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What's in your Box this week:

Box A: Cooking Pumpkin, Pickling Cukes, Apples, Bell Peppers, Yellow Squash or Poblanos, Eggplant, Muscadine Grapes

Box B: Apples, Irish Potatoes, Eggplant, Field Tomatoes or Cherry, Purple Sweet Potatoes, Butternut or Acorn Squash

Box C: Cherry tomatoes, Bell or Poblano Peppers, Turnips, Irish Potatoes, Purple Sweet Potatoes, Pickling Cucumbers

PURPLE SWEET POTATOES????? These are the "famous" variety from Stokes County, NC. The Vitamin E content is 8.5 times that of an orange sweet potato, and it also has more Vitamin C," says Sizemore. "But it does not have the Vitamin A beta carotene that makes an orange sweet potato orange." They have a unique quality however. "When raw," said Sutton, "you can see that the flesh is naturally moist, so if it is steamed, baked, boiled, barbecued, roasted or microwaved, in its peel, the unique nutty taste is superb even without salt and butter.

TURNIPS??? What are those white root veggies in my box anyway? They're turnips, a member of the radish family. Thinly sliced and eaten raw, they have a strong peppery bite and are great in salads. Cooked (I like to sauté them) , the flavor mellows and sweetens, with none of the peppery taste. Turnips can be used in place of white potatoes in most recipes. They are fabulous in stews and soups, or mashed, like potatoes. Turnips freeze well without becoming mealy, like white potatoes can. Give them a try today. Yummy!

SERIOUSLY? EIGHTY-EIGHT DEGREES IN OCTOBER?????

Cool off with this delicious recipe using your Muscadine Grapes in Box A this week:

MUSCADINE ICE

2 1/2 gallons muscadines Water
sugar lemon juice
Stem, wash, and mash muscadines. Strain and reserve juice. Put hulls and pulp in a kettle with a little water; bring to a boil and simmer for about 20 minutes, adding a little more water if necessary to prevent scorching. Remove from heat and strain through a strainer or jelly bag. Add juice to the reserved juice. Sweeten with sugar to your taste and add a little lemon juice. Put in an ice cream freezer and freeze as you would ice cream.

The first week of our fall season went well! With a LOT of help from our Area managers, volunteers and some motivated students from Shaw University, we worked with six different farms and sent out over 1900 boxes!! Our operation moved to Raleigh this month... a little closer for all of us and we are just THRILLED with the warehouse packing space generously provided to us by Richard, a neighbor of mine in Quail Hollow. We have lots of room to spread out and it is a sight to behold looking at stacks and stacks of boxes ready to be filled. Once the farms deliver their goodies, the packing starts and finishes in a five hour period each Tuesday and Wednesday, believe it or not! **A HUMONGOUS THANK YOU to Kevin O'Connell, our resident chef, food expert, and Quality Control Person extraordinaire.** Kevin moved up from Wilmington to run the farm coordinating/box packing operation and has done a FANTASTIC JOB ! Thanks, Kevin! And if anyone is interested in volunteering to help for an hour or two, or in taking a peek "behind the scenes."let me know!

Courtney

Easy Apple Leather...for fall lunchboxes!

3-5 pounds apples
1/4-1/2 cup sugar, if desired
1/8 cup lemon juice, if desired
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon nutmeg

Preparation:

1. Peel, core and slice apples.
2. Cook uncovered in a heavy 3-quart saucepan over low heat (note: a crockpot works well and won't scorch). If apples are dry, add a little water to prevent scorching. Cook until they have the appearance of applesauce. Continue cooking until apples are brown and look like apple butter.
3. Add sugar if apples aren't sweet enough and add lemon juice if the apples aren't tart enough.
4. Add the spices. Mix completely and let cook a little longer to allow the flavors to blend. When the apple mix clings to an upturned spoon, it is ready.
5. Cool in an uncovered pot.
6. Spread mix evenly and thinly on 2 waxed paper lined cookie sheets. Let dry in a warm oven (125 degrees) overnight or on the counter uncovered, for 2-3 days. Check the apple leather for dryness. When you can touch it with your finger and it is not sticky, it is dry enough. It should be flexible, not brittle.
7. Cut in 1/2 inch strips. Wrap in waxed paper or plastic wrap. Eat like a fruit roll. Store in tightly sealed containers; it can also be frozen and will keep well for months.



