


# THE PRODUCE BOX

“How we eat determines to a considerable extent how the world is used.”

~ Wendell Berry

WWW.THEPRODUCEBOX.COM		May 4 & 5, 2011		Vol 4: Iss 4		Follow us on 	
BOX A	BOX B	BOX C	BOX O	EXTRAS			
FREE FULL SHARE COLLARD SAMPLE	Kale	FREE FULL SHARE COLLARD SAMPLE	FREE FULL SHARE COLLARD SAMPLE	Lilly's Maple Butter \$6.75			
Tomatoes (pest-free)	Orange Sweet Potatoes	Romaine Lettuce	Bok Choy (pesticide free)	Chapel Hill Creamery Asiago \$9.75			
Cucumbers (pest-free)	Tomatoes (pest free)	Organic Lettuce (red fire)	Edible Flowers (pesticide free)				
Strawberries	Cucumbers (pest free)	Tomatoes (pest. free)	Organic Lettuce (red fire)				
Organic Lettuce (red fire)	Bok Choy (new harvest)	Cucumbers (pest free)	Fresh Cilantro (organic)				
Fresh Cilantro (great for salsa)	Strawberries	Strawberries	Tomatoes (pesticide free)				
Radishes	Fresh Mint (one bunch)	Fresh Cilantro (one bunch)	Cucumbers (pesticide free)				
		Radishes	Sweet potatoes (organic)				

**CUCUMBER RECALL IN RALEIGH:** Some of you may have seen the news alert for a cucumber recall from a Raleigh produce supplier. Thankfully, none of his cucumbers were distributed in this area. His operation and booth are located in “the shed” which is a wholesale area near the retail farmers’ area at the Farmers’ Market. I bring this up to highlight the fact that many of those farmers in that area buy from other states. As was the case with this recall. Those cucumbers did NOT come from North Carolina. So just because the company is located on the grounds of the Farmers’ Market, it doesn’t mean the produce is from here.

You can rest assured that I will not put produce in your box except what comes from our neighbors. This means that we limit our buying to NORTH CAROLINA ONLY. **It also means that we’ll have somewhat of the same produce in the boxes on a three-week cycle.** As is the case this week. Next week we’ll see new items. But the cycle is usually about every three weeks or so. Buying LOCAL is the reason I started this program in the first place. Although we’ve had some of our members say they would consider buying regionally so we can get bananas, pineapples, there’s just not enough interest and I’m not considering it anytime soon. So for now and the foreseeable future, *we are NORTH CAROLINA PROUD!*

**REALLY RIPE STRAWBERRIES!!** As many of you know, we used THREE DIFFERENT strawberry farmers last week. One set of berries was greenhouse grown, one from Lenoir County and one from Johnson County. We had about 3% of our members ask for replacements this week and although that’s not bad, those are still families that didn’t get to enjoy their berries.

Here’s what I think is happening: the farmer is excited about the order and doesn’t pick in the field for a couple of days. He harvests EVERYTHING, even the REALLY REALLY ripe berries. They look REALLY good when we get them on Tuesday or Wednesday, and overnight, the REALLY RIPE ones start to turn, then the whole container of berries is affected. Remember, these guys are used to picking and selling at a market on the same day. The other thing to remember is that with the hotter spring weather, the sugar content in the berries is concentrated, and they are more likely to turn as well.

So....we’re having a conversation with each farmer about picking the berries a bit less ripe and more firm (but just as sweet). We’re using the grower who had the best quality this past week for the berries in the boxes, and we’re giving another one a second chance with the add-on berries that aren’t packed in the box. We’ll see what happens. The greenhouse berries are just too challenging now that the weather is hotter, though.

Regardless, I wanted you to know what the thinking is, and how our conversations are going with farmers and how things happen. This year is different from last year because we are working with 25 small/med farmers instead of 8 or so. I love the fact that we’re able to support more farms, but there is a bit of a learning curve with some of them about how we deliver, what the boxes look like, how we need produce to look when we get it, etc. Anyway, I’d love to hear feedback and comments on this. Feel free to email me anytime at [Courtney@theproducebox.com](mailto:Courtney@theproducebox.com). We’re all still learning and creating this system as we go along....so keep the comments coming!!

