

Members,

The zucchini are coming, the zucchini are coming! Well its not quite the British but it feels like an invasion and just in time for the 4th of July. The garden is flourishing and this time of year it changes hourly. Once our zucchini, summer squash, and cucumbers begin to flower and fruit we can barely keep up. The first round are in this weeks box and by the looks of things its going to be a great harvest for next week. We literally pick these DAILY this time of year, sometimes we swear you can watch the cucumbers growing.

Speaking of independence, it reminds me of just what our community farm is all about, supporting local and sustainable agriculture, businesses, and communities. We are proud that almost all of our equipment from heaters to refrigerators, trucks to tractors and everything in between is made right here in the USA. We always shop at the local lumber yards, co-ops, and brick and mortar retailers. We are grateful to have such great drop-site partners as Kitchen Window and the Golden Fig, two locally owned businesses. We also employ high school and college kids from Minneapolis to Stevens Point and a few stops in between. They love the opportunity to work the summer on the farm.

From an agricultural point of view the 4th of July marks a half way point for us as growers. What started in February as a vision, was seeded in the greenhouse in April, transplanted in May, elivered beginning in June and culminates as we finalize transplanting fall crops.

The garden is flourishing and this week we begin to move away from the Spring greens and jump right in to the Summer treats. Week 3 brings some very familiar vegetables and a few unusual suspects. **Napa Cabbage** is outstanding this year. Very tightly packed, clean and very green.

Cabbages, cucumbers, and zucchini can be susceptible to all types of pests and disease. Typically heavily sprayed in a commercial environment, we are proud to deliver superior quality through organic methods.

Cucumbers, Zuchinni and Summer Squash as mentioned above, are beginning their run. The cucumbers have a thicker skin due to the high heat this week so I would peel them before using. We slice a few up and toss them in the vinegar and sugar dressing from the Bok Choy recipe and leave them out as a snack or a great side to a spicy dish. My friends from Mexico squeeze lime juice, kosher salt, and Cayenne pepper over sliced cucumbers for a refreshing salad, not for the faint of heart but very tasty, albeit a bit spicy.

Zucchini and Summer Squash are great sliced and sauteed, added to a minestrone style summer soup, layered in vegetarian lasagna or marinated and grilled to bring out that caramelized sweet flavor the grill gives the squash.

Broccoli and Scallions join us this week. The broccoli has very tight and firm heads. This particular variety has a blueish hue to it and makes a great raw snack. I love the flavor of early broccoli, I know its good when I eat it all the way down, stems and all. If you are going to boil or blanch your broccoli don't forget the salt in the water. Salt enhances the green color of vegetables when cooking. The scallions are large and packed with flavor. Grill these whole or use accordingly in your regular cooking. This variety gives us large green tops that we love as

garnish in salads, or added to pasta dishes.

Beets and Fennel are the unsung heroes of this weeks box. The fennel is love/hate for most people. The licorice type flavor is most commonly found in seed form in Italian style sausages. The vegetable itself is best cooked, either baked, grilled or sauteed and often works as a component to a main dish. I love fennel under a baked, steamed, or grilled fish. Seafood and sausage are the most classic pairings for fennel, however some more contemporary pairings include: cabbage, cucumbers, lentils, tomatoes, chicken and olives.

I LOVE BEETS. I was the kid who could never get enough beets. When I am in a hurry I boil them, peel them, dice them up and drizzle with olive oil and salt. Beets can be roasted, peeled and sliced very thin on a mandolin and used to make a beautiful addition to any starter or salad. They are exceptional with bleu cheese and toasted almonds. Lemon, sour cream and parsley also go a long way to enhancing the natural earthy flavor of beets. In the restaurant we used very thinly sliced beet as a substitute for beef and made beet carpaccio salad, with capers parsley, lemon, olive oil and fresh cracked black pepper. Parsley is this weeks herb, not quite in abundance yet but available self serve at the drop site.

Snap Peas, yes the peas are in. It has been very hot for the peas. Great for holiday weekends not for pea picking. These peas are picked first thing in the morning and have a sweet snap. Everything we can ask for from a whole snap pea. We are delivering the peas in bushels this week. If you love them take a bunch if you dislike peas leave some for the next family. Eaten whole these are great raw or in a stir-fry.

We have been getting some requests for news on some upcoming vegetables. We do our best to plan, plant, predict and harvest in a timely manner. Sometimes veggies come in on time, sometimes early, and like our friends the Spring Turnips, sometimes almost not at all. We try to stay away from getting to far out on upcoming produce but as of this morning we are looking at some very healthy and close to ready stands of potatoes. Early reds, Yukon's and some special bakery called German Butterballs. The tomato and melon patches are beginning to erupt with the arrival of the Summer heat and are producing some promising flowers. These are a bit farther out, coming soon to a kitchen near you.

We have had such a great response from our members this year, we have recipes submitted and have received some wonderful emails of thanks as well as stories of whats been cooking! We are grateful to have this opportunity to grow our community. Keep the emails and recipes coming and do not forget to return your boxes. See you at the drop-site!

Your friends,

[The Bistro Farm](#)