

Monroe Family Organics

CSA Newsletter

AUGUST 10, 2013

Farm Update

Hello Everyone! This last week was a very nice week to be out in the fields, and the rain early in the week really helped our crops a lot. There were many crops at a critical point that will now be much better quality and more productive than if the rain had not come. Right now we are seeding for fall, putting more of our lettuces, beets, and carrots in the ground. We also have a lot of transplants of cabbage, broccoli, and other veggies that will go into the ground soon. The pigs are in one of their fastest growth stages and are eating like crazy. We are also slowly getting into the main tomato season, which is a lot later than usual, but we are starting to see a lot of tomatoes finally starting to ripen. There are tons of green tomatoes on the vines, and we have really been enjoying tomatoes here at home. They taste very good, especially after the warmer and sunnier last few days. For you Brussels sprouts lovers, it looks like our crop will be very strong for the fall as the plants have done very well with the cooler summer, and they are starting to put on small sprouts already.



Our pigs are eating a ton of food right now, because they are at a stage when they put on weight more quickly than they normally do.



What to Expect in This Week's Share

- ❖ Tomatoes or red potatoes
- ❖ Lettuce or Yukon potatoes
- ❖ Kale or cabbage
- ❖ Carrots or chard
- ❖ Beans, broccoli, or beets
- ❖ Parsley, basil, or small head lettuce
- ❖ Onions or garlic

Have questions or comments? Email us at mforganics@yahoo.com or call Michele at

517-896-6884.

Vegetable Spotlight: Carrots

The carrot is a very common vegetable in the American diet, and orange carrots are typically found in every supermarket across the country. This popular vegetable originated somewhere in Iran or Afghanistan, but was extremely different from the orange carrot we now have at our tables. Thousands of years of traditional breeding have turned the original carrots from a tough, thin, bitter purple root into the typically orange sweet root we have today. The first carrots were mostly used for the aromatic foliage and for the seeds, much like we now use dill, which is a close relative of the carrot. Through medieval times it is referenced many times for medicinal purposes. When it first came to Europe is widely disputed, and there are a lot of historical unknowns due to its confusion in ancient writings with the closely related parsnip. However, its movement to the Americas is a little more certain, as it showed up very soon after Columbus came to the Americas in 1492. Back in the 1600s, more definite descriptions of carrots appear, and orange is mentioned along with many other colors of carrots that were present. The real push in the US and Great Britain came during the first and second world wars, when other foods were highly rationed but carrots could be grown at home and stored well. During World War II, Great Britain didn't want the Germans to know how effective their radar was, so they famously spread the rumor that their fighter pilots could see so well at night because of their high carrot intake.

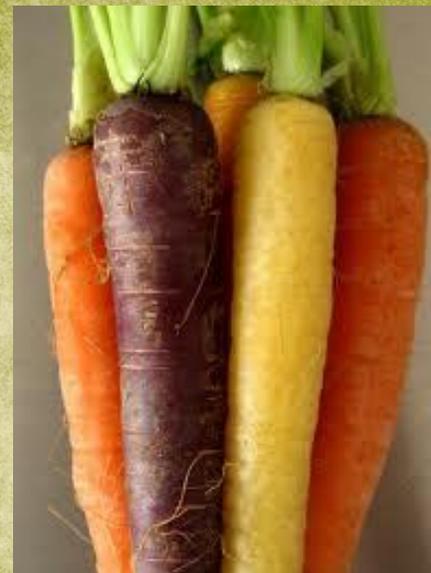
The carrot has great nutritional benefits, the most well known of which is the high vitamin A levels found in the orange carrots. Our mix of carrots is yellow, purple, and orange, and you can see that each has a slightly different taste than the others.

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Above: Since the root is the part of the carrot that we eat, you can only see the greens while they are growing. Here, the carrots are being irrigated with drip tape.

Below: People are familiar with orange carrots, but we also grow yellow and purple carrots at the farm.





Try out our yummy carrot cake recipe!

The sweetest is the orange, where there have been more breeding efforts. We expect in future years there will be greater improvements in the yellow and purple carrots that will increase the sweetness and ease of growing.

Your carrots start out being seeded directly into the ground during the first planting of the season. They are also one of the last seedings of the year as well, due to the extremely frost-hardy nature of this plant. After being seeded, they come up and are cultivated with the push cultivator, and then they are hand weeded two or three times before becoming mature. They are then harvested by hand and cleaned using high pressure water out of our hose. During most of the summer, they are irrigated heavily with our drip tape, mostly to germinate the seeds but also through dry periods to avoid a bitter taste. They can be harvest very late into the year; it is typical to harvest carrots through December, although care has to be taken to harvest when the ground is still thawed. They can also be covered and harvested anytime that the ground thaws throughout the winter

This season we have had very productive plantings due in part to the cool summer. We hope you enjoy the carrots this season!

Recipe: Carrot Cake

INGREDIENTS:

4 eggs	3 cups grated carrots
1 1/4 cups vegetable oil	1 cup chopped pecans
2 cups white sugar	1/2 cup butter, softened
2 teaspoons vanilla extract	8 ounces cream cheese, softened
2 cups all-purpose flour	4 cups confectioners' sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons baking powder	1 cup chopped pecans (optional)
1/2 teaspoon salt	
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon	

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour a 9x13 inch pan.
2. In a large bowl, beat together eggs, oil, white sugar and 2 teaspoons vanilla. Mix in flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Stir in carrots. Fold in pecans. Pour into prepared pan.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack and cool completely.
4. To Make Frosting: In a medium bowl, combine butter, cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Stir in chopped pecans. Frost the cooled cake.