

Small CSA Contents:

- 6 ears Super Sweet Corn
- 1 package Italian Sausage links, approx 1.25 lbs
- 1.5 lbs apricots
- 1 dz eggs
- 1.5 lbs Red Haven peaches
- 1 candy onion
- 1 head leaf lettuce
- 1 lb green beans
- 1 bunch kale

Vegetarian and Vegan Substitutes:

- 1 pint blueberries
- 3 golden zucchini

Large Add-Ons

- Traditional Small Bag plus the contents below
- 1 lb roasted red pepper linguini
- 1 stalk leeks
- 1 bunch carrots
- 2-3 medium hot "block" peppers
- 1.5 lbs red slicing tomatoes

Sweet Corn

Summer in Ohio means sweet corn to many of us. However, not all sweet corn is created equally.

Many of you who shop the farmers markets likely have been seeing sweet corn for a few weeks now. Some of the farmers may advertise it as "Marietta" or "Rancine" sweet corn. Those are two big river towns where sweet corn is grown due to the sandy yet rich soils.

I refuse to buy these products. Three reasons:

- 1) There is very very little organic sweet corn in Ohio. Corn needs more nitrogen than our soils offer. Therefore, fertilizer is used....and when used in the soils along the Ohio River, you can only guess where it goes.
- 2) I don't know the farmer....and it's too far of a distance from Cleveland.
- 3) It's usually a sugar enhanced variety.

The last one probably sounds foreign to you. Sugar enhanced? When farmers are picking out their seeds, they have a couple options. A sugar enhanced corn variety is one of them.

The sugar enhanced is desirable to the farmer for two reasons – it's cheap and it grows fast. A sugar enhanced seed has been bred to create a seed that is high in starch. The starch is the fuel for the plant to get started. Seeds with high amounts of starch have higher energy. They may then sprout from colder soils and grow faster.

To the farmer, the sugar enhanced seeds mean more corn faster – and at a lower price. Who wouldn't want that?

Well there is a tradeoff. Sugar enhanced seeds have all their starch at the beginning of the plants life, not at the end. As consumers of the corn, we want the starch in the kernels of corn on the cob. That's where the flavor is. It also allows the product to taste better for longer.

This week's corn is the season's first "super sweet" corn. Super sweet is a type of corn that has less starch in the seed but puts a lot of starch into the finished product. You'll taste the difference!

This corn was grown at Maize Valley Farm in Hartville OH in their rich muck soils. In my opinion, they grow hands-down the best sweet corn. It's so good you can even eat it raw and enjoy it.

Easy Roasted Corn

Take the whole ears of corn and start soaking them in water. No need to husk them at all. Just put them in water for 30 minutes or more.

Take the wet ears of corn and place on a hot grill. Close the grill and start roasting the corn.

There is no magic trick to when it is ready. It's all preference. Because your corn is so fresh, you will only need 15 minutes or so on the grill. After 20 or 25, you may start getting some burnt ends, depending on how hot your grill is.

Mirai Sweet Corn

This week's variety is called Mirai. This variety was developed in Japan in the 1990s and has only recently made its way to the US. It is a hybrid, meaning that it is a cross-breed of different existing varieties. The Mirai corn is, by most accounts, considered a super sweet corn. However, the seed company prefers to think of it is a true "natural selection" of the best characteristics of Sugar Enhanced, Super Sweet, and Standard type sweet corns.

I've always been impressed with the flavor of the Mirai because it is so sweet and tender that it can even be eaten raw. In terms of sugar, it has more sugar than an average peach or watermelon!

GMO vs Non-GMO Corn (and other crops)

A GMO is a Genetically Modified Organism. It is a plant or animal in which the genetic makeup of it has been modified by scientists to include selective genes (DNA) from other animals or plants. The most common use of a GMO is in field corn and soybeans. Field corn is not sweet corn. Field corn is a corn raised for processing or animal feed. GMO field corn is often resistant to certain herbicides (such as Roundup) or have the herbicide bred into the plant itself. There is a

tremendous amount of controversy about how safe these crops are for our planet and diet.

Occasionally, you will see a GMO sweet corn variety; that is why I have written this piece.

This week's sweet corn and all the sweet corns I offer are non-GMO varieties. They are natural hybrids and they have been selected based on their flavor profile. Other hybrids you may see at farmers markets, such as Temptation, Bodacious, Incredible, Silver King/Queen, and Luscious, are also Non-GMO.

However, growing a good crop of organic sweet corn can be difficult. The crop needs lots of nutrients fast (usually requires fertilizer) and is attacked by many insects, particularly caterpillars and earworms. Other challenges include birds picking at the ears before they are ripe. Those ears are then missing several kernels and appear damaged to the customer.

For the insect problem, two solutions have been offered. I present this data to demonstrate that the term "GMO" is much more complex than one thinks. The first solution is to spray a pesticide. The most common pesticide is Dipel, which is an organic pesticide containing a bacteria derived from an African flower. The bacteria, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, kills the larvae laid by the worms on the silk of the corn. If the larvae are not killed, they will eat the kernels.

The second solution is to develop a corn variety with the *Bacillus thuringiensis* bacteria bred into the seed. These varieties, as designated by their BT-"Name", are technically GMOs. Why would one prefer the BT variety? The primary reason is prevention of insect problems. Second, it reduces the need to spray a crop with a pesticide. Even though Dipel is organic, no one wants to spray if they don't have to. It is expensive, time consuming, and not "targeted." Even an organic pesticide can have negative side effects to the environment.

So in this argument, many farmers are starting to prefer BT varieties because it requires less maintenance, less chemicals, and less money. It is, however, a GMO which across the board has received a bad reputation in the marketplace.

Did You Know?

- 1) Each silk strand on the sweet corn is attached to a kernel of corn. The silk catches the pollen as it falls from the tassels that grow from the top of the corn plant. The kernels then develop once that silk is pollinated and reproduction occurs.
- 2) A stalk of corn produced one to two ears of corn. Generally one ear is larger than the other.
- 3) Corn is in the grass family and has very shallow roots. As a result, it is difficult for a grower to hoe the rows between corn without damaging the roots.