



Gathering Together Farm  
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## CSA Newsletter—Week 9

# Melons—the Queens of Cucurbitaceae

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- **Melon!!!**— August is officially here when melons come in. There isn't yet enough of any one type to give you all the same kind, but Sally likes to make sure our beloved CSA customers are the first to enjoy our specialty items, so you will be receiving one of two types.
  - **Charentais Cantaloupe**— Charentais is a true French cantaloupe, sought after by chefs and foodies alike. It has an intensely sweet, floral flavor.
  - **Honey Orange**— Though these may look like a white dinosaur egg on the outside, they are bright orange inside! They have the texture of a honeydew with the extra sweet flavor and color of a cantaloupe.
- **Sweet Bell Pepper**— You'll receive either a red, orange, or yellow sweet bell pepper this week.
- **Serendipity Sweet Corn**— We grow this variety for its high sugar content. We grow bicolor corn that is a mosaic of yellow & white kernels that makes for a particularly beautiful corn on the cob.
- **Tomatillos**— Tomatillos are more closely related to ground cherries than they are to tomatoes. Most people blanch them before blending them into a salsa verde, however they are quite versatile in other dishes.
- **Yellow Potatoes**— These potatoes are a buttery yellow all the way through, waxy and perfect for roasting, baking, or fried into hash browns.
- **Jalapeno**
- **Sierra Blanca Superstar Onions**
- **Bunched Carrots**
- **Persian Cucumbers**
- **Tomatoes**
- **Mixed Summer Squash**
- **Lettuce Surprise**

We can't believe it's already week nine! You've got a fully-packed August box this week, complete with sweet corn, tomatillos, melons!, sweet bell peppers, and so much more. As always, I like to notice when we have multiple members of a plant family present in one box, and though Solanaceae may be the leading star of summer, including such gems as tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, potatoes, ground cherries, and tomatillos, Cucurbitaceae, home to melons, cucumbers, and squash, comes in at a close second.

Winter squash is beyond amazing, so dense and filling. Cucumbers are so refreshing, so crisp and full of sweet, summer life like nature's water filter. Summer squash are so tender and buttery, so versatile in cakes or on the grill. But, as much as I believe in vegetable equality, let's be real, melons are the best! Melons mean summer! You don't do anything to them except impatiently wait for your body to slice them up so that you can finally devour the sweet fruit waiting inside. No cooking. No prep. They're just perfect. They woke up like that.

This is the side of melons that most people enjoy—the tasty part. Here at the farm, we're lucky to get to enjoy an entirely different aspect of what it is to bring melons into existence—the fun part!

For those of you who have driven past our farm during melon season, you may have seen the joy that is melon tossing. First, our select melon whisperers go out and harvest all the melons that are perfectly ripe, gently picking each one up for the first time. We're all used to having to try to tap out a tune on melons at the grocery store in fear of buying a bland one, but at the farm our melon whisperers tap out a melody for us that only the most perfect melons sing. They stack the ripe melons in piles to await the toss.

Because our melons are picked ripe and full of sugar, they are quite fragile to transport. It is for this reason that we take as many as eight people out to a field, we stand in a line from the melon rows to the flatbed truck lined with bins, and we toss melons from one end to the other for hours.

The melon gets touched for its second time when pulled from the ripe pile and tossed to the next person, and depending on how far the row is from the truck, another seven people might gently catch and then toss each precious orb. We all talk and laugh as we toss melons in the sun, a task that feels much more like play than work. From harvest to consumption, melons are so precious, thus they receive the utmost care. Only the best for the Queen of Cucurbits.

Best, Laura Bennett

We'd love to see what you're doing with your CSA box! Tag us on social media @gatheringtogetherfarm!

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## Raw Green Salsa

"The raw vegetables in this salsa are full of enzymes that kick-start your immune system. A great sauce for a completely raw meal or a perfect salsa on top of tostadas or eggs"—adapted from *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing*, p.174, yields 1 ½ cups

### Ingredients

- 8 large **tomatillos**, husks removed
- 1 small **white onion**, quartered
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 1-2 fresh serranos or 1 **jalapeno**, stems & seeds removed
- ½ bunch cilantro
- 1 tsp sea salt, or to taste
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 avocado, peeled and seeded

### Directions

Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor, and process until small flecks of cilantro are scattered throughout the salsa. This salsa is raw, so it should be refrigerated and used within 2 days.

## Pepper, Corn & Black Bean Quesadillas

—Adapted from *The CSA Cookbook* by Linda Ly

### Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp olive oil, and more oil/butter for greasing
- ½ **onion**, minced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 **sweet pepper**, finely chopped
- 2 ears **corn**, kernels cut off the cob
- ½ **jalapeno**, minced
- ½ tsp salt, ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 cups cooked black beans
- 4 10-inch flour tortillas
- 2-3 cups shredded cheese of your choice
- Sour cream for garnish
- Pico de Gallo for garnish (rough chop some **tomatoes**, **onion**, and cilantro, add salt and lemon juice and you're good to go!)

### Directions

- Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil, onions and garlic and cook until tender and fragrant, 2-3 minutes. Stir in the eggplant, jalapeno, sweet peppers, salt, and pepper, and cook until the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the beans and corn and heat through for 2 minutes. Remove skillet from heat.
- Heat another large skillet over medium heat. Grease the surface with butter and place a tortilla in the skillet. Layer the cheese (a heaping ¼ cup, or more if you'd like) and vegetables (a heaping cup) over half of the tortilla, then top with more cheese. Fold the tortilla in half, press down lightly with a spatula, and toast for about 2 minutes per side until the tortilla is golden brown and the cheese is melted. Repeat with the remaining tortillas and fillings. (If you can't load up the tortilla that fast, you can assemble it on a plate before transferring it to the hot skillet.) To serve, slice each quesadilla into halves or quarters and add sour cream and pico de gallo on top.

## Lemony Orzo Pasta Salad with Cucumber and Feta

—adapted from <http://www.forkknifeswoon.com/lemony-orzo-pasta-salad-with-cucumber-and-feta/>

### Ingredients

- 1-1/2 cups dry orzo pasta
- 2 tbsp olive oil, or enough to lightly coat the pasta
- juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 1-2 **cucumbers**, chopped
- 1tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- Recommended Additions: **Tomatoes!**

### Directions

- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the orzo *al dente* according to package directions (about 9 minutes). Drain the pasta, let cool for a couple of minutes, and toss with the olive oil, lemon juice and zest, cucumber, herbs and feta.
- Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Serve chilled or at room-temperature. Can be made up to a day in advance and kept in the refrigerator.