


THE PRODUCE BOX

“When you’ve got nuts, the possibilities are endless”

Lee Swinson

WWW.THEPRODUCEBOX.com	May 11 & 12, 2011	Vol 4: Iss 5	Follow us on 
BOX A	BOX B	BOX C	BOX O
Strawberries	Strawberries	Red Leaf Lettuce	Red Leaf Lettuce
Lesabre Garden Peas	Baby Bok Choy	Strawberries	Cucumbers
Tomatoes (1.5 shares)	Romaine Lettuce	Cucumbers	Cone Cabbage (2 lb approx)
Red Russian Kale	Tomatoes (1 share)	Rosemary or Oregano	Tomatoes (1.5 shares)
Sweet Potatoes	Sweet Potatoes	2-3 additional items,	Fresh Cut Oregano
Cucumbers	Red Leaf Lettuce	depending on harvest	Red Swiss Chard
	Cucumbers		English Peas

Questions I’ve been asked lately.....

Is the produce REALLY fresh??.....Sometimes things go bad quickly... The produce that comes to you in the morning was picked the day before and packed that previous afternoon at the HUB here in Raleigh....near the intersection of Atlantic and Whitaker Mill Rd, by the way. None of the veggies or fruit are waxed or preserved, and most is picked at the peak of ripeness, which is why they taste so good and the fruit is so sweet...it’s full of natural sugar. But picking at the peak means everything is a bit more susceptible to mold spores that splash up out of the dirt when it rains (berries) and small blemishes that grow into messes (tomatoes) Remember that the same thing that makes your produce so yummy, is what can degrade it: Mother Nature.

How does the price of the box compare to the Farmer’s Market? To the grocery store? Good question. For years I’ve said we can’t really “compete” with the grocery stores, because they buy from such big farm companies and can negotiate the price down so low. We’re working with lots of small farms, so we don’t buy a HUGE amount from anyone, really, and so can’t negotiate a lot. Plus, we want to pay farmers a price they can live on, not the lowest price they can give us. However, a Stephanie S., a Raleigh member, priced us against LOWES FOODS a couple of weeks ago, and bought what we delivered for \$20.00. Not bad considering we include a .44 sales tax in the price (we pay that for you to the state) and the cost of delivery.

As for the Farmer’s Market, I try to pop by early in the AM about every two weeks or so. Recently, our Box A worked out to be about \$19.75 at the market. When you add .44 for tax, plus the cost of delivery, you’re paying just a bit more for the delivery. . Hopefully you find that the delivery to your door saves you time and money (gas). Of course, if you know you’re going to the market for a special day or trip (blueberry day, etc), then SKIP US for sure, and pay the farmers directly. Our program is for when you CAN’T get to the market.

BIG NEWS!!! We are making a big change at the HUB this week! We’ve rented a HUMONGOUS refrigerated trailer and we’ll be cooling the boxes down all night until we deliver them in the AM starting with this week. This should help reduce the time the produce is at outside temperatures and reduce the degrading that happens. Also, we encourage you to leave a cooler out (WITH ICE PACKS) on days you know it will be particularly hot. We will transfer the more fragile items there.

The next few years will be interesting for all of us. But rest assured that our farm-partners are dedicated to providing the freshest, safest local produce they can...and I can vouch for them wholeheartedly. They’ve done a great job for all of us these past four seasons and I’m excited about what’s to come!!

Courtney Tellefsen, Founder

Julian Barham who turned wastes into gold... or yummy tomatoes

By Yuri Yamamoto, *Raleigh Member*

Two weeks ago, I was overjoyed to see a little sticker on tomatoes in the Box that read "Barham's Best." I knew exactly where these tomatoes came from. In fact, I recommended Courtney to contact Julian Barham last year.

I first heard about Julian Barham, a hog farmer in Zebulon, in late 1990s. I just joined a team of scientists at NC State University who were trying to find ways to recycle hog waste. Julian had been working with the expert team to try various ideas at a commercial scale when most other hog farmers were reluctant to change their old ways of using lagoons and spraying the nutrient-rich water into hayfields.

Open-air hog waste lagoons have been considered a major environmental threat. Large amounts of nutrient-rich waters are occasionally released from ruptured lagoons and cause harmful algal bloom. Ammonia emitted from lagoons travels far and eventually pollutes waterways. Methane, a greenhouse gas, is also emitted from these lagoons. Nearby residents are concerned about potential health impacts of air-borne chemicals and pathogens from lagoons.

Julian's farm has a lagoon completely covered by a sturdy plastic to capture methane to produce electricity. The cover also cuts odor down.

