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

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

1) In Your Box this Week

Early Girl Tomatoes

Zucchini
Patty Pan Squash
Zephyr or Yellow Straight Neck Squash
Pickling and Slicing Cucumbers
Sweet Peppers
Hot Peppers
Eggplant
Garlic
Okra
Butternut Squash
Melon

Look for cherry tomatoes in the Trade Box. There will be a few flowers as well, the earlier you can arrive to the pickup site the better for getting flowers!

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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](#).

This list also features links to recipes, photos for the more unusual veggies, and other interesting tidbits.

2) Farm News

- Last week we mentioned our intention to move to bulk distribution sites. We are still very much in the planning stages, and would be interested in **meeting with potential bulk distribution site hosts**. We are looking to partner with churches, community associations, or other groups which have a large air-conditioned space available on a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon. Contact us if you are interested or have suggestions for suitable locations.
- Today was officially the last day of the summer tomato harvest. As soon as we finished harvesting, we began pulling out the tomato stakes, untangling the twine that's been holding them up, and removing tomato cages. Don't fret, there will be tomatoes again soon though – we've been setting tomato transplants out into the field for a couple weeks now, and are giving them lots of extra attention in an attempt to stave off the spider mites.
- We're always looking for **workshare volunteers** on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Workshares help with harvest and packing CSA boxes from 8am to 12:30 in exchange for a CSA share of vegetables. We currently have more growing than ever before and sure do appreciate the help! Send us an email at farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com if you'd like to participate.
- We are looking to **partner with Universities to expand our internship program**, please contact us if you have a strong University connection as an alumni, faculty, staff or student.
- We will be having a **Melon Day** on a Sunday afternoon within the next month – we're not very good at predicting things around here but look for an announcement in the newsletter in the next couple weeks. Bring a picnic to enjoy in the shady pecan orchard, there will be complimentary melons for CSA members, Brenton will have the grill fired up if you want to bring burgers, and hopefully we'll round up a band!

- Remember that **new CSA memberships** will be put on our waiting list – don't be discouraged, we are expanding and have more crops growing than we ever have before, so get on the list now before it gets too long! Current members can renew on our website, you'll just need to enter your email address to link to our database. If you did not include your email address when you signed up, or have forgotten which one you used, just email us at farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com
- The New York Times has had several articles recently about farming and CSAs in particular – check them out: [Cutting Out the Middlemen Shoppers Buy Slices of Farms](#), [Local Food Movement Attracts New Breed of Midlife Farmers](#)
- August is fast-approaching – remember that we will be taking a one-week break from CSA boxes from **August 14th to 21st**. We will resume the following Saturday August 23rd. (If you pick up every other week, this may not affect you at all if that week would normally be an 'off' week.)
- A note on **photos** in the newsletter - I've had a couple people recently report that they are not able to view the newsletter photos anymore. Let me know (carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com) if you are having a similar problem. I haven't changed anything (at least not knowingly) in the newsletter format but perhaps with more information I can resolve this. One thing to be aware of is that many email servers block photos for security reasons, which may require you to change your email settings to allow photos from a specific address.

3) Tomatoes in Flight

Intern Carolyn Fryberger

Last Thursday I drove my sister, Annelies, to the airport during our breakfast break. We typically start working at 6am, then take a half hour break at 8, which coincided perfectly with my sister's flight schedule. Before leaving, I headed into the coolers to select veggies to send home with her to my family – we managed to fit one of every variety of winter squash, including the giant pink banana, a honey dew melon and some patty pan squash into her suitcase. And for the carry-on: two pounds of tomatoes, two bunches of leeks, and oh, another acorn squash. In a way it defeats the purpose of eating local, to send these vegetables all the way to North Carolina to my family. But they still carry meaning, not the meaning of place but rather of kinship. I grew these vegetables and I want my mom and dad to eat them, I want my grandpa in New Jersey to eat tomatoes that I enjoy growing only because he taught me to appreciate them, and for my grandmother in North Carolina to use the giant pink banana squash in her amazing three-layer pumpkin cheesecake.

