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>This week's Photos were taken by Carrie Kenny.

>Please send newsletter feedback, suggestions and contributions to carolyn@johnsonsbaycardgarden.com

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

1) In Your Box this Week

- Zucchini
- Patty Pan Squash
- Zephyr Squash
- Yellow Straight Neck Squash

Sweet Peppers
Hot Peppers
Eggplant
Basil
Okra
Melon
Pink Eye Peas
Carnival Acorn Squash

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](#).

2) Farm News

- We've been doing a lot of work in the field this week, planting and preparing beds. Now that we have all of our acreage available for planting, we are also getting ready to plant a winter cover crop on the first third of the field. All of this gives us hope that fall really is coming, and that the weather really will soon cool off!





- You may recall from earlier newsletters that we were considering changing to a bulk distribution for our CSA. After receiving feedback, talking to other farms that use this method, and thinking it all through we've decided not to go to bulk distribution and to stick with the box method that we use now. We are planning to change to indoor, air conditioned pickup sites however. We're in conversation with a number of churches and community centers about locating pickup sites in their facilities. If you have suggestions for a suitable site, particularly in South Austin, please let us know!
- We've started several thousand mint cuttings; these will be planted alongside the greenhouse, comprising what we are calling our 'Mojito Patch.'
- Today we're drilling test wells in preparation for installing a second well on the farm! Brenton has selected a couple of locations around the farm, places that are located near electric hookups where there would likely be a good source of water, which the drillers will test to see if there is in fact any water present there.



3) New - Manage Your Subscription on our Website!



We've added a new area to our website that allows you as a CSA member to manage your subscription. [Here](#) you can check your pickup schedule, change pickup dates, and change e-mail settings (to receive newsletters and pickup reminders). Subscription renewals will also be done using this part of the site now.

To access this system, look for the "Members" link on the left side of any page under the "Join" plank. First-time users will need to request a new password. Simply type in your e-mail address and click "Send a new password". Check your e-mail for the new password and use it to login. The first page you see will allow you to change your contact information, e-mail settings, and password.

Click on the "My Pickups" link at the top of the panel to view your pickup schedule. Your pickups are displayed as a list and a calendar. Click on either one to change a particular pickup date or location. The other links at the top of the panel can be used to renew your subscription or find information about our different pickup locations such as directions and maps.

Thanks to Aaron Rice our programming whiz for developing this fantastic website feature!

4) Encouraging Government Support of Sustainable Agriculture

Farms big and small are affected by multiple levels of government regulation. One of our CSA members, Virginia Snodgrass, emailed us recently with a call to contact representatives encouraging them to support local and sustainable agriculture in the next legislative session. This year's Federal Farm Bill, while mostly more of the same subsidies for industrial agriculture, did have several small gains for small-scale sustainable agriculture. According to the [Carolina Farm Stewardship Association](#), these include:

- \$22 million in guaranteed funding for the Organic Certification Cost Share program, a fourfold increase over the 2002 Farm Bill, and an increase in the payment limitation to \$750.
- A requirement that USDA improve data collection on organic farming, including a complete review of crop insurance rules that currently force organic farmers to pay higher premiums for lower coverage than conventional farmers.
- Expanded eligibility of organic farms for funding under federal soil conservation programs (EQIP, CSP).
- \$78 million in guaranteed funding for organic farming research.
- A new grant program, the New Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, to promote non-GMO plant and animal breeding research.
- \$78 million for the Beginning Farmers and Rancher Development Program.
- Support for local food systems, including allowing a "geographic preference" through federal procurement programs for locally grown foods, funding for new local and regional food supply networks, and \$33 million for the Farmers Market Promotion Program.

With this momentum, we are hopeful for more advances next year. For more info and background on the Farm Bill, the [American Farmland Trust](#) is an excellent source.

