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Please send newsletter feedback, suggestions and contributions to carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

We're on MySpace, [be our friend!](#)

1) In Your Box this Week

Zucchini
Patty Pan Squash
Zephyr Squash
Yellow Straight Neck Squash
Sweet Peppers
Hot Peppers
Eggplant
Basil
Okra
Melon - ?
Butter Beans
Winter Squash

This list is subject to change depending on availability and quality of crops on harvest day. You'll find the most accurate packing list on the homepage of our [website](#).

2) Farm News

- Fall planting is in full swing. Since Brenton returned last Thursday, we've set out several beds of cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli transplants.
- A big thanks to interns Will, Jeff and Chris who worked extra hard to keep the farm running last week while Brent was out of town!
- Our greenhouse continues to improve – yesterday we laid 5 truckloads of sand (and a sixth today) for the floor, once leveled and smoothed the sand will then be covered with groundcloth.



- The Well House Loft design continues to evolve. This is the structure intended to shade our well and the water storage tanks for residential use. It has grown to include a spiffy residence above, checkout the most recent design, done by Steven Mattern, here: [view 1](#), [view 2](#), [view 3](#)

3) New - Manage Your Subscription on our Website!

We've added a new area to our website that allows members to manage their CSA subscription. [Here](#) you can

check your pickup schedule, change pickup dates, and change e-mail settings (to receive newsletters and pickup reminders). Subscription renewals will also be done using this part of the site now.

To access this system, look for the "Members" link on the left side of any page under the "Join" plank. First-time users will need to request a new password. Simply type in your e-mail address and click "Send a new password". Check your e-mail for the new password and use it to login. The first page you see will allow you to change your contact information, e-mail settings, and password.

Click on the "My Pickups" link at the top of the panel to view your pickup schedule. Your pickups are displayed as a list and a calendar. Click on either one to change a particular pickup date or location.

The other links at the top of the panel can be used to renew your subscription or find information about our different pickup locations such as directions and maps.

4) Logo



Here's the most recent incarnation of our new logo, designed by Steven Mattern. We're looking for member

feedback...[what do you think?](#) You can access a larger, higher quality image here: [color](#) or [black and white](#).

5) Cooking Southern Peas

Some background, from Clemson University's Agricultural Extension: "Southern peas, black-eyed peas and field peas are all names for the crop known worldwide as cowpeas (*Vigna unguiculata* ssp. *unguiculata*). Cowpeas probably originated in Africa and were introduced to the United States during early colonial times. They quickly became a staple crop in the Southeast. This member of the legume family, which is actually a bean and not a pea, produces a very nutritious crop of seeds that can be shelled and eaten fresh, processed in the green stage or allowed to dry on the vine for a dried product. Most varieties of Southern peas produce their own nitrogen in root nodules making them good choices for soil-building during the summertime."

There are many different varieties, more than 85 in fact, of southern peas; these varieties are loosely grouped into 12 separate groups according to color and the density of peas within the pod. This week we distributed Lady Finger Peas which are a variety of the 'Cream Crowder' group due to their light color and high density in the pods. We also have Butterbeans, and Pink Eyes in storage for the coming weeks.

These peas were all harvested fresh, they can be lightly cooked and added to salads, or stewed and served over rice or cornbread (my favorite). They are very versatile, hold up well in cooking and go well with lots of different flavors. Southern peas are at the center of many traditional southern dishes like Hoppin' John, Chow Chow, Succotash, Texas Caviar, and of course the traditional New Year's Day meal for good luck. For basic southern pea preparation, we turn to Mama Nell, Brenton's 83 year old Grandmother in Alabama:



Steps to Making Great Southern Peas

Dictated from conversation with Mama Nell, 8-20-08

“Brent, don't write anything down. I just want to tell you how I do it and then you can write it down.&#xu201D;

[Brent keeps typing]

“I am going to get up if you do not listen!&#xu201D;

[Mama Nell gets madder and madder as Brent stays poised at the keyboard]

“I am just going to quit. Stop!&#xu201D;

To Mama Nell it is silly that Brent would need to write down how to cook peas, because *everyone* knows how to cook peas. That may be so in Alabama, but at every CSA pickup on Saturday Brent found he needed to explain what the peas were and how to cook them. But fear not, really they are “the simplest thing ever to cook&#xu201D; according to Brent and Mama Nell.

More from Mama Nell:

“Go get the frozen peas out of the freezer. If they are defrosted take them out of the bag, put them in a colander, and rinse for a few seconds in cold water.&#xu201D;

[Brent adds, “I don't even do that&#xu201D;]

Put in a sauce pan and cover about 1" with water.

Optional for flavoring, put a couple of pieces of bacon. Salt to taste and cook until tender...usually about 45 minutes or so. If you cook too long they will fall apart so caution about cooking too long.

