



*Prentice school group helping harvest winter squash this week.*

## BENEFITING OUR BACTERIA

This week we hosted a school group and revisited a familiar newsletter topic: eating dirt. Judging by the look on the students faces, they are now wondering, "Does eating dirt actually improve our health?"

A quick search on the internet and you will discover that there is a movement called the "Eat Dirt Movement." Yes it is real and apparently people are curing a whole host of health issues simply by eating dirt and the soil-borne organisms within. These organisms enter our bodies both from unclean food and unclean hands. They aid the body in absorption of specific nutrients and antioxidants and apparently it is changing people's lives. Recent research has shown that exposing children to a diverse range of microbes early in life, particularly those found in the soil where they live, reduces their risk of allergies and asthma and strengthens their immune system. Admittedly, we already suspected this to be true but never read the reports.

When a school group was on the farm on Thursday, we discussed how most herbicides don't just kill weeds, they also kill micro-organisms in the soil rendering it life-less and no longer able to breakdown nutrients that plants need. Growing organically, our plants must be in prime condition to fight off diseases and pests, so our soil has to be in peak health. Even worse, chemical residue in our food deteriorates our own body's microbiome inside the intestinal tract, which breaks down nutrients during digestion not unlike what happens in soil. When you realize how many illnesses are linked to inadequate gut bacteria, this should be a serious concern. Perhaps most importantly, our microbiome plays a role in our immune system. It is lesser known that it also influences gene expression. The scientific understanding of biological functions is becoming more and more complex every day!

So the take-away we are pondering is that the latest and greatest "super-food" is in fact dirt. The five-second rule was written to make sure we are allowed to consume that pound of dirt annually. And your dirty vegetables are providing more than meets the eye.

Believing in the power of dirt,

*eric + rebecca*

## IN THE BAG

Spaghetti Squash  
Broccoli  
Melon  
Carrots  
Bell Peppers  
Sauce Tomatoes  
Tomatillos  
Radishes  
Lemon Cucumbers  
Garlic Bulb  
Onions  
Lettuce (*larges*)

## BUTTERNUTS

As we continue to get the fall harvest in, we will have a lot of nicked, cracked and rodent nibbled butternut squash. There will be very little waste, but they are considered imperfect. Some will last several months in storage because the nicks are healed over. Squash retail price is \$1.25 per lb. We are offering 15 lbs of imperfects for \$10. Add more for \$0.67 per pound. This is five or six average sized butternuts. Let us know if you'd like these delivered with your share.

## FINAL SHARES

Shares will continue until the third week of October when we reach WEEK 20. For Saturday pick-up, that date will be October 16. For Tuesday pick-ups that date will be October 19.

## VEGGIE HUMOR

Why was the cucumber so concerned? Because it was in a pickle!

FOLLOW THE FARM:



# MELONS

## Green-striped watermelon:

This variety is called Early Moonbeam. It is a yellow fleshed variety with a high brix level. The brix level refers to the sugar content in food. We love growing this variety because we think it tastes amazing! If this is your first year getting a share, you might be surprised to find seeds inside the watermelons.



**Solid dark green watermelon:** The standard northern icebox watermelon, Sugar Baby has beautiful deep red flesh when fully ripe. Discovered in a field of picnic watermelons by M. Hardin of Geary, OK, in 1955 it is still prized by those who prefer their watermelons open-pollinated and of modest size, although its flesh quality is grainier than hybrids.

**Oblong yellow with subtle white stripes:** This Korean bred melon, called Sun Jewel, has sweet, crisp, white flesh that tasting like neither cantaloupe nor muskmelon, but has its own sweet and subtle flavor and great crunch. As Sun Jewels age, the rind will split on the outside. The ideal time to eat them is when there are numerous small splits down the rind as they are bursting with sugar at this point. That being said you needn't wait, they are delicious now as well.



## Heavily netted, peachy undertone muskmelons:

1) The first of several similar melons, Dove F1 from FEDCO seeds is new to us. It is an ananas-type melon. The ivory-colored flesh with tropical fruity overtones has tested as high as 15.5 on the Brix sweetness scale! The greenish-orange skin shows scant netting and blushes as the fruits ripen. After harvesting let them sit 3-4 days to bring out their full flavor.

2) This is also the first season for Sugar Cube Muskmelon at We Grow. This variety was promoted as a fast maturing, small muskmelon. Great for going halves with a fellow melon lover. The thick deep orange succulent flesh zings like musky candy.

3) The third is called Arava F1 from High Mowing Organic Seeds. The flesh inside is more green than orange with extra-sweet eating quality. It is a Galia type melon. Galia melons were developed by crossing a honeydew to a cantaloupe, Green-fleshed tropical melon with deliciously aromatic, sweet and crisp flesh.



# SPAGHETTI WINTER SQUASH

Baked until tender, this is one of the best replacements for pasta. Just consider the added nutrition and fiber versus traditional wheat flour noodles.

It's easy to make. Cut in half, poke some holes in the skin with a fork and place it cut side down on a greased baking sheet. Pop it in a pre-heated 400°F oven. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes for al dente texture. After baking, use a fork to pull the "noodles" from the halves. One large spaghetti squash is generally too much for our family to eat at one meal. Rest assured, the cooked squash can be frozen for later use.

Spaghetti squash is excellent served with tomato sauce, but also delicious with butter and parmesan cheese or basil pesto. Store winter squash at 45-50°F well into the winter, hence the name! Check often for signs of decay.



# BROCCOLI

Finally the broccoli is back! This is the third planting of broccoli that we planted in the field back in late-July. It really took its sweet time. Literally, as the nights get cooler, brassicas get sweeter. You might notice it will start to taste a little different as the weather reaches freezing temps later this month. We will have broccoli for a month or more if the weather cooperates.

Please note that we have found there to be more bugs in this crop than usual. We suggest a combination of several techniques to avoid a green worm on your plate. First, a visual inspection of the stems on the underside of the florets is the easiest. Second, you can soak the cut up broccoli in a salt water bath overnight. Third, we often blanch ours in boiling water for one minute and stir vigorously to dislodge their little bodies from the pieces. Or ignore them and eat a little extra protein this week.

## MELON RIPENESS

**If you cut into your melon within a reasonable amount of time and find it is either over ripe or under ripe, please just let us know and we will get you a new one. It can be incredibly difficult for us to determine when a melon is at the perfect point of ripeness and we know mistakes are made. Every CSA member deserves a great tasting melon!**