



Arugula will be ready to harvest after the break - the first of the fall crops!

Johnson's Backyard Garden, August 12<sup>th</sup>

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We'd love your input on the newsletter, please send suggestions, recipes, news items, etc to [carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com](mailto:carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com)

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

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### 1) In Your Box This Week

Zucchini  
Zephyr Squash  
Patty Pan Squash

Yellow Straightneck Squash

Eggplant

Okra

Sweet Peppers

Hot Peppers

Cucumber

Onions

Garlic

Carnival Acorn Squash

Melons - get excited, it will be a double melon day!

Wednesday only! No boxes Saturday Aug 16<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday Aug 20<sup>th</sup>.

Remember, this list is subject to change depending on availability and quality of crops on harvest day. Check the homepage of our [website](#) for the most accurate packing list.

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2) Farm News

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The show Friday Night Lights filmed an episode on the farm on Monday!

- We have several new varieties of summer squash that will start showing up in your boxes: sebring golden zucchini, patty green tint (light green in color) and flying saucer (dark green) patty pan squash. The patty pans are our favorite, tasty, tender and so easy to harvest - we're excited to have so many different kinds now!
- The irrigation installation to the back field continues, the trench is dug and the pipes are all connected.
- We're working on finishing up the greenhouse, ordering the last of the supplies needed to bring it up to full production capacity.
- We're getting excited for our break - Brenton is headed to Alabama this week, Carolyn is already in North Carolina (so this is the 'royal we' you are reading, Carolyn did no squash harvesting today - save for that in my mother's garden - only newsletter writing from afar!) with her family and Natalie will also be headed to visit family this week on the East coast and beyond. Interns Jeff, Will and Chris will be holding down the fort, keeping the crops irrigated and taking a few things to the Wednesday and Saturday Austin Farmer's Market.



### 3) Zukes and Okra

*Elaine DiRico*

Still in an okra frame of mind. A friend, who professed to not like okra ("I wouldn't eat anything that looked like it needed a shave and a handkerchief...") LOVED this recipe: Trim the stem end off of small young okra pods, and toss in a bowl with a little olive oil, salt, powdered chipotle and ground cumin. Roast at 450° for 10-15 minutes, depending on size, until crispy. Let cool on a rack for a few minutes before eating. I especially like these dipped into a yogurt based dressing like a raita.

#### **Cucumber Raita**

1 cucumber  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 1/2 cups yogurt\*  
large handful chopped mint  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
a few drops of Tabasco to taste

Peel the cucumber, and using a soup spoon, scrape out the seeds. Chop coarsely or grate, then place in a colander and sprinkle with the salt. Let drain for 30 minutes, then rinse very thoroughly and pat dry. Add to the remaining ingredients, stir, and serve. Keeps well for two or three days, covered and refrigerated.

\*I have come to love the Greek style yogurt, Fage in particular. It is denser and moiré flavorful than traditional American yogurts.

Using this recipe, add a little olive oil and two or three minced garlic cloves, and you have tzatziki.

Another lovely cucumber salad, and very easy:

#### **Cucumber Salad**

1 cucumber, seeded and chopped  
1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped  
salt and pepper  
1/2 teaspoon honey  
1/4 cup rice wine vinegar  
1/4 cup salted, roasted peanuts, chopped

Put the cucumber and pepper in a bowl. In a measuring cup, dissolve the honey in the rice wine vinegar, and add a pinch of salt plus a few grinds of black pepper (or substitute red pepper flakes for more kick...). Dress the vegetables and top with the peanuts. Very nice with broiled fish or Asian styled dishes.

As zucchini season continues, I have been keeping a bowl of roasted zucchini in the refrigerator. Good added to salads instead of croutons, or as a side dish with a sprinkle of feta or Parmesan cheese and some chopped basil. Just slice the smaller zukes, or with the larger ones, cut them lengthwise in quarters and then slice about 1/2" thick. Toss with a bit of oil, salt and pepper, and oregano if you like, spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and roast at 400° for 20 minutes, until well browned. To re crisp, just reheat for a minute or so in a hot oven.

Another great way to sneak zucchini into a meal that also looks pretty is to shred the squash with a vegetable

peeler into beautiful strips, dunk them in boiling, salted water for about a minute to soften, then into an ice bath to stop the cooking. Toss with any pasta sauce, let them replace lasagna noodles, or use half and half with papperadelle pasta with any sauce. My favorite would be a nice bowl of the blanched zucchini tossed with basil pesto!

