

Two Onion Farm

Chris & Juli McGuire • 19638 Cottage Inn Road, Belmont, WI 53510
farmer@twoonionfarm.com • (608) 762-5335

Week of July 26, 2009

Several of you have asked about whether we suffered damage in last Friday's hail storms. Fortunately we did not, although there was heavy hail in nearby locations. Monday night brought another round of thunderstorms with pounding rains and high winds which downed many trees and branches in the neighborhood. This storm also tore the outer leaves on some of the lettuce heads which we will harvest this week and next.

The unseasonably cool weather has also affected the growth of our vegetables, particularly eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes. We planted all of these crops at the usual time, but they are slow to mature. We typically begin to harvest slicing tomatoes for your boxes in the last week of July but we have none ripe this week. We are harvesting a few cherry tomatoes this week, but not enough for every box; whereas we typically have an abundant cherry tomato harvest by this time. Eggplants and peppers are both a week or two later than usual, and yields have also been lower than usual. This week we are giving out eggplants in the Tuesday boxes and peppers in the Friday boxes whereas we typically have enough of each for all boxes by this time.

On the positive side, yields of cucumber, summer squash, and green beans have all been excellent. These crops do like warm weather, but they do thrive at somewhat lower temperatures than the pepper, tomato, and eggplant. The cool weather has improved the flavor of our broccoli. Onions develop large bulbs in cool, moist weather, and our onions are sizing up well in the field.

Overall, we're hoping for a dryish August with daytime temperatures in the mid eighties. This will push our lagging summer crops toward maturity and help our fall vegetables grow towards harvest.

Eggplant is sponge-like in nature: it can really soak up oil and marinades. You can sauté eggplant in oil or butter until lightly browned and then season with salt and pepper, parsley, and/or parmesan cheese. You can also bread the eggplant in flour, egg, and/or bread crumbs before sautéing. Eggplant is often grilled; we have several recipes for grilled eggplant on our website:

Grilled Eggplant Sandwich ([7/25/2005](#))

Grilled Lemony Eggplant ([7/16/2006](#))

Eggplant should always be cooked; peeling is optional. The skin is somewhat tough and can be unpleasant in some sautees and cooked dishes. On the other hand if you are grilling eggplant slices you will probably want to leave the skin on in order to hold the slices together.

Pepper this week's pepper is a white variety. Most peppers are green when they first form on the plant and they then turn red as they ripen. But there are all sorts of color variations. The white peppers begin white, instead of green, and later turn a red color. We have trialed several unusual novelty colors of pepper varieties over the years and we really enjoy the nice mild taste of these white peppers.

Onions and garlic are both uncured. After harvest, onion and garlic bulbs both need to cure before they will store well. Curing means placing the bulbs in a warm, well-ventilated place for several weeks, during which time the outer skins of the bulb dry and harden. The dry outer layers will then protect the bulbs from rot and moisture loss. The garlic and onions you're receiving this week are relatively fresh and not completely cured. The garlic is partly cured. We recommend that you leave the garlic unbagged on your countertop and plan to use it in the next week or two. The onions will do best bagged in the fridge and eaten within a week or so.

In this week's box:

Vegetable	Refrigerate?	Store In Plastic Bag To Retain Moisture?	Approx. Storage Life	Comments
Basil	No	No	<1 wk	Store upright in a vase with water, out of direct sunlight. Refrigeration will blacken the leaves.
Beans, green	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Broccoli	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Cucumber	Yes	Yes	1 wk	
Eggplant	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Tuesday boxes only
Garlic	No	No	1-2 wks	Store in dry well ventilated location
Onion	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Red round or Ailsa Craig varieties
Lettuce	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Romaine
Pepper, white	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Friday boxes only
Summer squash	Yes	Yes	1 wk	Yellow-green bicolor and/or zucchini
Tomato, Cherry	No	No	1 wk	Tomatoes may keep slightly longer in the fridge but fridge temperatures damage the flavor a bit.

Braised Green Beans and Friends

1 Tblsp olive oil
 1 small onion, halved and sliced
 1 tsp dry oregano or 1 Tblsp chopped fresh
 1/2 cup white wine
 1 lb green bean, stem end trimmed
 1 med summer squash or zucchini, quartered lengthwise and cut into 3/4" pieces
 1 pepper, sliced and cut into 3/4" squares
 1 cup broccoli florets
 1/4 tsp salt
 Black pepper to taste
 Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large skillet on medium heat. Saute onion and oregano until onion is soft and beginning to brown. Add wine and bring to a boil. Add beans, and simmer covered for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add squash, pepper, and broccoli and cook until all vegetables are tender. Mix in salt and pepper, serve sprinkled with parmesan cheese.

Garlicky Grilled Eggplant

1/4 cup olive oil
 1 garlic clove, minced
 1 large or 2 medium eggplants cut into 3/4" thick rounds
 Salt
 Black pepper
 Parmesan cheese

Mix garlic and oil. Brush it on both sides of eggplant. Season with salt and pepper. Grill covered, turning once, until tender, 6-8 minutes total. Cut into bite sized pieces and sprinkle with cheese.