

what's "cropping" up!

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A note from the farmers of Geauga Family Farms

Thank you for all of the feedback that you have provided to us so far. We have heard some concerns very recently that produce is getting damaged in transit and that some items are not as fresh as we would like. Thank you for bringing this to our attention!

The farmers of the Geauga Family Farms cooperative are working extremely hard to provide you with the freshest and tastiest produce possible. We would like to let you know about some changes in direct response to your comments.

- We are going to start sending heavier items like melons in a separate box so they will not damage more delicate items in your box. Make sure you look for them at your pickup site.
- Items like tomatoes and peaches will be placed inside of compostable quart containers to better protect them from our farms to your home.
- The removal of the melons should also alleviate damage to items like corn, and will make the boxes less full – providing a little more space for what remains.

The large plastic bags in which we deliver your produce have become a primary concern. We believe that the extra warm temperatures we are experiencing this summer, paired with placing the produce in the plastic bags, is accelerating the ripening process and resulting in some items seeming as if they were picked too late. The nonporous nature of the bags traps heat and moisture, leading to wilted greens, mushy melons and worse.

Organic standards require us to place the food in a fresh container each week and we understand the reasoning for this. We did not use the plastic bags last season and did not run into this sort of problem at all. It does, however, seem to be a fact of life at least for the near-term, so we are looking for a few ways to make them work better until we find a better option.

- When you receive your produce, open the bag. Some experiments over the weekend demonstrated that the produce in an open bag sitting on a covered porch in the 90+ degree heat fared much better over 24 hours than a closed bag sitting for a few hours in cooler conditions. It's certainly best to get the produce out of the bags as soon as possible, but if you can't do that right away, at least open the bag to let it breathe.
- Take the box with you if possible. It is packed in a manner to keep the produce in better shape. Once removed from the box, it is easier for items to get jostled and bruised.
- We are currently searching for breathable produce bags and hope to find some that will meet our needs very soon.

The farmers of Geauga Family Farms are committed to finding solutions to these problems so your produce arrives in the best condition possible. Imagine our disappointment when we hear that the vegetables that we have been so excited about in terms of condition and flavor are arriving to you in a state that is unacceptable! We truly appreciate your feedback and patience as we try some new approaches to solve this.

Sincerely, The Farmers of Geauga Family Farms Organic CSA

Noah Yutzy, Jr.

Andy J. Miller

Marvin Hershberger

Daniel Fisher

Lester Hershberger

Abner McDaniels

Jonas L. Byler

Thomas C. Byler

Dominic Marchese



Sage's Apples - A family tradition for five generations

This week we are featuring our partner site Sage's Apples Farm Market in Chardon. I interrupted Bob Sage while he was busily picking peaches one morning. He said it was not unusual



relationship. If Bob needs extra produce to sell his customers, it can be dropped off with the shares that week.

"And when the CSA customers come to pick up their shares some of them buy from us too," Bob said. "Some are strictly organic, and they don't buy and that's OK."

Sage's has a long history in Geauga County; the barn was built in 1914. It's a conventional family farm, with family members working alongside hired local labor to plant, maintain and harvest their produce.

"My mom still works in the market," Bob said proudly. "She'll be 87 this October. And she picks

to find him in the peach orchard as that's about all he'd been doing for the past 15 days.

Bob, along with his brother and partner John, grow 50 varieties of apples, as well as 16 types of peaches, and several varieties of nectarines, plums, pears, cherries, grapes, blueberries, red raspberries and blackberries.

Sage's also grows their own vegetables, including green beans, tomatoes and 15+ acres of sweet corn. Customers will find pumpkins, gourds and winter squash such as acorn, buttercup and butternut later in the year.

"We picked plums this morning too," Bob said.

Bob says what he likes most about being a pickup site for GFF is bringing more fresh produce to his customers.

"Fresh produce is a good way of staying healthy and I sure promote that as much as I can," Bob said. "I just promote eating fresh produce, and GFF is doing the same thing."

Sage's joined GFF several years ago to help promote Geauga County produce, and the whole idea of buying local, specifically buying Geauga County.

"That's what we are about too, so it made sense for us to join them," Bob said. "We wanted to see them succeed."

Sage's and GFF have a mutually beneficial



red raspberries and blackberries."

"My son Ben's generation is the fifth generation," Bob said. I detected more pride in his voice when he spoke of his kids.

Ben is a photographer, specializing in fruit and vegetable shots, including the photos with this article. See more of his work on the Web site at www.sagesapples.com.

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Bob's other son, Jordan, is a sophomore at Chardon High School. Bob's brother John has four kids of his own.

Bob says he enjoys every aspect of his job, year-round.

"I enjoy every part of the year," he said. "I enjoy the planting, the market and selling produce to customers."

