

Johnson's Backyard Garden, May 13th

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We'd like your input for the newsletter! Please send related news articles, book reviews, recipes, etc to carolyn@johnsonbackyardgarden.com

We're on MySpace, [be our friend!](#)

1) In Your Box this Week

Arugula
Green Bunching Onions
Peppers – Sweet Banana and Green Bells
Rainbow Chard
Spinach
Strawberries
Beefsteak Slicer Tomatoes
Zucchini

As the unexpected never fails to happen, keep in mind that this list is subject to change depending on availability and quality of crops on harvest day. You'll find the most accurate packing list on the homepage of our [website](#). The website list also features links to online recipes, pictures (for the more unusual veggies) and other interesting tidbits.

2) Important Farm News

- Please note on your next visit to the farm that we have changed the farm access point – the first driveway (where the well and mailboxes are) is now a **resident only** access. The second drive (where the Johnson's Backyard Garden sign and the new greenhouse are) is for public farm access; please pull up past the fence and park on the right side of the road by the pecans.
- For those CSA members who pick up on the farm, we will now be setting up a tent for box pickup right in the orchard, easily accessible to this new parking area. These changes will hopefully make farm pickup

more convenient and also limit the traffic in the area where the kids play.

- This new tent pickup site is also an experiment which we hope will lead to a permanent **farm stand**. We are envisioning a permanent structure which would be open twice a week for on farm CSA pickup as well as public sales. The farm stand would feature produce from our farm as well as other local farm products – meats, cheeses, eggs, jam, etc. **We would appreciate your input in planning this farmstand – what products would you like to see? What hours/days would be convenient for you?**
- We will soon be adding a **new pickup** location in Round Rock. Jenny Rasmussen of [Tiny Birds Organic Baby & Family](#) has offered her store's new location at 1100 Sam Bass Road as a pickup site. We anticipate beginning Wednesday deliveries there in June. We are not yet accepting changes to this location, but we'll let you know when we are!
- Remember that **we reuse the wax boxes** your CSA share arrives in. PLEASE do not keep or throw away these boxes, and take care not to tear them when you break them down. These boxes cost \$2.00 a piece – taking good care of them will keep the cost of your shares down. Thank you!!
- Lila, the oldest of the Johnson kids, turned eight last Thursday – congratulations on another trip around the sun, Lila!
- The squash harvest has begun! We brought in around 200 pounds of zucchini and patty pan squash on Monday. Squash stores well, so we will keep this in our cooler until it goes in boxes and home to you this week.
- Greenhouse construction continues – this week we stretched 4,000 square feet of 6 millimeter thick roofing plastic. This essentially is a large scale shrink-wrapping process: we stretched the plastic on a hot sunny day when the plastic is pliable, when the weather cools down the plastic shrinks onto the frame.



3) Organic Certification

This past Thursday our farm was finally inspected by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) for organic certification under the National Organic Program! We submitted our application in early October of last year, at which point it was promptly lost in the bureaucratic shuffle which we did not discover until we called to check on its status in February. Not to be deterred, Brent then hand delivered the application to the TDA office in Austin. Up to this point, we have been following organic practices but had not yet finished the application process for the official certification. We anticipate having the official seal within the next month.

Texas was one of the first states to begin an organic certification program; the Texas Department of Agriculture began their certification program in 1988 when only eight other states had organic labeling laws. In 2002, national organic standards were codified by the US Department of Agriculture National Organic Program (NOP); TDA is now an accredited certifying agent of the National Organic Program.

The certification process involves a lengthy paper application and a thorough farm inspection by a TDA inspector. The inspector collects soil and crop samples to ensure the absence of prohibited chemicals. Production and harvest records are also checked to ensure that each crop can be traced from point of origin to point of sale.

NOP regulations cover many broad categories, including:

- Land History
- Documentation and Record Keeping
- Soil Management
- Weed Management

Insect Pest Management
Disease Management
Soil and Water Conservation
Irrigation
Fertilization Management
Buffer Zones
Harvest and Handling
Crop Rotation and Cover Cropping

All of this adds up to a lot of paperwork, which in itself is a large enough barrier to deter many small farms from seeking certification, though they may technically use organic practices. We were in this situation when we first started out, and had not originally planned on seeking organic certification due to the added expense of the required paperwork and record keeping. However, now we have a larger staff as well as improved record keeping and crop planning methods which enable us to maintain the required records more easily. As our customer base expands, we feel it is important to be certified organic to provide assurance to those consumers who have not visited our farm that we are using organic practices.