From Virginia:

One of the topics we touched on at the Slow Food session this past Tuesday was the issue of contacting our local representatives to let them know we want more support for local agriculture, here in Austin and all over the US. I sat down and wrote a letter, which I'm attaching [see below], for people to use or change/improve and use so that we can maybe get some momentum not just here in Austin for in the lead-up to this year's legislative session. Please feel free to send this out to anyone, to change it and then send it, etc.

Dear ____,

I am writing you as a local constituent in (location/place/state) and as a concerned consumer of local foods. For the past two years, my husband and I have been members of a local family farm that runs a community-supported farm, or CSA. Our participation in the CSA has really changed the quality of our lives here in Austin, not least because we know exactly where our food is grown, and who grows it. For example, we continued to munch on tomatoes and jalapeño peppers while everyone else around the country had to suffer through tomato and pepper season without. We know and trust our food source. Austin is unique because it is home to several such CSAs. The website localharvest.org lists 8, but there are more than that. In addition, there are a number of small family farms in the metropolitan area that would like to bring more than veggies to Austinites using the CSA model: meat, poultry, milk, and cheese. Unfortunately, our agricultural system puts these folks at a disadvantage, which ultimately puts us, the consumers, at a disadvantage. These farmers face high bureaucratic hurdles (they are higher for small farmers specifically because of their size) and must compete with big farmers that receive generous subsidies from the federal and state governments.

It is my hope that through our democratic system, we can bring about change in this skewed system. Given issues of food security and health problems, particularly among children, it is my firm belief that the scales are tipped the wrong way. Instead of privileging large, anonymous farms, the government should find ways to encourage a return to small farms and local eating. The health benefits would be immense, as people would have more access to fresh vegetables (rather than ones that traveled up to 1,500 miles to reach supermarkets), and the economic benefits also would be tremendous as localized economy generates more jobs.

As my representative, I hope you will consider the benefits that promoting local agriculture would bring to our community. I hope that you will go to the legislature this Spring and ask for changes.

Thank you for your attention,

5) Melons and the Last of the Summer Heat

Elaine DiRico

The radio recently said that the low might drop to the 60's! Ok, maybe 69 degrees, but I'll take it!

Surviving summer in Austin always feels like an Olympic event to me. I take the heat personally, as though I am being stalked, and whenever I open the door, there is HEAT, trying to kill me. Of course it isn't over yet, but somehow the evening breeze isn't quite as searing, and if I let the dogs out early enough, coffee on the back porch is a day starting delight.

And it isn't over, not by a long shot. I am expecting another couple of months of swimming weather, maybe more if I am courageous. And melons are still ripening, along with a few tomatoes not burned out by the 100° plus days last month. Zucchini and eggplant are grudgingly moving over for some fall plantings. As delicious as the first tomato is in June, getting lettuce and greens, fresh and delicate, is a close second. But back to the melons- I have wrapped them in prosciutto all summer for an appetizer, kept them sliced and cold for impromptu salads, and even a couple of cold soups. I do a lot of prep when I bring my food home, letting me have dinner on the table in a just a few minutes. But this is a basic recipe that works with any fruit, and there is nothing more refreshing in these last few blastingly hot days of summer:

Liquado for one

1/4- 1/2 cup pureed fruit *

1 cup water or milk

2-4 Tablespoons honey, to taste

double handful of ice

Blend for 10-15 seconds, no more, then strain into a tall glass and enjoy.

Rum is a nice thing in this for a refreshing drink- about one ounce is right. A friend calls this drink an "Offset" on the theory that the good things in the liquado 'offsets' the bad things in the rum....

*Cantaloupe comes to mind, or watermelon, with a few mint leaves tossed in as well. Any berries are wonderful, and if you go the water route rather than the milk way, consider adding a banana for creaminess. I have also added a spoonful of coconut milk (get the canned low fat, but avoid the Coco Rico used for Pina Coladas- it is mostly that Terrible High Fructose Corn Syrup) with a banana and maybe mango or pineapple. Lime juice is nice as well, if the fruit is very ripe and overly sweet, and here we are back to the daiquiri discussion again. This recipe also freezes beautifully for homemade Popsicles.

