

THE PRODUCE BOX

Fall is a Southerner's reward for having survived summer.

~ Landscape designer James Farmer

Oct 19 & 20, 2011		Find us on facebook! 		Volume 4: Issue 28	
BOX A \$22		BOX B \$22		BOX C \$22	
Organic Carrots		Raspberries		Granny Smith Apples (huge!)	
Green Beans (1.5 lbs)		Radishes		Radishes	
Green Bell Peppers (4)		Cucumbers (4)		Yellow Squash/Zephyr Squash	
Zucchini		Acorn Squash (2)		Sweet Potatoes	
Grape or Cherry Tomatoes		Grape or Cherry tomatoes		Local Baby Ginger	
Raspberries		Sweet Peppers		Romaine Lettuce	
Apple Tasting		Romaine Lettuce (2)		Sweet Pepper Mix	
(Arkansas Black & Pink Lady)					
				BOX O \$26	
				Organic Carrots	
				Organic Baby Ginger	
				Organic Bok Choy	
				Organic Surprise Item	
				Conventional Apples (Granny Smith)	
				Organic Kale	
				Organic Eggplant (Fairy Tale variety)	

Flavor, abundance or price...what's important?

It's been a great season so far, and we are planning on continuing deliveries until the week before Thanksgiving as long as the weather holds out. That would be the week of November 17-18th. Between now and then, we'll be giving you opportunities to stock up on the ADD ONS you've enjoyed this season, to get you through the winter until we're back the week of April 15th or so...unless we can start earlier.

One of the things I've learned over the past four seasons is the basic idea that fruits and veggies aren't manufactured items that remain the same throughout their shelf life. They age and change just like the rest of us. We've all learned that any number of conditions can affect the abundance or "look" of a particular veggie or lack thereof. Heat, cold, too much heat then a little cold, too much cold then a little heat, then some cold again....too much rain, too little rain, or too little rain then too much rain.

And the farther away from us something is grown, the longer it takes to get to you so if it's ripe to start with, the 2-4 days of travelling can wreak havoc. As the produce industry tries to come up with ways to beat the aging process, one favorite technique is picking produce earlier. In some cases, this is okay. Peaches ripen off the tree, so picking peaches a bit earlier to have them a bit more durable is okay....although the earlier you pick them, the less nutrients they absorb from the environment, I'd think.

Russ Parsons says the more steps between us and the food we eat, the more opportunities for problems...and the farmer is the one who pays, usually. So he reduces his risk as much as possible. He makes compromises and grows the type of peach MOST people like, or the apple that is the most durable. And can we really blame him?

In the produce industry, there's not much reward for flavor, but farmers DO get paid by the pound. Farming is a business, you know, with an extremely slim profit margin. How does our program change this? By establishing an ONGOING conversation between you and the farms we work with. If we hear that the "fall corn" wasn't as good, or wasn't as sweet, or the tomatoes degraded too quickly....we tell the farmer. And if we get rave reviews on a particular item, like Bill Walker's sweet Italian peppers, or Keith's gala apples, you can believe we tell them that. And then...we ask them to grow MORE next season. So in our case, better taste DOES get rewarded and you get more of what you like...

In a grocery store, there's no conversation between a grower and the customer. And how many of you would REALLY take the time to call the store and let them know the "corn was a bit dry" or "not as sweet"? I'm SO glad you do that with us and I want you to KEEP doing it! This is what the farmers want too, trust me! So keep the comments coming ...ESPECIALLY those of you who have been with us for a while. You have a great perspective with the ups and downs of the seasons as they come and go and we learn from you! Thanks again for your support and enthusiasm.....read below for a sneak peek at what's coming over the next few weeks.....

Courtney

THE PRODUCE BOX



Farmers Bill & Barbara Walker raise all kinds of vegetables for the local retail farmers' markets as well as wholesale markets in Raleigh. They wouldn't tell you this, but they won several blue ribbons at the State Fair last year for their HUMONGOUS bell peppers, sweet potatoes and eggplants. They were at the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market on Saturday showing off their eggplant and other produce. Bill's son, Drew, has followed him into the farming business as well. Although he refuses to plant seedlings until after EASTER (learned the hard way), he has plenty to share once the harvests come in. YUM!!