But Bob admits fall is probably his favorite time of year.

"I really enjoy harvesting time. I can be out in the orchard picking, no equipment noises, not as many decisions, just pick, as fast as we can," he said.

Though Sage's produce is not organic, they use trapping and integrated pest management techniques.

"IPM for short," Bob said. "IPM is a standard of relying on specific pest life cycles to time sprays to maximize effectiveness. We don't want to spray any more than we have to; most spraying is done evenings when conditions are more favorable for spraying."

Sage's employs a lot of summertime help, mostly high school kids and housewives, Bob says, asking me if I needed a job.

"The big things from here on are pears and grapes, and lots of choices on apples," Bob said. "Some favorites that people might not have heard of unless they shop here are Honey Crisp and Macoun – real tender, good quality."

They will be available in mid-October.

Homegrown fruit available now includes Red Haven peaches, Jersey Macs, Ginger Golds, Zestar and other early varieties. Sage's always has local honey, Geauga County maple syrup, brown eggs, yellow and white popcorn, Sage's apple and pumpkin butter, Amish-made whole-wheat bread

and specialty jams and jellies for sale in the retail market. Later in the season, locally pressed apple cider will be available.

Technology allows Sage's to offer apples year-round.

"We have a cooler of our own, but the ones we have in March, April and May, are stored in



Columbiana in a controlled atmosphere cooler," Bob said.

The market, located at 11355 Chardon Road in Chardon, is open: July – October: Monday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Sunday noon – 5 p.m. November – June: Monday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Sunday noon – 5 p.m. Call 440-286-3416 for available varieties.



This week's picks

Coming this week to your CSA box ***could be some or all of the following:*** Sweet corn, cantaloupe, acorn squash, potatoes, beans, green peppers, jalapeños, cherry tomatoes, tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, peaches, Swiss chard, blackberries, basil and lettuce.

For those of you who have opted out of receiving nonorganic fruits, your name will be on your share to differentiate it from the others.

Remember, farming isn't an exact science. Family and Single shares won't necessarily include the same items so if you don't have one or

more of these items, it's either because we didn't have enough, or because you have a Single share and the item in question was included in the Family share only.

Photos of each week's produce are still being posted on Facebook by GFF member Lyn Trier. Just "Like" Geauga Family Farms and click on "Links" in the bottom left-hand portion of the page. It will bring up a list of postings from each week, with labeled photos of all the veggies.

Below are a few recipes using this week's vegetables. 

Zucchini Corn Fritters

Serves 24

2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon cumin
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 fresh ground black pepper
 2 eggs, beaten
 1 cup milk
 1/4 cup butter, melted
 2 cups grated zucchini
 1 1/2 cups fresh corn, kernels cut from cob
 1 cup finely shredded Cheddar cheese
 Oil for frying

In a large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, cumin, sugar, salt, and pepper. In a small bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, and butter. Whisk wet ingredients into dry

ingredients. Stir in zucchini, corn, and cheese; mix well. Warm oil in a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Drop batter by the tablespoonful into hot oil.

Fry until crisp and brown, turning once with tongs. Remove to paper towels. Serve hot with ranch dressing.

Recipe from Allrecipes.com.



Uncle Jon's Watermelon Salsa

"This is a good way to use up extra watermelon, but also a good excuse to buy some watermelon in the first place. I was surprised by how well the watermelon works in salsa."

8 cups cubed seeded watermelon
 1 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
 1/2 large white onion, chopped
 2 large jalapeno peppers - stemmed, seeded and minced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 cup white wine vinegar
 1 teaspoon salt

Stir the watermelon, cilantro, onion, jalapeño peppers, garlic, vinegar, and salt together in a bowl until evenly mixed. Cover, and refrigerate overnight for best flavor.

Recipe from Allrecipes.com.



RECIPES...continued from Page 4

Easy Cold Tomato Soup

Puree tomatoes, a little onion, a peeled avocado and a bit of olive oil. Process until slightly chunky or smooth (whatever your preference) and serve as a refreshing cold summer soup.

Harvest Grains & Summer Vegetable Salad

A recipe from Vegenista's blog that is a modified version of a salad from Vegetarian Times.

"I did modify it a bit, substituting the quinoa with the Harvest Grain Blend from Trader Joe's - a savory blend of 'Israeli-style couscous, orzo, baby garbanzo beans & red quinoa.

"I also topped each serving with a chiffonade

Salad:

- 1 1/4 cup Trader Joe's Harvest Grains Blend, or 1 cup quinoa, rinsed & drained
- 1 Tbsp. vegan margarine (Earth Balance is always my choice)
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen sweet corn kernels (from 2 ears)
- 1 1/2 cups halved cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1 cup finely chopped purple cabbage
- 1 cup diced cucumber

To make Salad: cook grains blend or quinoa according to package.

