in the next 1-2 weeks. Please note, this is not a guarantee, but our attempt to give you an idea of what's coming up.

Sweet corn — Green top carrots (eventually!) — Melons — Parsley — Chard

the first cantaloupes within the week, and hopefully have enough for CSA boxes the week after next. Watermelons will be coming in shortly after that.

Next week will also be the time for onion harvest. We're seeing ~20% of the plants with signs of maturity—the "neck" loses turgidity and the leaves flop over. At a glance, it looks like the onions will be, on the whole, a bit smaller than last year. This means we'll have a little more labor in "cleaning" the onions prior to selling, but it won't be of great consequence to CSA members—last year, we were swimming in yellow onions, and perhaps included too many in late summer and fall CSA boxes...so this year may be just right ;-)

The rest of the summer crops are just about to burst. Yesterday, we had our first modest tomato harvest. Still not in full swing—only enough for about half of the boxes this week—but better than the 15-20 lb harvests we've had over the last week or so. Expect lots more of these starting in the next week or two. We're seeing the first bell peppers start to turn red, so hopefully you'll see some of those in the next box or two. Sweet corn—which we only had one successful planting of this season—in almost ready. We are seeing the raccoons wreaking some havoc on the ripening ears....we hope we can catch the guy in the live trap we have set, and then re-locate the him before he eats it all. (Or maybe it's a "she"?) If we're successful, you should see some sweet corn next box or the following one.

That's a wrap for this week's field update!

Have a good week,

–Dana

Kabobs

Bell peppers, zucchini, cherry tomatoes, and onions just beg to be skewered and thrown on the grill. Here's a simple recipe for basic kebabs. It could be made without the chicken.

Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 cup Italian salad dressing, divided
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt (or two cloves garlic, pressed)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
- 1 medium or 1/2 large zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1 medium or 1/2 large Hurakan summer squash, quartered and cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 2 medium onions, quartered
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes

Directions

1. In a small resealable plastic bag, combine chicken and 1/2 cup salad dressing. Seal bag and turn to coat; refrigerate for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a large resealable plastic bag, combine the oil, garlic salt and rosemary; add vegetables. Seal bag and toss to coat. Marinate for up to an hour.
2. Drain and discard marinades. On eight metal or soaked wooden skewers, alternately thread chicken and vegetables.
3. Grill kabobs, uncovered, over medium-hot heat for 12-15 minutes or until juices run clear, turning and basting occasionally with remaining salad dressing.

Modified from <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/chicken--n--veggie-kabobs>