**FAVA BEANS:** Most of you enjoyed the fava beans, but several felt it just wasn’t enough of a portion. We forwarded those comments on to Jan, and we’ll either put more in the box next time, or offer it as an add-on at a higher quantity. Thanks for letting us know!

## EATING IN SEASON

There are many reasons to buy local. Supporting the local economy and helping support local farmers are two GREAT reasons to buy local. Most of us buying local probably understand that there are more nutrients in foods that have not been sitting on a truck traveling across the country or even worse across the world. We see the difference in rutabaga that is local and that which is covered in thick layer of wax in an attempt to keep it fresh longer. However, there are other health benefits to buying local: nature's wisdom in when certain foods are available. Traditional Chinese medicine and Aurveda, are two ancient health philosophies that look at health in conjunction with the seasons. Since we are in our spring season now let us consider what is in season right now. Coming out of winter where the foods are heavier (think of root vegetables and nuts) our bodies now need foods that are lighter and more cleansing. The days are beginning to get warmer. It gets lighter earlier and people start thinking about spring cleaning. Well nature is no different. The organ that is associated with spring in traditional philosophy is the liver which is one of the main cleansing organs. The spring season foods nature provides us with are young tender greens and shoots, things that grow upward, and therefore are uplifting, and are considered detoxifying or cleansing. Eating these foods help to begin to rid us of the heaviness and congestion associated with the winter months. The plants of spring are considered cleansing blood purifiers; for example, asparagus is a great blood purifier and kidney cleanser. Lettuces have vital minerals that help the body to clear and detoxify; garlic and onions are great for helping fight bacteria and can be great for seasonal allergies; bitter greens such as arugula- and if you like to go wild like me- dandelion greens, stimulate the bile which helps clear the liver. As time marches on towards summer the local foods that are going to be available will change in the type of energy and health properties they will provide for us. Summer fruits are wet, juicy and cooling: think watermelon, peaches, and tomatoes. So as you can see, nature has a blueprint of what comes into season when. So as you receive your local Boxes consider the wisdom of Mother Nature and what she has chosen to make available for us to eat in the appropriate season. (Debbie Orol RN, Certified Holistic Health Coach and Raleigh Member) [www.deborol.com](http://www.deborol.com)

**WHERE'S THE MENU?** We don't put the menu up each week until Friday at noon. This gives Kevin (our crop coordinator and 25+ year chef by trade) a chance on Friday mornings to make his final calls to the farms and be sure we know what's available for the upcoming week.



### Did You Know?

Sometimes our menu and password emails are routed to junk and/or spam folders. Please add [theproducebox@gmail.com](mailto:theproducebox@gmail.com) and [webmaster@theproducebox.com](mailto:webmaster@theproducebox.com) to your address book to help solve this problem. Please contact your Neighborhood Coordinator if you feel our emails aren't reaching you.

Thank you!

**NEED A REPLACEMENT?** We'd hate to have you wait a whole week for something you looked forward to and/or planned to use over the weekend. If this is the case, please contact your Neighborhood Coordinator directly and we'll bring it to you the next day. We often have extras at their houses or at the HUB, and it's really no problem at all to run it by your house. So don't hesitate to call us if it's something you REALLY NEED. Since you're not picking out the produce yourself, if we missed something in the packing, we want to FIX it soon. Thanks in advance!

## SPECIALTY ITEMS

The Asiago cheese we are offering this week comes from Chapel Hill Creamery. "Sharp and bursting with flavor, our Asiago is aged for 6 months or more and is made from raw milk. It grates well and adds sparkle to pasta, meats, veggies - plus it's great to just nibble on!" say Portia McKnight and Flo Hawley, proud dairy farmers of the Creamery. Last summer, The Produce Box Member families enjoyed a fun day of cheese-tasting, along with meeting the cows and bulls, and seeing how the Chapel Hill Creamery operates.

Lilly's Gourmet Maple Butter is an old-fashioned treat brought to us by Nancy Foss of Foss Gourmet Foods in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Nancy's grandmother Elianne ("Lilly") taught in a one-room schoolhouse until she married Nancy's grandfather in 1920 and went on to have 14 children. One way Elianne was able to make ends meet was by making and selling her Maple Butter. Thanks to Nancy, now you too can enjoy this delicious taste of the past. Try it on biscuits, pancakes, waffles, cinnamon buns and English muffins, stirred it into oatmeal and other hot cereals, or as a topping for baked sweet potatoes.