Julian also has greenhouses full of tomato plants with buzzing bees for pollination. Nutrients in the lagoon water fertilize the plants to produce yummy tomatoes! To make sure that tomatoes do not carry any pathogens, he and an expert developed a disinfection system.

The system makes sense when you see it at his farm. However, lots of experts had to work together with Julian to make the system work. Very few farmers were willing to try a new system. Perhaps because of his engineering background, Julian has been a pioneer in turning wastes into great resources. I am glad that now the Produce Box customers can enjoy his yummy tomatoes!

You can read more about Julian and his family farm at: www.barhamstomatoes.com/aboutbarhams.asp



Bibb Lettuce is Nowhere to be Found!! Huh???

So...Lonnie at Green Haven Farms told us Friday morning that we'd have 1200 heads of lettuce this week, then he sold them that afternoon, darn it. So he gets a frowny face in crayon next to his name. We'll probably try to work with him again, but not anytime soon. Red Leaf is substituted this week for all BIBB lettuce.

THE PRODUCE BOX

chooses to support local businesses

GREAT HARVEST BREAD COMPANY

Raleigh & Cary, NC

FLOURY APRON, LLC

Wake Forest, NC

GOLDEN GROVE CANDY CO

Warsaw, NC

WANTED

YOUR STORIES AND PHOTOS!

Please send your contributions to:

Laurie Rosenfeld, Newsletter Editor

laurie@theproducebox.com

Please write 'newsletter' in the subject line.

Thank you!

SPECIALTY ITEMS

Fadia House's Sweet & Tart Tomato Sauce is great on hamburgers, hot dogs, meat-loaf, with chicken or fish and vegetable dishes too. It is also delicious as a dip, salad dressing and a spread on bread. Fadia lived in India and loved the flavorful sauces, but they were a bit too spicy for her. After a little experimenting and tweaking, Sweet & Tart Tomato Sauce was born! www.flouryapron.com

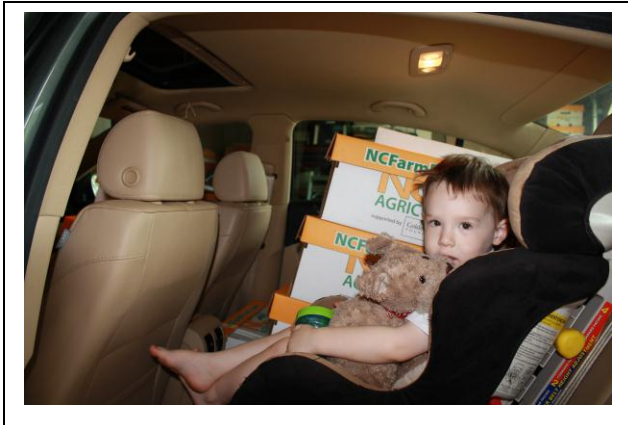
Great Harvest Bread Company's Cinnamon Chip Bread is a great breakfast bread made with whole grain wheat flour and bits of cinnamon chips. Fabulous for French toast, or try it as an after school or mid-day snack, with fresh peanut butter. www.greatharvest.com

Carolina Crisp Peanut Bars are made by the Swinson family, using Carolina/Virginia Style peanuts. The peanuts are double roasted to release their natural flavor. This gives our peanut bar a rich, unique flavor not found in other brands. www.goldengrove.com



I was a happy customer of The Produce Box last year and am excited to be a Neighborhood Coordinator for the Apex area this season. Every Wednesday morning I load the car with produce, snacks and a curious toddler who taps the Boxes while entertaining me with cheerful renditions of "You Are My Sunshine" while we make our deliveries. Grady sends off every Box with "Bye bye, Box!" until we are down to the last one and we are able to check out all the new varieties for ourselves. So far his favorites are the strawberries and juicy tomatoes.

Candice Brown, Apex Neighborhood Coordinator



DOING GOOD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

If you've ever had a late skip, then you already know we support the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle by donating Boxes.

We are proud to say that over the past few weeks we've donated more than 27 boxes to those families.

THANK YOU!!

PLUS....we donate any produce left at the end of the week after the boxes are packed. That ended up being **over 800 lbs of additional produce for IFS.**

WOO HOO!!!

"I received lots of collard greens in my box and wasn't exactly sure what to do with them so I made soup! I used it just like spinach and made one with lentils and the other with white beans and tomatoes....delicious. Just wanted to share in case anyone was looking for ways to use the greens. Trying new things is one of my favorite things about the produce box."