Another wonderful dessert using honeydew or cantaloupe is a sort of sorbet.

Thai Ice with Melon

1 melon, peeled and seeded

1 (13-14 oz.) can low fat unsweetened coconut milk (shake can well before opening)

1/4 cup honey

juice of a lime

Garnish: slivered mint leaves, and/ or lime zest

Combine all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor and puree. Chill well in the refrigerator, then freeze in an ice cream freezer according to directions.

Serves 4

Next week: Kitchen Soup

Elaine DiRico is a long-time CSA member and food writer in Austin. Email her with questions and recipe requests at Elaine@dirico.com

6) 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** 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.
- **Southern Peas** can be stored in the freezer, or thawed in the fridge for immediate use.

Counter

- **Basil** keeps best in a perforated bag kept at around 60°F, it will keep for 10 to 14 days. In contrast, refrigerated basil lasts only two or three days. You can also store stems in a vase in your kitchen, close at hand for cooking. As with flower bouquets, change the water in the vase every few days.
- **Eggplant** and **Acorn 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 our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course, feel free to contact us with any questions.

Long-term Storage

"The time will come when winter will ask you what you were doing all summer." - Henry Clay

[The National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) is your guide for how to can, freeze, dry, pickle or ferment just about anything.

7) Recipes

Chilled Oven-Roasted Bell Pepper Soup

From Intern Natalie Wolchover

Serves 6<!--[if !supportLineBreakNewLine]-->

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8 bell peppers

1/3 c. olive oil

1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped

1 jalapeno, seeded and minced

1 T fresh rosemary, chopped

2 c. chicken broth

pinch of sugar

salt and pepper to taste

1/4 c. fresh chives for garnish, chopped

Position oven rack in middle of the oven, roast bell peppers at 400 degrees, turning every 15 min until brown and wrinkled (45-60 min).

Seed, remove skins, and chop into quarters.

Heat oil over med heat, add onion, jalapeno and rosemary and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion starts to brown (8-10 min).

Stir in peppers and their accumulated juices, broth, sugar, 1 1/2 t salt and 1/4 t pepper, and 1 1/2 c. water. Bring to boil over med-high heat, cover, reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 min. Remove from heat, let cool slightly.

Puree in batches, refrigerate until cool and season with salt and pepper.

Optional: once in bowls, drizzle with olive oil and garnish with fresh chives

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### **Moroccan Eggplant with Garbanzo Beans**

*From The World's Healthiest Foods [www.whfoods.org](http://www.whfoods.org)*

Cutting the eggplant and peppers into 1 inch pieces gives the spices a chance to come through in cooking without the vegetables overcooking. This recipe is organized so it can be made quickly. However, when adding the garam masala and turmeric, stir well and give it time to heat up, at least 1 minute, before adding liquid. You will get much more flavor by doing so.

Ingredients:

1 large onion cut in half and sliced thin

5 medium cloves garlic, pressed

1 medium red bell pepper cut in 1 inch squares

1 medium eggplant, cut into 1 inch pieces

pinch of red pepper flakes

2 tsp turmeric

1/2 tsp garam masala

1 15oz can garbanzo beans

1 15oz can lentils, drained

1/2 cup tomato sauce

1 1/4 cups + 1 TBS vegetable broth

1/2 cup raisins

1 TBS chopped fresh cilantro  
salt & black pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat 1 TBS broth in a 10-12 inch skillet. Sauté onion in broth over medium heat for 5 minutes stirring frequently. Add garlic, red bell pepper, eggplant, garam masala, and turmeric. Stir to mix well for a minute, and add broth and tomato sauce. Stir again to mix, cover, and cook over medium low heat for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until peppers and eggplant are tender.
2. Add garbanzo beans, lentils, red chili flakes, and raisins. Simmer for another 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with chopped cilantro.

Serves 4

We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to  
[Carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com](mailto:Carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com)

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8) Subscribe/Unsubscribe To Newsletter

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9) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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