Dan Routh Photography, Inc
620 South Elm St, Suite 254
Greensboro, NC 27406



THE PRODUCE BOX



Planning on visiting the STATE FAIR this week? Be sure to stop by the vegetable competition! These beauties are grown with love and care by NC Farmers and many of our partners and transported every year for bragging rights. You'll be sure to see some names that are familiar!

Many people preserve fresh ginger by putting it in a jar with some sherry. It keeps in the refrigerator... for months that way. It's not actually necessary to peel fresh ginger, but if you are feeling scrupulous, do it anyway. It's hard to get all of the peel off without essentially paring off half of your root, and I'm just too miserly to do that. I'll take a carrot peeler and lazily get off what's easy to get off. It should keep for several months in the freezer; eventually, it'll develop freezer burn. (The vacuum seal will probably keep freezer burn away longer, but I still wouldn't keep it more than about six months.)

The fruits of various members of the gourd family fall into two classifications: summer squash and winter squash.



Did You Know? Every part of the squash plant can be eaten, including the leaves and tender shoots, which can be cooked in omelets or made into soup.

The term "**summer**" and "**winter**" for squash are only based on current usage, not on actuality. "Summer" types are on the market all winter; and "winter" types are on the markets in the late summer and fall, as well as winter. Thus, the terms "summer" and "winter" are deceptive and confusing. This terminology was never meant to confuse - it just dates back to a time when the seasons were more crucial to man's survival than they are now. "Good keepers" became known as winter vegetables if they would "keep" until December.

Winter squash comes in shapes round and elongated, scalloped and pear-shaped with flesh that ranges from golden-yellow to brilliant orange. Most winter squashes are vine-type plants whose fruits are harvested when fully mature. They take longer to mature than summer squash (3 months or more) and are best harvested once the cool weather of fall sets in. They can be stored for months in a cool basement- hence the name "winter" squash.

Who's growing CARROTS?? It took four years of looking, but thanks to Sandi and Trace at Eastern Carolina Organics, we're working with New Sprout Organics near Asheville, NC to bring you fresh, NC Carrots this week! Michael Porterfield's farm became certified in 2008 and since it's inception, the farm has grown from .10 acres to close to 18 acres. It all started when Michael and his wife found an old development property inside the city limits being fought over by developers and bought it out from under them to turn it back into the farm it had been 40 years ago. This isn't just farm preservation, but farm RESTORATION!

THE PRODUCE BOX

ARKANSAS BLACK APPLES: These are excellent to eat out of hand, and even better cooked in an apple pie or applesauce. Tart but not bitter. Best part about them? They keep for MONTHS so you can enjoy them all winter long.



PINK LADY APPLES: These apples are VERY popular because of their distinctive taste: sweet and a bit tart at the same time. Excellent in a fruit salad and eaten out of hand.

STORAGE & USAGE *Remember, all TPB produce is very ripe. If you see a * eat this first!*

Baby Ginger- Grown by Cheryl at Plum Granny Farms, they are one of the only growers in the state. It was an experiment that turned out fantastic. Use fresh ginger in all of your oriental preparations, stir fry, sesame salad dressings, etc.

Radishes- Remove the greens from the top before storing, as the greens will sap the nutrients and moisture from them during storage. As with all cruciferous plants, the greens are edible, and can be cooked or used in salads. Greens will store for 2 – 3 days in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. Wrap the unwashed radishes in a moist towel and place in plastic in the coldest portion of the refrigerator to allow storage for up to a week. If they become a bit dried out or lose their crispness, soak them in icy cold water for a few hours to a day, to restore them to their original appearance.

Carrots- Cut off greens, leaving stubble of about 2 inches. This is done to prevent rotting. Carrots should be kept away from apples, pears and potatoes, as the ethylene gas they produce will make the carrots taste bitter. Store carrots in refrigerator. For best results wash them only when you are ready to use them.

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.

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.

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.

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

“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.