Jenny Andreev, Cary Member

I just wanted to give kudos to your company. I got my first delivery today and I have to say that the produce I received looks great. It is obviously very fresh. The strawberries are super sweet and juicy. I am loving this!! The best part is the delivery. I have looked forward to coming home all day just to see the quality of veggies I would get. Thank you for this service.

Amy Davis, Raleigh Member

Loved my Box....and loved the Kale chips. Easy and yummy... I'm not a huge Facebook person,,,but i did change my status to "love homemade kale chips, love the produce book, and love supporting the local farmers...."

Great Job,
Sarah Schroeder, Raleigh Member

STRAWBERRY PICKING ANYONE????

We've had a conversation with one of our partners, Jimmy Lee, and due to a recent heart attack, he's not able to really get out and pick his ACRE of strawberries like he needs to. He's not really selling them anywhere either. So I thought: "what a fun way to get members together, buy some delicious berries, give the kids a chance to learn about where their food comes from, and help Jimmy."

His fields are off the Pea Ridge/Jordan Lake exit off US 1 South of Cary/Apex. It takes about thirty minutes to get there from North Hills. So...we invited our Cary members out there last weekend and we had a blast. This coming Saturday, we're doing it again for THE WHOLE MEMBERSHIP. Or at least until we hit 100 people. ☺ Plan to come for the late morning, bring a blanket and a picnic lunch and pick until you're pink all over. (ha ha).

I'll send out a registration form and directions later today by email. Once we fill up, we'll close it out. Be on the lookout for more pickings as the season goes along: blueberries, maybe a pea picking, pepper pickings, etc. FUN!!

Storage & Usage *Visit www.theproducebox.com for more info!*

Garden Peas- There are two common varieties of peas: green garden peas that need shelling and edible-pod peas that are eaten whole. Green garden peas are legumes just like dried peas, except they are eaten at the immature stage. Snow peas, sugar snap peas Chinese pea pods and many others fall into edible-pod category. They are low fiber pods with small wrinkled peas inside. The entire pod is eaten, cooked or raw. Fresh peas keep for 2 to 3 days in the refrigerator. The sugar in them quickly begins to turn to starch even while under refrigeration.. Store unwashed peas in perforated plastic bags for a few days. The sooner they are eaten the better.

Rosemary & Oregano- Store fresh herbs in a plastic bag or in a glass of water in the refrigerator. **To dry** your own, hang fresh sprigs in a warm, dry place. Be sure to strip off the leaves before storing. Store in an airtight container, in a cool, dry place, away from light, to preserve freshness and flavor. (Oregano's flavor is strongest when dried; use double the amount if using fresh.) **Freeze** herbs whole or chopped, packing into freezer safe bags or airtight containers. Chopped herbs that are to be used in soups or stews can be spooned into an ice cube tray, covered with water, and frozen. When you are ready to use the herbs, just remove what you need from the tray and add to the pot.

Romaine, Bibb, Kale- Wrap in paper towels and storing open plastic bag in crisper. Avoid storing lettuce with apples, pears or bananas. These fruits release ethylene gas, a natural ripening agent that will cause the lettuce to develop brown spots and decay quickly.

Cabbage- Green cabbage is sometimes called Dutch White. The outer leaves are dark green and the inner leaves are smooth and pale to medium green. If you plan to eat the cabbage raw, use within a few days. Cabbage that you plan to cook can be stored in the refrigerator for about two weeks. Or shred or chop, wash and drain well, then freeze in ziplock bags. **Cooking:** the notorious odor problem is a result of over cooking. Cabbage contains isothiocyanates that break down into smelly sulfur compounds during cooking. The reaction is even stronger in aluminum pans. The longer the cabbage is cooked the more smelly the compounds become. The solution; a brief cooking time. Cook just until tender and use stainless steel pots and pans.

Swiss Chard- Chard is extremely perishable, so keep refrigerator storage time to a minimum. Store unwashed leaves in plastic bags in the crisper for 2 to 3 days. The stalks can be stored longer if separated from the leaves. Young tender chard leaves can be eaten raw adding a beet-like flavor to salads and sandwiches. Chard can be used in place of spinach in any recipe, although chard will need to be cooked a bit longer. When cooking older chard, the stems require longer cooking time than the leaves.

Bok Choy (Pak Choy) - Wrapped in paper towels and stored in the vegetable crisper section of the refrigerator, bok choy should keep for up to a week. Boiling, steaming, stir-frying and even deep-frying are all possibilities. Separate the leaves from the stalks, as the thick stalks have a longer cooking time.