*Elaine DiRico is a long-time CSA member and freelance food critic. Email her with questions and recipe requests at [Elaine@dirico.com](mailto:Elaine@dirico.com)*

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#### 4) 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, Onions and Spaghetti 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.
- **Melons** should be stored uncut in a cool dark place. Keep cut melons in the refrigerator.

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

##### Long-term Storage

Don't want to eat the last of this summer's zucchini? Well you don't have to - you could instead store it for later in the winter when you'll actually appreciate it! [The National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) is your resource for how to can, freeze, dry, cure, pickle, and yes ferment, just about any fresh fruit or vegetable. Thanks to Debora Hanson for forwarding this link!

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#### 5) Recipes

## Summer Squash Risotto

*From DigginFood , a great blog by Seattle writer Willi Galloway about “cooking food fresh from the garden.”*

Risotto tastes best hot off the stove, but it cools down quickly. I get around this issue by serving it in bowls that have been warmed in the oven for a few minutes. This helps keep the risotto warm throughout the meal. In summer, I like to stuff the leftover risotto into bell peppers and bake them for dinner the next day. In the fall and winter, I stuff chard leaves with risotto, which Mark Bittman happens to discuss in today's (Aug 6, 2008) Dining & Wine section in the New York Times.

What you'll need:

4 6-inch long summer squash (a mix of yellow and green squash looks very pretty)

1 medium yellow onion, minced

4 tablespoons of butter

2 cups Arborio rice

¼ cup dry white wine

4 cups of water

4 cups of vegetable broth

2 large garlic cloves, slivered

¼ cup of basil leaves lightly packed

½ tsp lemon zest

½ cup finely grated Parmesan, plus more for serving

Salt and pepper

Instructions:

1. In a heavy bottomed pan (I use an enameled Dutch oven), melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. When the butter foams, add in the onions, give them a good stir, and cook until they are very soft and translucent. In a medium saucepan, combine the water and the vegetable broth and bring to a gentle boil, then lower the heat so the broth mixture stays at a low simmer.

2. Meanwhile, wash the zucchinis and trim off their stem and flower ends. Cut the zucchinis in half lengthwise and then slice each half into thin half moons (about ½ inch thick). You should end up with about 2 cups of sliced zucchini. To slice the basil into ribbons, stack 3 or 4 similar sized leaves on top of each other. Roll the leaves up into a tube shape and then slice the tube into thin pieces.

3. Add the rice to the softened onions and stir to coat the grains with butter. Cook, stirring constantly, until a white oval is visible at the center of each grain. Pour in the white wine and stir until it is completely absorbed.

4. Then, begin adding one cup of the broth to the rice at a time. After each addition of broth give the rice a good stir to keep it from sticking and wait until all the liquid is absorbed by the grains before pouring in the next cup.

5. Add the zucchini and garlic to the rice after the 6th cup of broth has been added to the risotto and absorbed.

6. Then, continue adding the broth to the risotto ½ cup at a time until the rice is cooked and the zucchini is just barely tender. In her excellent cookbook *The Splendid Table*, Lynne Rosetto Kasper offers this advice for determining when risotto is perfectly cooked: “A good risotto is tender, but still a little firm to the bite—never

mushy. Some prefer risotto creamier than other, but it is never soupy or dry.&#xu201D;

7. Once your risotto reaches your preferred texture and consistency, remove it from the heat. Stir in the lemon zest, Parmesan cheese, 2 remaining tablespoons of butter, and the basil. Adjust the seasonings to taste with salt and pepper. Let the risotto set aside for a few minutes. If you want the zucchini to soften up just a bit more, cover the pan. Serve the risotto in warmed bowls and pass extra cheese at the table.

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### **Simple Stir Fried Okra**

*From Steffanie Frazier*

- 1 medium sweet onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. mustard seeds (you can substitute ½ tsp. dry mustard)
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. dried crushed red pepper
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. fresh okra
- ¾ tsp. salt

Saut  first 4 ingredients in hot oil in large skillet over medium-high heat 5 minutes or until onion is tender.

Add okra; saut  15 minutes or until okra is lightly browned. Stir in salt.

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### 6) Upcoming Events

**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!

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8) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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