

September 20th, 2012

The local apple crop was severely reduced when we had an early Spring that pushed the trees to flower and then a freeze right when the trees were flowering. Harry and Jackie who we get most of our local organic apples from will have none for us this year. They will be making value added cider and jams with the small crop that survived the freeze. We have brought you the famous Honeycrisp apples and will continue to get them to you as long as they are in season. My kids and I can't stop eating the super sweet grapes which will soon complete their season too. The seasonal clock continues to turn. Thank you for eating with the seasons.

Enjoy,

Everett Myers, Founder and President of FruitShare™

This week's box: Honeycrisp apples, Bartlett pears, Thompson grapes, Hass avocados and Summer Flair nectarines

Storage and Ripening

Keep your nectarines on the counter at room temperature. They will give to gentle thumb pressure when they are ready to eat. Your Bartlett pears will need between 2-5 days on the counter to give to thumb pressure by the stem and then enjoy them. Bartlett's will turn yellow as a sign of being ready to eat. To speed up their ripening process you can place some in a paper bag with a banana, but remember to check them every day. The banana gives off ethylene gas that ripens fruit faster. Your avocados should be kept on the counter, too. They should give to thumb pressure at the stem end in 3-5 days. Keep your apples and grapes in the coldest part of your refrigerator. They are ready to eat right away. They will stay freshest when stored as cold as 34 degrees F. Place a paper towel in the bag with the grapes to soak up any condensation that may occur. Eat your grapes first. Your apples and pears will keep the longest, and nectarines should be eaten up as soon as they are ready or placed in the refrigerator once they become soft to keep a little longer.

What It Takes

The Honeycrisp apples this week come from Adolfo in Prosser, Washington. He has truly worked his way up through the ranks of farming to get where he is today. Adolfo began his career by picking asparagus in the fields, and soon he was driving a truck through the orchard hauling chemicals and equipment among the fruit trees. In time, he became an orchard foreman, and finally a manager, all the while imagining how he would do things differently if he owned his own orchard. Ten years later, that dream is a reality, and Adolfo is the owner of 200 acres of organic fruit trees. He does it for the kids - his own and those of his workers - so that they are not exposed to dangerous chemicals. Instead, Adolfo harnesses nature's power to grow his fruit and keep it free of pests by using beneficial insects and the intricacies of the orchard's ecosystem. All of this hard work will be apparent in each and every delicious bite of fruit you taste. Honeycrisp apples are one of the most popular varieties of apples because their flavor and texture make them perfect for everything from snacking to baking and everything in between.

The green grapes in your box are of the Thompson variety, and come from Joe and Johnni of Three Sisters Farm. Located near Fresno, CA, they use beneficial grasses and flowers - especially poppies - as cover crops, making their vineyard exceptionally beautiful. Three Sisters has been certified organic since 1981, but even before Joe and Johnni began farming, Joe's parents owned the farm. This week the grapes come with super high brix. "Brix" describes a measurement of the sugar content, and the higher the brix, the more sugar the fruit contains. These grapes are super sweet and you'll eat them right up! It is typical for green grapes at this time of the year with high sugar to show ambering "yellowing". I think they are the best flavored grape going so we are keeping them coming until that changes.

The nectarines this week are from Dick and Rose Ann in Washington. They have been farming since 1984

and have 15 acres of land with seven varieties of organic nectarines. These nectarines are as fresh as you can get, because Dick and Rose Ann pick and pack the fruit themselves, with the help of friends, family and neighbors. They pick the fruit and pack it in the same day so it stays as fresh, flavorful and nutritious as if you had picked it yourself. It is picked at the peak of flavor, and Rose Ann inspects every box to ensure it is of the highest quality.

You'll also find avocados in your box this week. They come from Will and Billy at Las Palmitas Ranch. Will has had over 20 years of experience growing organic avocados and is involved with the California Avocado Commission. He says a lot of good news is being reported about the heart healthy benefits of avocados. Before his work as a grower, he was a successful businessman in Silicon Valley. Will is a great guy who has raised two great kids that love growing avocados and citrus organically.

Health and Wellness

Did you know that the avocado is considered to be a natural mouthwash and can take away your bad breath? The oil from the avocado is used in beauty products world wide because of its ability to enhance the skin and the hair. Blood pressure can be regulated because of the potassium and folate content. Your cholesterol can be controlled because of the oleic and linoleic acids in the avocado, which can reduce the 'bad' cholesterol and raise the "good". With its high folate content, pregnant women will get the amount of folic acid they need for a healthy baby. Also, the vitamin B6 in the fruit can help relieve morning sickness if you are pregnant. The antioxidant in an avocado can help your immune system become stronger and neutralize the free radicals that may cause poor eyesight. The potassium content helps to balance your electrolytes for healthier nerves and muscles. The oil can help soothe the skin condition known as psoriasis. The avocado can help soothe the stomach lining if you suffer from a duodenal ulcer because of its bland texture. Maybe too much information, but what we know is the California avocados from Will and Billy taste great and are super good for you. Eat in moderation each one has between 250-300 nutrient packed calories.

Recipe

Heirloom Tomatoes and Avocados (Hopefully you're getting your last tomatoes before the real cold sets in).

Dressing:

- 1/3 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 tablespoon reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lime rind
- 1/4 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
- Dash of ground red pepper

Salad:

- 4 medium heirloom tomatoes (about 2 pounds)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup very thinly vertically sliced red onion
- 1 cup diced peeled avocado (about 1 small)
- Coarsely ground black pepper (optional)

Preparation:

To prepare dressing, combine first 9 ingredients in a small food processor or blender; process 30 seconds or until pureed, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Cover and chill.

To prepare salad, slice each tomato crosswise into 4 equal slices (about 1/2 inch thick). Place 1 tomato slice on each of 4 salad plates; sprinkle slices evenly with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Top each serving with a few onion pieces and about 1 tablespoon avocado. Repeat layers 3 times, ending with avocado. Drizzle 2 tablespoons dressing over each serving; sprinkle with black pepper, if desired.

Maureen Callahan
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