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What's in your Box this week:

Box A: Butternut squash, Mediterranean squash or zucchini, Grape tomatoes, Cabbage, Apples, Surprise Items

Box B: Apples, Cherry tomatoes, Swiss chard, Sweet Potatoes, Bell Peppers, Yellow Squash, Long cucumbers

Box C: Apples, Black Walnuts, Chinese Eggplant, Anaheim Peppers (MILD), Cucumbers, Cabbage

JUST FOR FUN, WE ADDED SOME SURPRISES TO EVERY BOX THIS WEEK! DECORATIVE GOURDS, HERBS OR TABLETOP PUMPKINS...ENJOY!



"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody."

--Lily Tomlin

Thanks to all of you for your thoughtful comments on our MEMBER SURVEY for the end of the regular season. We had a LOT of ideas on boxes, some suggestions of new farmers to get in touch with, and comments about the choices in boxes and how to make them better. Over 88% of you plan to return next year, and have friends to refer, so I will pass that along to the farms so they can start to plan. After the new year, we'll have a list of ideas for new veggies, and will send out a few questions on those for feedback, but already, we are hearing more beans, more lettuces, more carrots and spinach and less peaches.

Many of you have asked about getting "more involved" next year, as a coordinator, etc. I love that you all are so enthusiastic and interested in this new "food system". I hope we all keep working together to get fresher, more nutritious fruits and veggies onto your table and in the process, help sustain our local farm neighbors and the environment around us. Anyway, thanks for taking the time to give us feedback, and I'm going to try to get a personal answer to those of you that asked specific questions as soon as I can.

Courtney



Congratulations to one of our favorite farmers, Bill Walker, for winning blue ribbons at the NC STATE FAIR for his sweet banana peppers and bell peppers (both of which have been in our boxes) and two squash varieties. WAY TO GO BILL!!

Our produce this week comes from SEVEN different small to mid-size farms in NC. You know Joe Deal, who sends us the delicious apple variety each week as well as the cabbages last week and this week. His fantastic apple cider that you all loved last year will be ready next week! YUM!!

One of our newer farmers for the fall season (M and M farms) has supplied us with some late season ORGANIC grape tomatoes this week which will need just a little window-sill time to ripen. But we couldn't pass up the opportunity to grab them when we learned they had them. We're testing them and several other farms in a local co-op for the organic boxes next season!

Robbie Cox (in Wayne County) provided the squash last week (the neat Mediterranean and zucchini) and they will come from him again this week. I just was very impressed with the quality this late in the season. As some of you know, the older plants get this time of year, the less hardy the veggies are and are generally less "pretty".



Every year the Jacksons hand-harvest Black Walnuts from their orchards and rent a sheller, producing excellent local nuts. We've already enjoyed their premium fresh, shelled fancy pecans! Use this week's shelled black walnuts as a flavorful and nutrition-packed ingredient in your favorite salads, baked goods and walnut candy. For example, a simple boxed brownie recipe becomes another dessert entirely with a sprinkling black walnuts. The same could be said for Black Walnut Fudge - Banana-Black Walnut Muffins? How about Black Walnut Oatmeal cookies? Black walnuts have an intense, nutty flavor, featured in confections such as **Divinity**. They are more flavorfully potent than regular English walnuts. So you might want to reduce the amount of nuts or mix with regular walnuts, and still feature that special Black walnut flavor. They freeze well - just pop the box in - so you can use a little bit at a time and stretch your supply throughout the fall.

CABBAGE LASTS FOREVER and its not just for SLAW anymore!

Well, not forever, but certainly a good long time. So if you're thinking "enough with cabbage, guys!", I encourage you to remember that it will last in the refrigerator for quite a while. I know it's sometimes a struggle coming up with ways to use the items in the box, **and when I heard about fried cabbage**, it didn't sound that great to me. But now I LOVE it, and it's one of my new favorite side dishes. It's got **zero carbs**, too! As it fries, the edges get crispy and it brings out a great flavor. See how easy it is to make... Put a *generous* amount of butter in a cast iron pan (at *least* 2 T./per 1 cup of cabbage), add as much cabbage as you'd like (remember it cooks way down), and fry until golden brown and crispy. You'll need your heat fairly high (to get it crispy), but obviously, don't let it burn. You can make this into a **main dish** by adding a little onion and sausage (maybe from the boxes last week?).

Have you ever had SWISS CHARD? It's slightly more fibrous and hardy than many of the finer greens.

Chard and swiss chard are interchangeable names for this vegetable; the rainbow comes in when the stalks are grown to be red or other colors. It has a slightly bitter taste, which it's best to cook it rather than eat it raw (although if the leaves are young and tender, you may enjoy it in a salad). One tip is that if you are sautéing chard, separate the stalks from the leaves and begin cooking the stalks first. They take longer. The fresher chard is, the sweeter it is, so this stuff should be DELISH!

CHARD GRATIN is about what you'd expect if you substituted the pasta in baked macaroni and cheese or the green beans in green bean casserole with cooked leafy greens—it's creamy and savory and rich.

Here's the short version you should feel free to adapt/improvise on at will: Blanch 2-3 bunches of chopped greens in boiling water, stems first for 2 minutes if using and leaves for another 1-3 depending on how hearty they are (spinach only needs a minute, kale or chard will take 3 to soften fully). Drain well. Then, sauté a fistful of chopped onions and/or garlic in some kind of fat, stir in a couple of tablespoons of flour and then gradually whisk in about a cup of milk. Season with salt and pepper and a little grated nutmeg, stir in some grated cheese if you want it, and add the well-drained greens. Spoon the mixture into a buttered baking dish, top with buttered breadcrumbs mixed with some herbs and grated parmesan, and bake (350-400F) until golden and bubbling (about 20 minutes).

A NOTE FROM A MEMBER ABOUT CHARD: Hi Courtney, I like them sautéed in olive oil with bell peppers (especially since we've been getting them in our boxes – the spicy ones would work too) with chopped yellow onions or garlic as preferred. You can add a little stir fry sauce if you like too. I actually don't salt this because chard has a bit of a salty flavor naturally and I don't like a lot of salt. I try to keep it simple because I love the flavor as they are. Thanks, Mary Kay
