

# THE PRODUCE BOX

“I think we should all try to live as responsibly as possible, because it’s the right thing to do and because it’s what’s most likely to give our lives purpose” Joan Dye Gussow, local food advocate

<b>Nov 16 &amp; 17, 2011</b>		<b>Find us on facebook!</b> 		<b>Volume 4: Issue 32</b>	
<b>BOX A \$22</b>		<b>BOX B \$22</b>		<b>BOX C \$22</b>	
Organic Green Beans		Field Tomatoes		<b>BACK IN THE SPRING!</b>	
Romaine Lettuce		Small spring onion bundle			
Fresh cut fall broccoli		Green Cabbage			
Spinach		Pepper Mix			
Butternut Squash		Winter Squash			
Granny Smith Apples		Fall Broccoli			
Sweet Potatoes		Kale			
		Local Scuppernon Cider			
				Great Harvest Honey Whole Wheat Bread	
				Fresh cut fall broccoli	
				Green Cabbage	
				Spinach	
				Apples (mix)	



## NEW FARMER GIFT FUND AND MEMBER BOARD BEGINS IN JANUARY, I hope!

Did you know that most farmers go into debt each year in January? Paying up front for seed, irrigation tubing, and new farm equipment is unbelievably expensive. We want to help! And so beginning in 2012, I'd like to raise the enrollment fee for all members to \$18.00. What will we do with the additional \$3.00? We're creating a FARM FUND to help offset the startup costs for some of our farm partners. Our MEMBER BOARD- with full disclosure to you, of course- will decide how to distribute the funds, and checks will be cut the first week of February, for a minimum of \$3000.00 each. I REALLY think this is another great way for us to not only support our neighbors, but also help mitigate at least some the risk they take every year for us...when really, WE take no risk at all and don't even have to commit to buying anything. I'll be including a question about this in the end -of-season survey, but want to give you a heads-up now. Let me know your thoughts! (Co urtney@theproducebox.com)

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN THE CAROLINAS

This weekend, Kevin and I had the pleasure of attending the NC Sustainable Agriculture Conference in RTP. This gathering of over 900 (!) farmers and local food advocates was amazing. Young and old(er), beginners and pros, newbies and long-time advocates all met for three days to learn from each other and celebrate the phenomenal strides we've taken to create local food systems in the Carolinas. Seminar topics included growing techniques, building high-tunnel greenhouses for longer seasons, and using solar panels to power irrigation systems. Farm tours and Panel discussions about how to get local food to our school cafeterias rounded out the weekend and local food feasts kept us energized.

We had the chance to meet several new mid-size farmers as well as MANY new growers who are just starting out and SO excited to hear that there are buyers ready to work with them. Thanks to you, of course. We were glad to be part of the conversation and plan to continue these talks during the off-season. We'll keep you posted!

## FARM PLANNING BEGINS IN A FEW WEEKS...and you thought we took the next four months off!

Once we all take a much-needed holiday break, we'll begin thinking about next season. Farmers begin receiving seed catalogs in the mail in December, and buy seeds in January usually, so that is the time that we chat about what they want to grow, what YOU want them to grow, how much to grow, and when it will be ready. Kevin will be visiting as many farms as possible and we'll host a farmer dinner to finalize our plans. You will hear from us then, so you will know what we know, and we may ask for input as well...keep an eye out!

# THE PRODUCE BOX

Recently, one of our Member Corporations, Quintiles, hosted a cooking contest for employees. **THE PRODUCE BOX** Member, **Kim Braschwitz**, won FIRST PLACE for the healthiest recipe, for her Butternut Squash Soup, made with produce from- yes, you guessed it! – **THE PRODUCE BOX!** Thanks, Kim! All of us want to wish Kim a very “tasteful” CONGRATULATIONS for her winning idea. Kim’s recipe is featured in this week’s recipe insert.

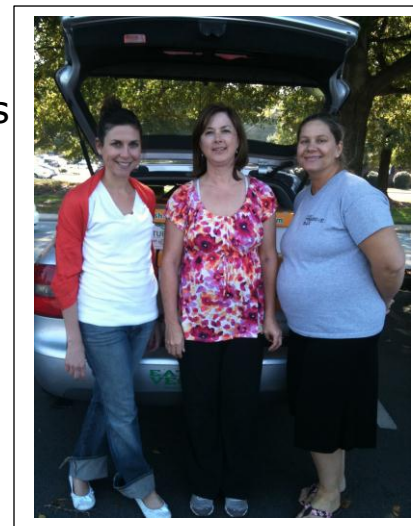


## HEY THERE, QUEEN CITY!

We would like to tell you about some very special ladies who live right around the corner!

We are proud to introduce... **Andrea Whitmore**, **Mary St. John**, and **Kelly Buda**, your South Charlotte Neighborhood Coordinators!

These hard working ladies are the reason that you get your **PRODUCE BOXES** on your front porch every week. “Weather” it’s pouring rain, or a hot 100 degree summer day, they are out in your neighborhoods making sure your family gets to eat fresh, local produce.



For this article, we asked them what they would like to share with Members. The answer was quick and simple: PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT **THE PRODUCE BOX!**



The **Granny Smith apple** gets its name from its founder, Mrs. Mary Ann “Granny” Smith. Granny Smith apples are crisp, juicy and tart which makes them perfect for either baking in pies, stewed in sauces, or eating out-of-hand. They're also great in salads, because once cut, they keep their color longer than other apples. They're the primary ingredient for a Granny Smith Apple pie. Keep apples as cold as possible in the refrigerator. Apples do not freeze until the temperature drops to 28.5°F.

