

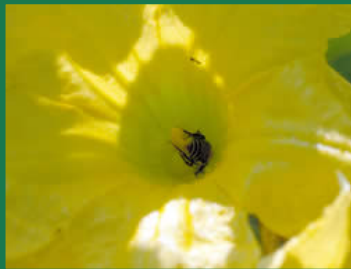


HARVEST HILL CSA NEWSLETTER

WEEK 7: JULY 28, 2016



ABOVE: Our truck filled to bursting with zucchini and summer squash. Thanks, bees!
BELOW: A squash bee pollinating a squash flower (photo courtesy of the USDA/Forest Service pollinators website)



POLLINATOR OF THE WEEK: WILD BEES

In last week's newsletter, we mentioned the importance of pollinators and the key role they play in the success of our crops. Many of you are familiar with the honey bee—a species introduced to North America by Europeans in the 1600s—but did you know that the US is home to approx. 4000 species of native wild bees? Of those, about 350 species live in Vermont. 17 of those are bumble bee species; the rest may be less familiar to us, but their pollination efforts are extremely crucial nonetheless. While honey bees are certainly highly effective pollinators, wild bees can actually be more effective in some circumstances and for some crops—for instance, they are more active in wet and cool weather, a major advantage here in Vermont. They also tend to collect nectar and pollen at the same time, while honey bees often focus on nectar and neglect to gather pollen, which makes for great honey but doesn't help the farmer so much!

Our favorite species of wild bee this week is the squash bee (*Peponapis pruinosa*), which often nests in the ground next to squash plants. According to one study, about two-thirds of the time their efforts alone are sufficient to pollinate a squash field, without the help of other pollinator species. We're not sure whether our squash bees stepped up their game or got back-up from other species, but the issues we noted last week with misshapen zucchini and a poor harvest have definitely cleared up! Here on the farm we're now dealing with an overabundance of squash, the fruits of not just our labor but also of the busy bees in our fields.

Sources: 9/14/12 issue of "Agriview", published by the VT Agency of Agriculture, and www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/, a resource from the US Forest Service.

THIS WEEK'S BOX:

- ✧ Lettuce
 - ✧ Broccoli
 - ✧ Zucchini
 - ✧ Yellow squash
 - ✧ Snap or shell peas (small amount)
- *Peas will be labeled. For shell peas, open and remove peas. Eat snap peas whole.**
- ✧ Spearmint (small amount)

ANNOUNCEMENT:

We're selling extra summer squash and zucchini for \$0.75/pound. If you'd like to buy some, email Abby at abigail.bok@gmail.com by **Wednesday evening** and we'll deliver it with your box this week. Great for if you're hosting a big summer cookout this weekend and want to serve lots of grilled veggies, or you could freeze some for later!

QUESTIONS? FEEDBACK?

If you will be on vacation and can't pick up your box, let us know and you will get extra produce in a different week.

Email us at: abigail.bok@gmail.com

BILL'S Funky MINUTE

As August approaches, it is great to look at the fields and see the results of so many hands' hard work—and to anticipate the arrival of some of my summer favorites. The corn has begun tasseling, the blueberries are turning a light shade of blue, and the tomatoes are getting some red. There is nothing like the taste of these summer fruits and veggies picked at their peak ripeness; it's the only time of the year that I choose to eat tomatoes, although luckily we can freeze corn and blueberries so that we can enjoy their summer flavors all year. Even beyond these three mid-summer favorites, so many crops fill me with anticipation of the weeks to come. Looking out over the fields of seedlings and seeing them grow larger day-by-day never ceases to amaze me. I see the onions beginning to form bulbs and know that, in three weeks or so, the tops will bend and we'll begin the drying process in the fields. The cucumbers have finally started to flower; the winter squash looks great, though I continue to worry about pollination in our squash field. And after a challenging start of the season with many seeding troubles, the beets and carrots will soon be large enough to harvest for your boxes.

We have a prolific zucchini and summer squash harvest this season, so enjoy what you get in the box...and if you have too much, you can always turn to the squash-burdened vegetable gardener's classic summer prank: sneak some in the back of an unsuspecting neighbor's car for them to enjoy!

Be well and enjoy!

Bill

CHEESY BROCCOLI SQUASH BAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- ✧ 2 cups fresh broccoli florets
- ✧ 3 tbsp butter
- ✧ 2 cups sliced yellow squash
- ✧ 1 egg
- ✧ ½ cup shredded Swiss cheese
- ✧ ¼ cup milk
- ✧ ¼ teaspoon ground mustard
- ✧ Dash cayenne pepper
- ✧ 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a large skillet, stir-fry broccoli in butter for 3 minutes. Add squash. Cook 3 min longer or until veggies are crisp-tender. Transfer to a greased 1-qt baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the egg, Swiss cheese, milk, mustard, and cayenne. Pour over vegetables. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake uncovered at 350°F for 15-20 min or until set. Yields 2-4 servings.

Source: www.tasteofhome.com

ZUCCHINI, MINT, AND YOGURT SPREAD

INGREDIENTS:

- ✧ 1 large zucchini, sliced lengthwise and cut into 1-inch half-moons
- ✧ 2 tbsp olive oil
- ✧ ½ cup Greek yogurt
- ✧ 2 tbsp mint, roughly chopped
- ✧ zest of 1 lemon
- ✧ salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle zucchini slices with salt and pepper and add to the pan. Cook for about 5 minutes, turning once, until both sides are nicely browned. Remove from heat. Once zucchini have cooled to room temperature, place in a food processor. Add mint and lemon zest (reserving a bit of both for garnish), a pinch of salt, pepper, and yogurt. Pulse until pureed. Spread dip onto a serving plate, drizzle with remaining olive oil and sprinkle with reserved mint and lemon zest. Serve with pita wedges or sliced vegetables (like broccoli from your box!).

Source: www.thekitchn.com/recipe-zucchini-mint-and-yogurt-117173