Bring 2 cups of water to boil in a separate saucepan. Add corn & cook 1 minute. Drain, & rinse under cold water. Drain again. Stir together corn, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumber & grains in bowl.

To make Dressing: Mix all ingredients together until smooth. Stir into Salad. Top with fresh basil & freshly ground black pepper.

of fresh basil.

"I have an abundance of it right now and I think herbs are a wonderful way to enhance the freshness of any dish! So yummy!"

Dressing:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 Tbsp. dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. salt

Cleveland Independents = Eating Out Locally

As CSA members, we know you are crazy about local food. Here is a newsletter from the Cleveland Independents, a group of locally owned and operated restaurants, many of which feature locally grown foods on their menus.

They offer a gift certificate sale a few times a year and we thought you'd be interested. Below are highlights from their latest newsletter. Read more at <http://clevelandindependents.com/>.

New members

Check this out. Bucci's at the Crowne Plaza. Bucci's J Bella. Bucci's of Berea. Dervish Mediterranean & Turkish Grill. La Strada. Naya Bistro & Lounge. Shuhei Restaurant of Japan. Rose Angel Taqueria.

The 2009-2010 Deck...Now That's a Deal!

This is one of those "too good to pass up" deals. The Deck is on sale now for only \$19.95. Incredible. Cards expire Dec. 30, 2010, so there's still plenty of time to use them.

Interested in purchasing high quantities of The Deck 2010-2011 for holiday gift giving? Call Myra Orenstein for discount information at 216-932-3322

or e-mail info@clevelandindependents.com. The Deck is the ideal gift for foodies and a fabulous stocking stuffer.

The 2010-2011 version of The Deck will feature the same offer at every restaurant: \$10 off with a \$30 food purchase.

One entrée must be purchased in order to qualify.

Alcohol, tax and tips not included. Holidays not applicable. May not be used in conjunction with other offers.

Cleveland Independents Gift Cards

We continue to receive rave reviews about our Cleveland Independents Gift Cards. These are the only cards that are redeemable at any of our 90 member restaurants. What a great gift idea! And effective this quarter, there are no expiration dates. Buy now for holiday gift giving. (We'll never tell that you got a discount.)

Go for it while there are still certificates remaining. Fabulous food at fantastic prices awaits you.



Letters from our members

We want you to know we are aware of your concerns regarding the freshness of your produce and are working out a solution to these issues. The extremely hot weather, organic packaging demands and amount of time the produce sits at some of the sites before being picked up have added some challenges.

GFF continues to receive many letters from our members. We love hearing from you. Our ears are open to your questions, comments, concerns, and naturally, your compliments. ;)

Please turn back to Page 1 for more information on the steps we are taking to address crushing and freshness issues.



Great newsletter...as usual, thanks.

...I don't like to bother Roseanna. It must be a big job keeping track of all the boxes and deliveries, schedule, etc.

She has always been very nice and has offered to help in the past too. Actually, everyone in CSA has been wonderful.

We were out at the Saturday Market at the Middlefield Cheese Co-op the Saturday before last and there were quite a few buyers there. There were some CSA members selling their produce and we were able to find some more corn and cukes. From the look of things, they don't need more publicity, but we were only there for a short time in the am.

Thanks again,

~Vic Sudik, Warehouse

The produce has been wonderful lately. It's nice to have the watermelon and berries and beautiful green peppers!

I did want to share that the last two weeks since the peaches came in they have been very bruised and squished. I have had to cut them to remove the damaged parts or I've had to throw them away altogether. I think having that big watermelon in

the bag caused some damage to both the peaches and the tomatoes this past week.

Anyway, overall I've been pleased with the produce. Thanks for your efforts.

~Beth Davis, TriPoint

I wanted to let you know that the peaches were very mushy for the past 2 weeks as well as the cantaloupe last week. I had to throw them away. What can I do to the basil to help it keep fresh longer than 1 day? I wash the basil in ice water and then place in the frig and it wilts and discolors over night. Otherwise, the vegetables and fruit have been very good. Thank you.

~Wendy Richey, TriPoint

I was happy to visit the Byler farms yesterday. It was amazing to see everything in action, meet the kids, etc.

I was hesitant to go on a farm visit at first, but thought I'd be missing out if I didn't try one. Now I am sad that I missed so many and can't wait for the next one. I'm hoping to take the kids with me next time.

Thanks!

~Lyn Trier, JCC

Please return ALL containers

Jars -- jelly/jam jars, maple syrup jars, honey jars, cucumber jars, in short, anything that comes in a jar -- are being added to the list of containers to return to your pickup site. The idea for this came from member Michael Sharon, who picks up at Ruffing Montessori School.