Great served with mashed potatoes, greens, corn bread, sliced onions, and cream corn.

Some other options:

Cook the peas in stock instead of water

For flavoring you can also use a ham hock or salt pork

OR (veggie option!) you can substitute 1 Tablespoon olive oil plus 1 teaspoon salt

OR a teaspoon of bacon grease

Add a few small whole okra pods

If you'd rather not stew the peas, here's a cold salad recipe. Also be sure to check out the recipe section below which has two more recipes that can be made with southern peas.

Field pea salad with tomatoes and garlic mayo

Adapted from *The Gift of Southern Cooking* by Edna Lewis and Scott Peacock

1 1/4 cup mixed field peas

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

4 fresh summer tomatoes, cut into wedges - use several varieties if possible

The Vinaigrette

3 T Red Wine or sherry vinegar

1 t salt

1/4 t fresh black pepper

1 t dijon or whole grain mustard

1 T chopped shallot or red onion

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Garlic Mayo

1 clove very fresh garlic, chopped or pounded to a paste with a pinch of salt

1/2 cup mayonnaise

Dash of Tabasco

1-2 T hot water to thin if needed

Boil the peas in a large pot of salted water until tender (about 10 minutes). Drain immediately and spread the peas out on a sheet pan to cool. When the peas are completely cool (you can pop them in the refrigerator or freezer if you are in a hurry) toss them in a bowl with the tomatoes.

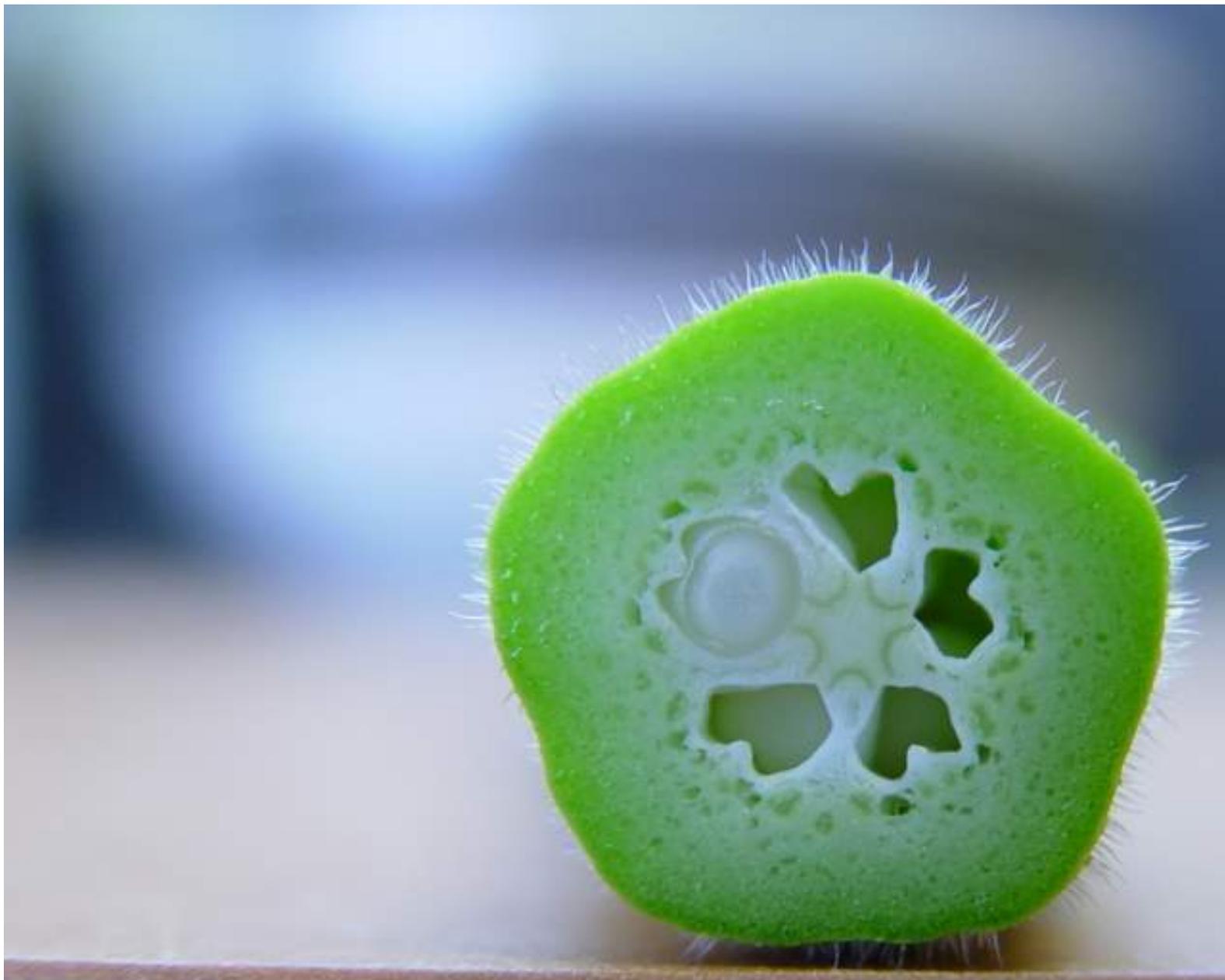
Make the dressing. Whisk together the vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Slowly whisk in the olive oil. Add the shallot and taste for salt and pepper.

