



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

August 30 - 31, 2019

What's In The Box?

POBLANO PEPPERS: Poblanos are the dark green, blocky pepper with a pointy bottom in this week's box. This is a hot pepper with medium heat. Refer to **last week's vegetable feature** article for more information about poblano peppers and two delicious recipes to utilize them!

SWEET PEPPERS: This week's box will contain either Orange Italian Frying peppers (long, slender peppers), Orange Ukraine peppers (resemble a small bell pepper, but with a pointy bottom), or Red Bell Peppers. Refer to this week's **vegetable feature** article for more information about how to best utilize sweet peppers.

MINI SWEET PEPPERS: More peppers?! Yes, we're in the peak of pepper season right now and we couldn't resist including a small portion of these tasty little snack peppers. These are one of the most flavorful peppers we grow and are a variety we've been saving our own seed from for well over 15 years! Mini sweet peppers are red, yellow and orange and are packed in a brown paper bag. If you find a small green pepper in the box, that is a hot jalapeño!

RED & YELLOW ONIONS: We're adding a little color to the onion selection this week! Red onions may be cooked, or eaten raw as in this week's featured recipe.

PORCELAIN GARLIC: Cut a large clove of garlic in half and rub it on grilled, buttered bread to make a tasty, mild garlic toast.

GREEN AND/OR ITALIAN ZUCCHINI: Slice lengthwise, brush slices with oil, season and lay them on the grill just long enough to make grill marks. Roll them up and serve them with basil pesto or olive tapenade.

EDAMAME: It's easiest to remove edamame from their pods after they've been cooked. You can also preserve them for later use by freezing them. Cook the beans in boiling water for 3-4 minutes, then cool in ice water. You can freeze edamame in its pods or remove the beans and discard the pods before freezing.

GREEN BEANS: We're nearly finished with green beans for the season. Use this week's green beans in a summer stir-fry, or toss them on the grill!

YELLOW OR RED GRAPE TOMATOES: Use these in this week's featured recipe for **Red Pepper, Lentil & Tomato Salad**.

VARIETY OF TOMATOES: Ripen tomatoes at room temperature and avoid storing them in the refrigerator. Enjoy slices of fresh tomatoes sprinkled with coarse sea salt and a drizzle of olive oil.

RED SEEDLESS WATERMELON: It's going to be a brief, but hopefully sweet, watermelon season this year! Chill your watermelon in the refrigerator before cutting it into chunks and eating it!

SWEET CORN: Take a moment to read this week's **feature article** about growing corn to gain a little insight into what it takes to grow delicious sweet corn. We encourage you to keep sweet corn cold to maximize its sweetness and eat it within a few days of receiving.

ROSE FINN APPLE FINGERLING POTATOES: This is an heirloom variety known for its buttery, nutty flavor. They may be steamed, boiled, roasted or pan-fried. A favored way to cook fingerlings is to slice them in half lengthwise, then pan-fry them, cut side down, in butter or duck fat until brown and crispy.

TOMATILLOS: While the tomatoes are lacking this year, the tomatillos are thriving! Tomatillos may be eaten cooked or raw. Enjoy their tangy flavor in a **Raw Tomatillo Salad** such as the one featured on our blog in this week's **Cooking with the Box** article.

JALAPEÑO PEPPER: Add some heat to a fresh salsa or chop finely and mix it into cream cheese along with minced garlic to make a spicy, delicious bagel spread! There is one green jalapeño pepper in the box.

MELON: Sadly, melon season is going to be short this year and this may even be the last week. This week's box will include one of the following varieties: Sugar Cube Cantaloupe, Sun Jewel Melon or French Orange melons.

CHOICE - EGGPLANT: Use eggplant to make a tasty Thai vegetable curry or the classic baba ganoush (eggplant dip).

VEGETABLE FEATURE: Sweet Peppers

By Andrea Yoder

The peak of pepper season typically marks the point in the year where late summer collides with fall. At the end of this week we'll be turning another calendar page, Labor Day will come and go, children will return to school and soon we'll officially say good bye to summer. Peppers are one of my favorite vegetables to grow and eat and they so gracefully represent this unique point in our growing season. They play well with summer vegetables, but can also dance with fall and winter selections. They are easy to eat, right off the stem in all of their crispy, raw glory. Roast them and they become soft, sweet and smoky in flavor which can add a sweet richness to sauces, soup, sandwiches and more. While pepper

season usually lasts several weeks, I never get tired of peppers and always make sure I have enough frozen peppers in the freezer to span winter, spring and early summer until the next crop comes in. I use them throughout the winter on pizza, add them to pasta dishes, mix them with root vegetables and roast them with chicken, add them into winter soups and stews, and of course they end up in scrambled eggs, quiche, frittatas and egg bakes. Peppers are one of the easiest vegetables to preserve, so even if I don't feel like I have the time to tackle preservation projects, I know I can always successfully freeze peppers. Peppers do not need to be cooked before freezing. So, at a minimum, freezing peppers requires the time it takes to wash the pepper and put it in a bag. If I have a little extra time, and to save some freezer space, I'll actually remove the stem and seeds and cut them into smaller pieces. Really, it's that simple and you'll really appreciate having them in the dead of winter!