We recently added the clear plastic containers

in which you receive your cherry tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, berries and more. These items are expensive!

This not only helps the farmers cut costs, thereby helping to keep the cost of your CSA share down, but also allows both you and us to do our part to help the environment. Reduce, reuse, recycle. It's the **GREEN** thing to do!



Quote of the Week: "It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato."

~Lewis Grizzard

Veggie Tip of the Week: Basil perks up if you put it in a glass of water (either in or out of the refrigerator). If the stems are just placed in the refrigerator without water, they will wilt almost immediately. You can throw it right into the food processor with a bit of olive oil and then pour into an ice cube tray. Empty the frozen cubes into a freezer bag and drop in a cube whenever you need some fresh basil flavor.

Order your bulk veggies now

The farmers of the CSA have asked us to let everyone know that they have some extra bulk veggies perfect for canning or freezing. Items include green peppers, cucumbers and canning tomatoes. They are great for making pickles, sauces and salsa.

Wouldn't it be nice to open up a jar of summer's goodness in January?

Please see the form below if you are interested in ordering any of these items. They can be delivered to your pick-up site. Quantities are limited so place your order soon!



CANNING TOMATOES – 20 LB. BOX \$10.00

#1 QUALITY GREEN PEPPERS – BUSHEL \$24.00

CUCUMBERS – 1/2 BUSHEL \$10.00

GREEN PEPPERS (SECONDS) – BUSHEL \$12.00

Please fill out the form below and mail it with a check* to:

Geauga Family Farms
Attn: Roseanna Hershberger
15549 Patch Road
Middlefield, Ohio 44062

* Checks should be made out to Geauga Family Farms



BULK PRODUCE ORDER

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Pick-up site location: _____

I would like:

___ CANNING TOMATOES (x \$10)

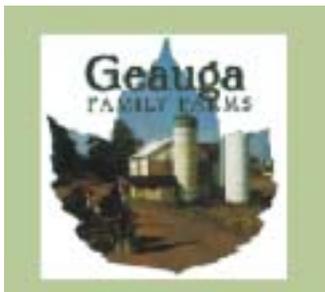
___ #1 GREEN PEPPERS (x \$24)

___ CUCUMBERS (x \$10)

___ GREEN PEPPERS (SECONDS) (x \$12)

ORDER TOTAL: _____





Like us on  Follow us on 

Extras, extras, read all about them

Some sites offer “extras” to GFF CSA members. St. Paul's, St. Noel, First Church Congregational, Ruffing Montessori School, Deepwood Center and Family Karate all offer extras.

This means you can order items like fresh baked bread, honey, maple syrup, ground beef and more, to

be picked up with your share.

The JCC, Sage's, Eagle Creek, First Unitarian and the Cleveland Food Co-op do not.

Please make sure your site offers extras before ordering meat or other products from the warehouse.

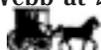
To order extras, see your site manager. 

Cluck-cluck, quack, quack, moo-oo-oo

Our Pekin ducks are ready! Duck meat doesn't 'taste like chicken' - the flavor is richer, the meat is more moist. Why not try something different, especially when you can buy directly from the farmer? Free-range chickens and ducks are fed organic minerals; most are fed conventional feed. The freshly butchered ducks are \$3.20 a pound; chickens are \$2.50 a pound. Most weigh in at about 4 pounds or so. Chickens and ducks MUST be picked up at the farms.

Please call Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris at 216-321-7109 or Laura Dobson at 440-478-9849 to place



your order. Also available is grass-fed, pastured ground beef. The cost is \$3.75 per pound delivered with your share. Please check first to see if your site is able to receive extras such as beef before ordering. More meats will become available in early fall. Contact Kathleen Webb at 216-408-7719 or gfamilyfarms@aol.com. 

Farm Visits

Meet the Farmer Dates 2010

Fourth Tuesdays – 6:30-8 p.m.
Second Saturdays – 1-4 p.m.

Drive out to picturesque Geauga County for a visit with the farmers of Geauga Family Farms. The second Saturday and fourth Tuesday of every month through October, CSA members can come see where their food is grown, and meet the farmers who have nurtured the certified-organic produce shareholders receive each week in their CSA share.

For a map of all the farms, visit our Web site at www.geaugafamilyfarmsllc.org and click on Meet Our Farmers on the left.

Aug. 24
Sept. 11



Ask a Farmer

Are you curious about farm life in Geauga County? Have a question about something you've received in your share? Wondering how so much is accomplished without the use of electricity and power tools? Curious about how upcoming agricultural legislation affects small, family farms?

Send your questions for our new “Ask a Farmer” section of the newsletter to BandyZ@sbcglobal.net, or LMFree99@yahoo.com and we'll get answers for you. 



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