- The history of apple consumption dates from Stone Age cultivation in areas we now know as Austria and Switzerland.
- In ancient Greece, tossing an apple to a girl was a traditional proposal of marriage; catching it was acceptance.

*Find a recipe for Granny Smith Apple Pie in this week’s recipe insert!*

# THE PRODUCE BOX

Our eastern North Carolina farms have the fertile soil leafy greens like spinach just LOVE to grow in- loose and sandy- great for allowing roots to go deep and wide, and leaves to grow big and full. But what about the grit??? Here's how to make sure only the delicious spinach leaves arrive at your dinner table.

## TRIPLE WASHING SPINACH



Fill your kitchen sink with water. Take the whole head of spinach leaves in one hand. In a firm, all at once motion, twist off the stems with the other hand. Dump leaves into the sink and, while the spinach is cleaning itself, pluck off the remaining stems. The spinach leaves will float on top of the water. Any dirt, grit or sand will sink to the bottom. Skim the spinach leaves off the water into a colander and let the dirty water out of the sink. Repeat the process two more times.

## A Special Treat for You

**KEVIN O'CONNELL**, our Crop Coordinator, works hard with our farm partners every week, to ensure the best variety and the peak of the harvest, go into each of our **PRODUCE BOXES**.

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, Kevin has taken extra special care this week to create a **Thanksgiving Box A**. The yummy butternut squash, Granny Smith apples and sweet potatoes should hold well, if you're hoping to include and share them, as part of your Thanksgiving meal.

*Wishing you* a bountiful, produce-and-fruitful Thanksgiving, filled with family, friends and delicious local food.



*From all of us at* **THE PRODUCE BOX**

# *Happy Thanksgiving!*



## *Dear Members-*

*Thanks for a great season! **THE PRODUCE BOX** newsletter has been chock-full of wonderful contributions from you, our Members. Your funny, sweet and fabulous photos, stories and recipes gave our newsletter warmth and heart. Thanks for all your fantastic contributions. I can hardly wait for what you will share next season.*

*Laurie Rosenfeld, Newsletter Editor*

## QUICK TIPS

A jar lid or a couple of marbles in the bottom half of a double-boiler will rattle when the water gets low and warn you to add more before the pan scorches or burns.

Ice cubes will **eliminate the fat** from soup and stew. Just drop a few into the pot and stir; the fat will cling to the cubes; discard the cubes before they melt. Or, wrap ice cubes in paper towel or cheesecloth and skim over the top.

## STORAGE & USAGE

**Green Beans-** Proper moisture is important to avoid wilting and drying out, plastic bag or plastic container usually does the job. For the same reason do not wash them before refrigerating, wash green beans just before using.

**Green Onions-** Store Green Onions in plastic bags in the crisper section of the refrigerator and they will last five to seven days. **Clever Tip:** When freezing chopped green onions, put them into an old water bottle that you've washed, and use a permanent marker to label the bottle cap with the contents. Freeze. To use, simply remove the cap, shake out just as much as you need, replace the cap and return to the freezer. The clear bottle allows you to quickly see what's inside, and shaking things out of a bottle is faster than spooning them out of a freezer container.

**Spinach-** Wrap greens in dry paper towels, place inside an open plastic bag and place in the crisper drawer. Change towels if they become wet (damp is ok). Triple wash just before using, to remove grit (see page 3 for instructions).

**Broccoli-** Broccoli will keep fresh in the refrigerator for up to two weeks, but the longer it is stored, the tougher the stems get and the more nutrients it loses

**Collards-** Store kale and collard greens in dry plastic bags in the refrigerator for up to three days. You can also cook the greens, and store them in the freezer in sealed plastic bags. They'll keep for months, so you can use them spontaneously in soups or casseroles.

**Green Peppers-** Store peppers for short-term use by refrigerating them in the produce drawer of your refrigerator. Chop or slice peppers and freeze.

**Field Tomatoes-** Leave tomatoes out at room temperature until cut or cooked, then refrigerate. This is a great time to FREEZE tomatoes: dice tomatoes, sauté in olive oil, cool and pack in sealed containers; freeze for use later in soups, stews or sauces.

**Romaine Lettuce-** Wrap greens in dry paper towels, place inside an open plastic bag and place in the crisper drawer. Change towels if they become wet (damp is ok). Wonderful as a tossed green salad or as lettuce wraps.

**Apples-** Store in crisper drawer. Eat fresh, or slice and microwave with cinnamon or nutmeg, for a quick, yummy dessert or snack. Pairs beautifully baked with acorn squash and pine nuts, walnuts or pecans.

**Green Cabbage-** Store whole cabbage in the refrigerator. Shredded cabbage will keep best sealed in a zip-top bag in the crisper drawer; shred or chop it, then freeze it raw and cook it later.

**Orange Sweet Potatoes-** Store them in a dry, cool (55-60°) place such a cellar, pantry, or garage. Do not store them in the refrigerator, where they will develop a hard core and an "off" taste. At normal room temperature, they should be used within a week of purchase. You may brush off any excess dirt before storing, but do not wash them until you are ready to cook them. It is the moisture from washing that will increase their spoilage.

**"Keeper" (Winter) Squash-** Butternut, acorn, amber cup, pumpkin and spaghetti squash are varieties of winter or keeper squash. They can be stored for several months in a cool, dark, ventilated place, like a cardboard box in the pantry. Acorn and butternut can be roasted with the skin on; the cooking process softens the skin. Try it! It's quite delicious! Spaghetti squash can be cooked in the microwave or oven. Once cooked, seed it and use the tines of a fork to create "spaghetti" strands. Serve with your favorite sauce.