And the **WINNER** of the  
Kale Cake Contest  
is

# Elizabeth Zelenka!

Elizabeth writes:

"You should know that I make the ugliest cakes  
EVER, so the picture doesn't look so great.

However, this cake really tastes good! I used  
purple sweet potatoes from the week before to  
make a wonderfully green and purple kale cake!"



Congratulations, Elizabeth!  
You've won a FREE  
PRODUCE BOX!



## HEY, MEMBERS!

You donated  
*over \$2,200.00*  
to help NC Farms  
damaged by the storms.



We have one farm partner, Gary Barefoot, who lost a greenhouse and all the windows in his house. He grows veggies for The Peddler Steak Houses in the area, and also supplied us with sweet potatoes. He almost got teary when I asked him if he would accept a check for \$1,200.00. And so did I. Farmers can be so proud and hate to ask for help.

The other farmer, Steve Thomas, is a friend of our asparagus grower, John Gross. Steve lost several pieces of equipment, plus tractors and a greenhouse. We're sending him a check for \$1,100.00. Your generosity is helping our local farmers.

Thanks!

**COURTNEY**



Jan's Irish Potatoes

Jan Jackson is growing Irish potatoes and they're doing great! Jan has also provided The Produce Box with fava beans, garlic, herbs and this week's edible flowers (Box O). Thanks for the photos Jan!



**Storage & Usage** Visit [www.theproducebox.com](http://www.theproducebox.com) for more info!

**Edible Flowers**- Wash flowers thoroughly by bathing them gently in a bath of salt water. Perk them up by dropping into a bowl of ice water for 30 to 60 seconds; drain on paper towels. Store flowers whole in a glass of water in the refrigerator until you need to use them. You can store petals for a day in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, but your optimum goal should be to use them within a few hours.

**Cilantro**- A member of the parsley family. The leaf is called cilantro and the seed is coriander. It is sometimes called Chinese parsley. Cilantro is a component of Tex-Mex, Indian, Chinese and Thai cuisines, and it's delicious in all types of salsas. To store, place the bunch, stem end down, in a small glass of water, much like you would display flowers. Cover with a plastic bag and secure a rubber band around the glass. Change the water every day or so and your cilantro will last much longer. Or freeze it: wash, shake off most of the water, pack tightly into a small plastic container or bag and freeze in coldest part of freezer.

**Mint**- Spearmint and peppermint are the most common mint varieties used in cooking. Peppermint is more often used for candies and teas while spearmint complements savory dishes like lamb, peas and other vegetable, as well as fruits and chocolate. Mint is common to Middle Eastern cooking. Try snipping the leaves into fruit salads and rice pilaf or adding to a marinade for chicken. Consider adding mint to punches, iced tea and milk shakes too. The fresh leaves make an attractive garnish to just about any dish. Store mint like cilantro. What's another member of the mint family? Basil!

**Romaine, Red Fire Lettuce, Kale, Collards**- 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). **Red Fire** is a type of red leaf lettuce and can be used in the same ways.

**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.

**Strawberries**-Refrigerate whole and cut berries. Mix with sugar (1:1 ratio) and pop in freezer. Use as topping for cake, ice cream, hot cereal, waffles and pancakes. Space washed whole berries on a cookie sheet and freeze for one hour. Place in zip-lock bag and store in freezer.

**Sweet Potatoes, Orange or Purple**- Store in a paper bag in a cool, dark place. Sweet potatoes will keep for several months, getting sweeter along the way. Roast them whole or chunked; with butter, cinnamon and sugar; or with olive oil, salt and herbs; use in place of white potatoes in soups, stews or hash browns; slice thick or thin for oven chips or fries, sprinkled with sweet, savory or spicy seasonings.

**Tomatoes**- Leave tomatoes out at room temperature until cut or cooked, then refrigerate. Dice tomatoes, sauté in olive oil, cool and pack in sealed containers; freeze for use later in soups, stews or sauces. Or make a fabulous, fresh tomato sandwich!

**Cucumbers**- Store in crisper or on bottom shelf of fridge. Keep wrapped until ready to use. (English only)