For more information on organic certification, visit [NOP](#) or [TDA](#)

Even better, come to our next open house or volunteer as a workshare - we'd love to show you what we do!

4) Beef Shares Available

We currently have three nice and healthy Black Angus steers that will be ready to butcher in June. The cattle are grass-fed, raised naturally and are antibiotic and hormone free. These cattle grazed our pasture last year, but as our farm expanded they moved them back to their original home at our neighbor Sam's Y&B Ranch.

We have ten beef shares available. Each beef share will be a quarter of beef consisting of a mixture of various cuts such as T bones, rib eyes, chuck roast, brisket, round steak, hamburger and soup bones, totaling an estimated 80 – 90 pounds. The meat will be processed at Doyle's Processing Plant in Giddings Texas, about an hour outside of Austin, and will be packed and labeled in butcher paper.

Pricing: We anticipate each share to cost \$650, the actual price will be based on the dressed weight and calculated at the time of processing. This amounts to approximately \$7.50 per pound of packaged meat. You will need approximately 2-3 cubic feet of freezer space for proper storage.

To reserve your beef share, we are taking deposits of \$250 on a first come first serve basis. This deposit will be deducted from the final cost of the beef, calculated at the time of processing.



5) More on Global Food Issues

A continuation on last week's theme of global food issues – here's a [great article](#) that my mom sent me from the April 17th edition of The Economist discussing the end of the era of cheap food and the coming changes in agriculture worldwide. Thanks mom! -Carolyn

6) Win a 4-week CSA Membership...

...by designing the winning Johnson's Backyard Garden logo or t-shirt design!

Submit logo and/or t-shirts designs by email (carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com), snail mail, or in person. Winner(s) will be chosen by the JBG team, or perhaps we'll put it to a vote through the newsletter.

We also need a good name for our tractor and our farm truck...we'd love suggestions. In exchange you'll get everlasting fame and glory, and a truck load of pecan wood (if we can convince you to take it).

Deadline: June 15, 2008

7) Vegetable Storage Tips

We aim to grow and package our vegetables to maintain the highest taste and nutritional quality possible. However, once they've left the farm it's up to you to keep them fresh and nutritious. There's no refrigeration at the CSA drop points so it's good to pick up your box as early as possible, especially as the weather heats up. Here are some additional tips for storing this week's share:

- **Arugula** should be washed immediately then spin dried. Rebag and place in the refrigerator.
- **Greens** should be kept in plastic bags. Any bunch greens can be freshened by cutting an inch of the bottom stalks and soaking the entire bunch in cold water for 10 minutes. Place in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few hours to revive.
- **Onions** are best kept moderately cool, no lower than 50 degrees. A cool, dry dark place is best- on the counter, in a cupboard or basket.
- **Peppers** should be stored in the crisper, and washed before use.
- **Strawberries** are best covered in the fridge. Don't wash until you use them - too much moisture in the package speeds spoilage.
- **Tomatoes** should be kept uncovered at room temp, but can be refrigerated if very ripe. All other fresh vegetables belong in the refrigerator.
- **Zucchini** and other summer squashes will last 4-7 days in plastic bags in the crisper.

Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course feel free to contact us with any questions.

8) Recipe - Summer Frittata

Adapted from World's Healthiest Foods www.whfoods.com

Ingredients:

2 whole eggs

4 egg whites

pinch of turmeric

½ medium **onion** chopped fine

1 TBS chicken or vegetable broth

3 medium cloves garlic, chopped

2 cups thinly sliced **zucchini**

1 **bell pepper**, chopped

½ 4oz can diced green chili

1 small **tomato** chopped and excess pulp removed

2 TBS chopped cilantro

salt and black pepper to taste

Beat together eggs, egg whites, turmeric, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Set aside.

Heat 1 TBS broth in 10-12 inch stainless steel skillet. Sauté onion, garlic, zucchini, bell pepper and green chili for about 3 minutes stirring frequently.

After 3 minutes add tomato, cilantro salt and pepper to zucchini mixture.

Pour egg mixture over vegetables. Turn heat to low and cover. Cook for about 10 minutes checking periodically to see if eggs are firm. When done, run a rubber spatula around edge of frittata, cut into four wedges and serve.

We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

9) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter

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10) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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