Make the garlic sauce by stirring together the garlic paste and the mayo. Add the hot sauce and a little hot water to thin to drizzling consistency.

Season the peas and tomatoes with salt and pepper. Pour enough dressing over the vegetables to coat them and toss gently. Drizzle the garlic mayo over the salad and pass more at the table. You can serve this as a side dish - it is delicious with grilled meats and fish- or with mixed greens or alone as a light meal all by itself.

6) Farm Art





This week's farm art comes from Tim Silverman, CSA member and photographer. Of his weekly vegetables Tim says, "The colors and shapes always inspire me to get out my camera.&#xu201D;

7) Vegetable Storage Tips

We aim to grow and package our vegetables to maintain the highest taste and nutritional quality possible. However, once they've left the farm it's up to you to keep them fresh and nutritious. There's no refrigeration at the CSA drop points so it's good to pick up your box as early as possible. Here are some additional tips on how to store this week's share:

Fridge

- **Peppers** and **Cucumbers** should be stored in the crisper, and washed in cold water before use.
- **Zucchini** and other **Summer Squash** will last 4-7 days in plastic bags in the crisper.
- **Okra** will keep for only two or three days. Refrigerate unwashed, dry okra pods in the vegetable crisper,

loosely wrapped in perforated plastic bags. Wet pods will quickly mold and become slimy. When the ridges and tips of the pod start to turn dark, use it or lose it. Once it starts to darken, okra will quickly deteriorate.

- **Southern Peas** can be stored in the freezer, or thawed in the fridge for immediate use.

Counter

- **Basil** keeps best in a perforated bag kept at around 60°F, it will keep for 10 to 14 days. In contrast, refrigerated basil lasts only two or three days. You can also store stems in a vase in your kitchen, close at hand for cooking. As with flower bouquets, change the water in the vase every few days.
- **Eggplant** and **Winter Squash** are best kept moderately cool, no lower than 50 degrees. A cool, dry dark place is best- on the counter, in a cupboard or basket. Eggplant are delicate and do not store well, so try to use them within a few days.

Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course, feel free to contact us with any questions.

Long-term Storage

“The time will come when winter will ask you what you were doing all summer.” - Henry Clay

[The National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) is your guide for how to can, freeze, dry, pickle or ferment just about anything.

8) Recipes

Sauteed Summer Squash with Red Pepper and Onion

This recipe comes from Martha Shulman's Recipes for Health, a new feature in the [Fitness and Nutrition](#) section of NYTimes.com that was shared with us by CSA member Marian Schwartz. Marian says: “Martha really knows her vegetables, and the recipes she's running focus on vegetables and aren't terribly difficult. Also, Martha has an Austin connection. She lived here in the early 1970s and wrote her first cookbook, *Vegetarian Feasts*, here.” Check out the original recipe (and many others) [here](#), complete with Shulman's notes on nutrition.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1/2 medium onion, chopped (about 1 cup chopped)

2 plump garlic cloves, minced

1 1/2 pounds summer squash, cut in 1/2-inch dice

1 small red pepper, cut in 1/4-inch dice

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Preparation:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat, and add the onion. Stir often and cook until tender, five to eight minutes, then add the garlic, summer squash, red pepper and about 3/4 teaspoon of salt. Turn the heat to medium-high and cook, stirring, until the squash is translucent and the red pepper tender, about 10 minutes. Add freshly ground pepper, taste and adjust salt. Stir in the parsley, and remove from the heat. Serve as a side dish, or use it as a filling for a vegetable tart, gratin or frittata.

Note: Some types of squash cook faster than others. Zucchini cooks more quickly than pattypan, for example.

Variations: Substitute 1 tablespoon chopped or slivered fresh mint, or 2 teaspoons chopped fresh marjoram, for the parsley. Sprinkle with feta or Parmesan.

Summer Succotash with Black Beans (or southern peas!): 5 minutes after adding the squash, add kernels from 2 ears of sweet corn and 1 can of drained black beans or 1 1/2 cups shelled edamame or southern peas, then proceed with the recipe. If you wish, add 2 tablespoons (or more) of chopped cilantro. This makes a great filling for tacos (sprinkle with queso fresco or feta and serve with salsa).

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The following three creative and delicious recipes were shared with us by CSA member Ann Hall – Thanks!