The Pumpkin in your box are called "Indian River" by the Porters, but the actual name is a "Long Island Cheese Pumpkin". They like it because it's firm fleshy, pumpkin and it makes a good creamy pie. The Porter's farm is located in Kinston, NC. These are the premier pumpkins to make the best pumpkin pies and baked goods. (The Halloween Jack-o-Lantern, while edible, is too often stringy and watery). But...You need never eat it - it's tan, waxy handsomeness can class up your front porch entrance, steps, light post display, porch rail and/or Thanksgiving table. It also makes a fetching soup tureen for a fall party. But let us assume you are a culinary adventurer, always looking for another good taste. After serving sentinel on your front stoop for six weeks or so, consider sampling it's rich, dense flesh:

"To cook the cheese pumpkin, you can either oven roast cubes of it in a covered heavy pan with enough liquid to allow the squash to cook until soft without browning, or cook the cubed squash in a pot of water on top of the stove until fork tender.

"If you're going to use the flesh for pie custard, allow the cooked squash to drain and cool before **pureeing it in a food processor**. Of course, you can also add chunks of the cheese pumpkin to winter roasts and stews.

"Cooking Light" magazine offers these tips for cubing a fresh raw pumpkin in preparation for using it in a recipe:

"Use whole milk, cheese or sugar pumpkins, not jack-o-lanterns because they will be full of bacteria from having been carved and used as decorations. "Cut straight down to one side of stem with a large, heavy knife. "Clean out pumpkin halves, spooning out the seeds and stringy pulp. "Place pumpkin half, cut side down, on a cutting board. Using a downward motion with the knife, remove the peel in small sections. "Cut peeled pumpkin into wedges, and then hold wedges firmly while cutting into cubes. Proceed with recipe. "Store fresh, cooked pumpkin in the refrigerator for up to five days, or in the freezer for up to six months.

Hey Courtney,

In case we still have members that have chestnuts left this week, I thought I'd share a recipe for them that's delicious... (I think I found it on epicurious.com)

Crispy Chestnuts:

Slit chestnuts and roast (400 degrees for 10 min.). Shell and skin them. Cut nuts into quarters. Heat 2T of oil in a skillet over med. high heat until hot but not smoking. Saute chestnuts in batches with salt and pepper to taste until crisp on the outside (about 4 minutes) being careful not to burn them. Remove and drain on a paper towel. Serve on mixed greens with pears and dressing or eat as a snack by themselves. Delicious !!!

I thought I'd share this super easy, super yummy butternut squash recipe. I scaled it down to be for just one of the squash (since we usually only get one). It's a great side dish and the sweetness of the squash really comes out in the end. It is dee-lish! (Kelly, Cary member)

Garlicky Baked Butternut Squash

1 TBS parsley (fresh or dried)

1 TBS EVOO

1 garlic clove, minced

1/2 tsp to salt, or to taste

1/4 tsp pepper, or to taste

1 lb butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1 inch cubes (I used one of the ones in our box)

2 TBS grated Parmesan cheese, or to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit

1. In a large bowl, combine parsley, EVOO, garlic, salt, pepper and 1 TBS of the Parmesan. Add squash and toss to coat.
2. Transfer to an ungreased shallow baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan - add more if you like it crunchy on top.
3. Bake uncovered for 50 minutes or until squash is tender.

****NOTE:** you can speed up the cooking process by microwaving the squash AFTER peeling. Microwave for about 8 minutes, let cool, then cut into cubes. It cuts the baking time about in half, but keep an eye on it and cook in increments so you don't burn it.