We grow several different types of sweet peppers. All peppers start out as green peppers when they are immature. While we eat green peppers, peppers are really fully ripe and at their peak of sweetness and flavor if we let them turn color to be fully red, yellow or orange. Our mini sweet peppers are our all-time favorite variety and the sweetest and most flavorful pepper we grow. While there are many snack peppers available in the marketplace today, we believe our peppers are more flavorful than commercial seed varieties. We've been saving our own seed for well over 15 years and our variety is not just carefully selected, but also well adapted to our area.

We also really enjoy growing and eating Italian frying peppers. Italian frying peppers are long, slender peppers that, despite their name, may be eaten either raw or cooked. We have both red and orange varieties and both have pretty good pepper flavor and sweetness. One of our other unique sweet pepper varieties is the Ukraine pepper. This is another pepper that we save our own seed. It's actually not available commercially and we got the seed from a woman who brought it from Ukraine. We like this pepper because it's a heavy producer, often with as many as twelve peppers per plant. This pepper resembles a bell pepper, but they are smaller and have a pointy bottom instead of a blocky bottom. They also ripen to more of an orange red color instead of bright red. They have a thick wall which makes them a good candidate for roasting. They're also a good pepper to use for stuffed peppers.

While sweet peppers are delicious eaten raw, they can also be sautéed and roasted. You can roast peppers, whole, over an open flame such as on a grill or just on your stovetop if you have gas burners. Otherwise, peppers may be roasted under a broiler in the oven. When roasting peppers, you want to blacken nearly the entire exterior of the pepper. Once blackened, put them in a bowl and cover them so they steam for about 10 minutes. Remove the cover and once they are cool enough to handle you can peel away the black skin. Once you have roasted the pepper, it's ready to use however you'd like. Slices of roasted red pepper are a nice addition to sandwiches, grain or lentil salads, or use them to build an antipasto platter. You can also use roasted sweet peppers to make a delicious cream sauce, dressing or soup.

Peppers are high in vitamins A & C as well as a whole host of other phytonutrients, so munching on a sweet pepper also has nutritive benefits. I mentioned above how easy it is to preserve sweet peppers so you can enjoy them throughout the year. Watch your email for our produce plus offerings coming as early as next week. You'll have the opportunity to purchase larger quantities of peppers if you'd like to preserve more than you receive in your box each week. Enjoy!

Red Pepper, Lentil and Tomato Salad

Yield: 4-6 servings as a side dish or 2-3 servings as a main course

1 cup brown or green lentils	1 cup chopped sweet peppers, ¼ inch pieces	3 ½ Tbsp basil leaves, roughly torn, plus more to serve
5 Tbsp apple cider vinegar	1 cup quartered small tomatoes (red or yellow grape, etc)	Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ small red onion, finely chopped	Finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon	2 ½ oz feta cheese, crumbled (optional)
Juice of ½ lemon, or to taste (approximately 2 Tbsp)	1 garlic clove, crushed	
5 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil		

1. Cook the lentils in a saucepan of simmering water until they are soft but still have some bite. Depending on the freshness of the lentils, this will take 15-20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, pour the vinegar into a small bowl and add the red onion. Stir well, then leave the onion to soak (this removes some of its pungency).
3. Once the lentils are cooked, drain them, rinse with warm water and place in a serving bowl. Immediately squeeze the lemon juice and 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil over the lentils and stir well. Leave to cool completely.
4. Stir in the red onion (drain and reserve the vinegar for the dressing), sweet pepper, tomatoes, lemon zest, garlic and basil.
5. Dress the salad by combining 2 Tbsp of the reserved vinegar, the remaining 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, 1 tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper. Pour over the lentils, mix well, then taste and adjust the seasoning. You may want to add a bit more of the vinegar, lemon juice or salt to balance out the flavors.
6. Just before serving, strew with a few more basil leaves and the feta, if you are using it.

Recipe borrowed from Yasmin Khan's beautiful book, *Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen*.