When we got to the airport I went inside with my sister, something I don't usually do when dropping someone off for a flight, but we had to be sure, are tomatoes approved carry-on items? Being in the airport reminded me of how different my life is right now from most everyone else's, and from the typical post-college path. I stood happy and already dirty from a morning of harvesting as business travelers whizzed by, overly connected to much of the world and yet lacking the connections that are so central to my life right now, connection to a place, to food, to dirt, to community. I waited with a grocery bag in hand, just in case, as Annelies went through security. She stopped and talked with the security official who checked her ID, and gave me a thumbs-up. For future reference everyone, tomatoes are TSA approved. So while others in the airport used fancy contraptions to message and call, I drove back to the farm happy to know that those simple veggies would board a plane and carry my love back to my wonderful family.

4) Spotlight on Zucchini

Elaine DiRico

There is a lot more to our relationship with food than can be satisfied with a hit and run at the McWhataBell. Until the beginning of the last century, most people had contact with their food from germination onwards. Our farmers were a major section of the economy, most women cooked, and almost everyone had a garden that they could harvest conveniently. In other countries, this is still the case. I can't help but believe that this has had a profound impact on our relationship with food.

For years, we kept chickens in downtown Austin. We have moved to Oak Hill and are much more at the mercy of coyotes and stray dogs, but a safe chicken coop is in the works for this home as well. (I really like the mobile ones on Craig's list for moving around your yard....) "The Girls" as our chickens were known, had a great effect on our kids growing up. The kitchen waste went to the coop, where The Girls, sorted, filed, and generally broke it up and ate it. Once they had processed it, it went into the dry leaves and straw, and when we needed compost for the garden, it was shoveled out, fed to the vegetables, which we harvested, ate, and returned to The Girls. A closed and highly functional system, and I miss it. When Tony, my son, was about ten, we were having breakfast out, and he was suitably appalled: "You're going to eat an egg from a hen you don't know?!?"

Missing that connection, I am grateful for the Johnson Backyard Garden. It embodies some elements that are hard for us city folks to get, as well as being very available to visit. It isn't perfect, but not weeding in the sun and not having to harvest okra in July makes up for a lot....



Zucchini. I am surprised the Evangelists of any sect haven't hit on summer squash as a proof of God's Abundance. Give every kiddo in Sunday School a zucchini plant to watch and nurture, and a baseball bat for later in the summer to beat it to death with. The last time I had a garden, every morning, I was out picking the luscious fingerling sized babies that grew overnight, and most days, moved aside a leaf and found the Hindenburg of vegetables.

The little ones, say 4" or less, I punctured a few times with a fork and put whole in brine in the fridge. Left for a week, these made wonderful pickles. Slightly larger ones can be sliced and treated the same way. Usually, I use a jar of pickles that has been emptied, maybe spicing the leftover brine with some chopped chilies or a little honey

for a bread and butter effect. That's one of the beauties of pickles- they are always a work in progress. A pinch of ginger today, and a bit of garlic tomorrow... If it starts tasting a bit weak, add some good vinegar. Almost any relatively crisp vegetable does well like this, from cabbage to carrots to okra to radishes. (Yummy!!)

But it is July, nearly August and we are well beyond that time, when we could have some tender baby vegetables and in to the 'take the rake with you to the garden, Honey, I think the zucchini is large enough to hurt you...' What to do? Here's my favorite: a squash casserole that can use a huge amount of squash, make it so delicious, and then, with the addition of a can of black beans, (drained) can be used a couple of days later in enchiladas.

La Reyna's Squash Casserole

Preheat oven to 350°

8 cups large diced (1" or so) summer squash

1/4 cup canola oil

2 cups chopped onions

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 teaspoon each salt and pepper

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme or 1 teaspoon fresh leaves

1 can Rotel tomatoes

1 cup grated cheese (Eddie Wilson uses Velveeta over at Threadgills- we can do better)

1 cup bread crumbs or crushed crackers

1 Tablespoon butter

Sauté the squash in half of the oil over medium heat, in a large skillet, stirring often, until it breaks down. This is going to take as much as twenty minutes. Pour into a colander over the sink, and let drain well, pushing a bit with the spoon to get it as dry as possible. In the hot pan, sauté the onions in the rest of the oil until they begin to color. Add the garlic and stir, being careful to let the garlic color a bit but not burn. Add the squash, the Rotels, salt and pepper and thyme, stir well, and heat until it is quite dry, perhaps another five minutes.