### **Roasted Okra and Southern Peas with Garlic and Mint**

Serves 6

Ingredients:

225g/8oz okra (or very thin asparagus)

1 small red onion, sliced

2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 cup cherry or heirloom tomatoes, or a mixture of both (cherries can be halved or left whole, depending on their size; heirlooms should be cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces)

3/4 cup shelled field peas

handful fresh mint leaves, torn

3 tablespoons olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

## Preparation:

1/ Preheat the oven to 450 F

2/ Rinse the okra in cold water and drain well. Trim the stems from the okra tops, but don't remove the caps. Slice the okra lengthwise and put in a mixing bowl. If using asparagus instead, trim the woody ends. Add the onion, garlic, tomatoes, peas or beans and mint leaves. Drizzle the olive oil over and season well with salt and pepper. Toss to mix and transfer to a large baking sheet.

3/ Roast in the preheated oven for 8-10 minutes, giving the vegetables a toss if needed.

Serve hot, warm or room temperature.

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Kararee Bhindi (Crispy Okra Salad)

Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium or 2 small tomatoes, quartered, seeded, and roughly diced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
- About 8 cups canola oil for frying
- 1 pound fresh okra, trimmed and cut lengthwise into thin strips
- 4 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice (about 1/2 lemon)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons *chaat masala**

Preparation:

In small mixing bowl, stir together onion, tomato, and cilantro. Refrigerate until ready to use. In wide, 4-inch-deep heavy pot over moderate heat, heat 1 1/2 to 2 inches oil until deep-fat thermometer registers 350°F. Fry okra in batches (returning oil to 350°F between batches) until golden brown, about 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer fried okra to paper towels to drain. In large mixing bowl, combine okra, onion-tomato mixture, lemon juice, salt, and *chaat masala*. Toss gently and serve immediately.

* I bought pre-mixed chaat masala at MGM Indian grocery on Burnet road—probably any Indian grocery would have it.

Chaat Masala

- 4 t [amchoor powder](#) (powdered dried mango)
- 3 t [roasted cumin seeds](#), ground

- 3 t ground [black salt](#) (or ordinary salt if you can't get it)
- ½ t [ground black pepper](#)
- 1 pinch [asafetida powder](#) (optional)
- 1 t [garam masala](#) (optional)
- 1 t roasted [coriander seed](#), ground (optional)
- ½ t [ground ginger](#) (optional)
- ½ t roasted [fennel seed](#) or [anise seed](#), ground (optional)
- ½ t [ajwain](#) (aka Carom/lovage/thymol seeds) (optional)
- ¼ t ground [dried mint](#) (optional)
- ¼ t [cayenne pepper](#) (optional)
- ¼ t [paprika](#) (optional)

Directions

If you haven't already, roast any whole spices (ie cumin, coriander, ajwain &/or fennel/aniseed) in a dry heavy bottomed pan for a minute or so until they give off a delicious aroma, then grind well. Combine all ingredients, and store in an airtight container.

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## Avocado-Stuffed Zucchini

From *The Vegetarian Epicure, Book 2*

### Ingredients:

6 plump, evenly shaped zucchini (about 1 ¾ lbs.)  
 2 medium-sized ripe avocados (about ¾ lb.)  
 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice  
 1 Tbs. olive oil  
 1 Tbs. wine vinegar  
 2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro  
 ½ small onion, finely chopped  
 1 tsp. salt

Garnish: paprika and cilantro sprigs

### Preparation:

Trim the ends of the zucchini and cut them in half lengthwise. Put them in a pot of boiling salted water for 4 minutes, then drain them and run cold water over them for a minute. Working carefully with a dessert spoon, scoop out the pulp, leaving a shell about ¼ inch thick. Put the pulp in a sieve to drain and turn the shells upside down on a rack for about 10 minutes.

Chop the well-drained zucchini pulp. Peel the avocados, remove the pits, and chop them or mash them with a fork. Add the avocado to the zucchini pulp. Stir in all the remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly.

Fill the zucchini shells with the avocado mixture and sprinkle a line of paprika down the center of each one. 'Plant' a small sprig of cilantro in the stuffing of each zucchini, arrange them on a platter, and chill for an hour or two before serving.

Serves 6 as a first course.

**Note:** This also looks really pretty in other kinds of small summer squash. I think room temperature or barely chilled is better than cold.

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Roasted Summer Squash

From CSA member Kay Robart

Preheat the oven to 350 or 375.

Grease or butter the sides and bottom of any baking pan or casserole.

Slice up a bunch of summer squash.

Put the squash in the pan and dot with butter or margarine.

Salt and pepper to taste. Lots of pepper is good!

Shake on some grated Parmesan.

Bake for 20-25 minutes until soft.

We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to Carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com

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10) [Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information](#)

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