In a small skillet, toast the crumbs with the butter. Stir the cheese into the casserole, or reserve to put on top.

Pour the squash mixture into a well oiled casserole pan, finish with the cracker crumbs, and bake for half an hour or so, until nice and bubbly.

To make those enchiladas, drain any collected moisture from the casserole, add a drained can of black beans and roll in warmed corn tortillas. Of course you can stop there and call them tacos, or line them up in a casserole, cover with enchilada sauce and cheese and bake in a 325° oven for twenty minutes or until warmed through, and once again, nice and bubbly.

Elaine DiRico is a freelance food critic and long-time CSA member. Feel free to contact her with questions, comments and recipe requests at ELAINE@dirico.com

5) 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. Here are some additional tips on how to store this week's share:

Fridge

- **Peppers** and **Cucumbers** should be stored in the crisper, and washed in cold water before use.
- **Zucchini** and other **Summer Squash** will last 4-7 days in plastic bags in the crisper.
- **Okra** will keep for only two or three days. Refrigerate unwashed, dry okra pods in the vegetable crisper, loosely wrapped in perforated plastic bags. Wet pods will quickly mold and become slimy. When the ridges and tips of the pod start to turn dark, use it or lose it. Once it starts to darken, okra will quickly deteriorate.

Counter

- **Eggplant, Garlic** and **Winter Squash** 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. Eggplant are delicate and do not store well, so try to use them within a few days.
- **Tomatoes** should be kept at room temperature, but can be refrigerated if very ripe. Leaving them in the paper bag will help them ripen quickly. Also, be sure to store your tomatoes away from your eggplants, or other sensitive produce such as bananas, as the tomatoes will make them ripen faster.
- **Melons** should be stored uncut in a cool dark place. Keep cut melons in the refrigerator.

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

6) Recipes

Thank you to CSA member M'Lynda Owens for sharing the following three squash recipes with us!

Warm Squash Salad With Mint

For this easy side dish, I used zucchini and yellow crooknecks, the two types of summer squash most readily available to me. Add pattypan or any variety to the mix. Quantities are not terribly important here; aim for 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 pounds of squash. The squash-mint-goat cheese combination is also one of my favorite omelet fillings and would make a fine frittata, as well.

Makes 4 servings

1 tablespoon olive oil

3 medium zucchini (about 1 pound), trimmed and chopped into half-inch pieces

3 small yellow crookneck squash (about 3/4 pound), trimmed and chopped into half-inch pieces

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 (15.5-ounce) can cannellini beans, rinsed, drained and dried

1/4 cup loosely packed chopped fresh mint

4 ounces goat cheese

Add the olive oil to a large nonstick skillet and heat to medium high. Add all the squash, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes or until squash is lightly browned and tender (adjust the heat if squash browns too quickly). Transfer to a large serving bowl.

Add the beans and most of the mint to the bowl. Toss gently. Just before serving, crumble the goat cheese over the salad and finish with the rest of the mint.

Whole-Wheat Zucchini Pancakes

This recipe is a good way to use up the one or two leftover zucchini hanging out in the crisper drawer. I often use whole-wheat pastry flour, available in health food stores and many supermarkets, in pancakes because it provides a tender texture. However, regular whole-wheat flour works well, as does substituting unbleached all-purpose flour for the whole wheat. Nutmeg has a strong flavor that I like paired with both vegetables and whole grains. If you don't enjoy it as much, use the smaller amount.

Makes 10 to 12 pancakes

3/4 cup unbleached all-purpose flour (3 1/4 ounces)

3/4 cup whole-wheat pastry flour (3 1/4 ounces)

1 tablespoon light brown sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1/2 to 1 teaspoon nutmeg

3/4 teaspoon salt

2 large eggs

1 1/4 cups milk (low-fat or whole)

Zest of 1 lemon

1 tablespoon lemon juice

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled

1 medium zucchini, trimmed and shredded on large holes of a box grater

Cooking spray

Maple syrup, powdered sugar, yogurt or sour cream for serving (optional)

Add the flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt to a large bowl and whisk thoroughly. In a separate bowl, lightly whisk the eggs. Add the milk, zest, lemon juice and butter and whisk until frothy. Stir in the zucchini.

Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and stir gently, just until combined (some lumps are okay; do not over mix). Let the batter rest at room temperature for 10 minutes or up to 30, allowing the leavening agents to start reacting and any lumps of flour to dissolve.

Meanwhile, coat a nonstick skillet or griddle with cooking spray and heat to medium or medium-low. Give batter a quick stir. Using a small ladle or quarter-cup measure, scoop scant quarter cups of batter onto the cooking surface to make roughly 4-inch pancakes. Cook 2 minutes or until holes form on top of pancakes. Flip and cook on second side 1 minute or until golden brown. Serve with maple syrup, powdered sugar, yogurt or sour cream.

Fettuccine With Squash Ribbons

Use a sharp vegetable peeler to make thin squash ribbons, about a half-inch wide. Peel, then rotate the squash so strips are about the same width. Stop when you hit the rough seeds. The hot fettuccine and sauteed grape tomatoes will heat and slightly soften the squash.

Makes 4 servings

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

12 ounces whole-wheat or regular fettuccine

Cooking spray

3 fully cooked chicken sausages, preferably spinach and feta or sun-dried tomato flavor

1 tablespoon olive oil

3 to 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 pint grape or cherry tomatoes, halved crosswise

3 medium zucchini, trimmed, skin removed and peeled into thin ribbons

3 medium yellow crookneck squash, trimmed, skin removed and peeled into thin ribbons

1/4 cup packed chopped fresh basil

Parmigiano-Reggiano for serving

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Salt generously and add fettuccine. Cook according to package directions. Reserve about 1 cup of pasta-cooking water and drain.

Meanwhile, coat a nonstick skillet with cooking spray and heat to medium. Add chicken sausage and cook, turning often, until golden brown on each side. Transfer to a cutting board. Allow sausage to rest for a few minutes, then thinly slice on the diagonal.

Add olive oil to skillet and turn heat to medium-low. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add tomatoes and cook 3 minutes, or until skin is no longer taut. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Deglaze skillet with about 1/4 cup of reserved pasta-cooking water, loosening any bits from the bottom of the skillet. Remove from heat.

Off the stove, add the zucchini ribbons to the empty pasta pot, followed by the tomato mixture, the drained pasta, the sliced sausage and about three-quarters of the basil. Toss well to combine. If pasta appears dry, add enough of the reserved cooking water to coat the pasta so it looks moist, but not wet.

Divide among 4 bowls and use a vegetable peeler to shave thin pieces of Parmigiano-Reggiano over pasta. Sprinkle with remaining basil and serve immediately.

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

8)

7) Upcoming Events

August 2nd, 6:30 to 9:30pm: Festive Garden Gathering, hosted by the Sustainable Food Center at El Jardin Alegre, 1801 East 2nd St. between Chalmers & Chicon. A celebration of community gardening in Austin and an event to mark a change in leadership for SFC's Grow Local program. Please bring veggies to grill or a dish to share or non-alcoholic beverages.

August 5th, 6:30pm: [Community Supported Agriculture Panel Discussion](#), hosted by Slow Food at Habitat Suites in Austin. Follow the link to RSVP.

August 18-19: [Farm and Food Leaders Training Conference](#), Austin Texas. Be part of an exciting gathering of non-profit leaders, farmers and ranchers, farmers market organizers, local foods activists, and more! The first day will feature top speakers on issues critical to independent agriculture, including:

- the National Animal Identification System
- genetically modified foods
- farm-to-school programs

- water rights and management
- the Farm Bill
- local food systems and farmers markets

The second day will be the training ground for what each and every person can do about these issues! Come early for a networking breakfast on additional topics, such as raw milk, mineral rights, and government organics programs. Then learn what 501(c)(3) organizations can and cannot do, how to create a network of local contacts, practical information on how each of us can be a citizen lobbyist, and laying the groundwork for taking action in 2009!

8) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter

Forwarded from a friend? Sign up for your own copy [here](#).
To unsubscribe, click [here](#).

9) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

Johnson's Backyard Garden

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Self-Serve Farmstand Hours: Saturdays, 9am – 1pm

e-mail: farm@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

website: www.johnsonsbackyardgarden.com



Parting Shot: Interns Chris and Will measure out the spacing for the new irrigation risers in the back field, our new 7.5 acre canvass!