



PlumFresh Harvest Subscription

Season 6, Week 15
Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Happy Fall Y'all! Today at 3:21 p.m. Autumn officially arrives (yeah, I know those PSLs have been out for over a month now but what does Starbucks know about seasonality?) Summer swam out in a torrent of rain – we've gotten over 4.5 inches so far and there's more to come.

Thanks for understanding our need to skip last week's bag – for so many reasons it was the right decision. We were able to get our blackberry plants in good shape and do lots of field work. Plus, we harvested around 1,200 pounds of beautiful Sweet Potatoes! Look for these next week in your bag!

The good thing is that before all of the rain we were able to get the field prepped for strawberries. We received 2000 plants last week and they look really good! We also have some 4-packs of plants available for sale if you are interested in trying a few at home. Let us know if you are interested.

Here's what you'll find in this week's bag:

- Okra – *Burgundy and Cajun Jewel*
- Shoots & Microgreens Mix – *Pea and Sunflower Shoots mixed with a special blend of microgreens: Mild Mix (kale, mizuna, cabbage, kohlrabi)*
- Muscadine/Scuppernong Grapes
- Shishito Peppers
- Tomatoes – *Moskovich, Martha Washington, Ken's New Zealand, Brandywine*
- Garlic Sampler Bag – *Music, Chesnok, Lahontan, German Red, Lorz Italian*
- Apples from Levering Orchard – *Mutsu and Spartan*

Storage Tips

- Please make sure that you always wash all of your produce – while we wash many of our products (but not all) and we don't use chemical pesticides, there may be field dirt or other residue.
- **Muscadines/Scuppernongs, Okra and Shishito Peppers** should be stored in plastic bags in the refrigerator.
- **Store apples** in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. They are odor-absorbent, so keep them away from onions, potatoes and other strong-flavored items.
- **Shoots/Microgreens Mix** stores well in its bag – please wash them in cool water and spin dry before eating!
- **Tomatoes** belong on the counter. The best way to store them is stem end down.
- **Garlic** stores well in the net bag in a cool, dark place. Do not put in the refrigerator!

Things to know + How do I use this stuff?

- We are SO excited to bring you some delicious apples from [Levering Orchard](#) in Ararat, Virginia. This 113-year-old orchard is run by the third generation of the Levering family and boasts more than 70 acres of fruit trees. A great thing about Frank Levering is his commitment to use a low spray approach to growing fruit. Orchards are notoriously high in their use of pesticides and fungicides – typically fruit is sprayed 12-15 times. Growing fruit can be very challenging in the conditions found in the Southeast – higher humidity creates more disease and pest issues than what is found in the Northwest. Frank, although not Organic, sprays only 3 times in the season. His apples have a few more spots and cosmetic blemishes than your grocery store varieties but you can feel better about eating less chemicals. The apples are truly delicious! We will be getting apples from Levering two more times this fall.
- The two varieties of apples in this week's bag are Mutsu and Spartan. "Mutsu" is the Japanese word for an apple variety (originating in Japan) that just might be the greatest apple variety in the world, according to Frank. The Mutsu apple grows spectacularly large, is a beautiful green-gold, has a scrumptious, dense crispness and well-balanced flavor, and will store for months in a cool place after you take it home. It's just a sensational apple! Most supermarkets don't carry it because supermarkets don't want to sell an apple this big. "Spartan" is a Macintosh-cross variety that wins new fans every year for its not-too-sweet, not-too-tart balance and juicy crispness. Spartan won the apple taste-off at the Blacksburg Farmers Market a couple of years ago – and after eating one, we know why! Both varieties are terrific for eating out of hand and for cooking. Do we see pie in your future?
- The **muscadine and scuppernong grapes** are another heirloom fruit that Cheryl's Daddy planted many years ago. Muscadines are the purple ones and scuppernongs are the lighter colored, "champagne" ones. Muscadines are earlier than the scuppernongs. These grapes tend to produce heavily every 2-3 years – and this seems to be a good year!
- North Carolina is a major producer of muscadine grapes since they are native here. A lot of research on the grapes has been conducted in this region and has come up with some pretty amazing findings. Here's some information as reported by the [NC Muscadine Grape Association](#): The muscadine grape is a nutritional powerhouse. Like many intensely colored fruits, vegetables, and berries, the muscadine grape is a rich source of polyphenols. The skins and seeds of muscadine grapes are particularly rich in the polyphenolic compound resveratrol, which has been studied for its antioxidant benefits in numerous diseases, including cancer and heart disease. However, many of the health benefits of the muscadine have been linked to other polyphenolics, including ellagic acid. [A recent study at NC State University](#) found that a compound contained in muscadines, green tea, and chocolate may inhibit the Covid-19 virus!

Exciting research at Wake Forest University School of Medicine over the past five years investigated the use of a highly concentrated muscadine grape extract in both animal studies and clinical trials in humans. The researchers showed that the muscadine grape extract reduced human breast and prostate tumors growing in mice, improved gut health and cardiovascular health in rodents, amplified the effectiveness of standard breast cancer therapies in mice with human tumors, improved exercise capacity in hypertensive rats and reduced self-reported fatigue in cancer patients. The research team includes over 25 faculty members from multiple departments. This work is supported in part by a \$20 million gift made in 2015 by an anonymous donor. The studies are on-going; the concentrated extract is still in research and development and is not commercially available at this time. However, muscadine grapes and other muscadine grape products are available to everyone now! [Learn more about this research and muscadine health benefits here.](#)

- If you aren't familiar with this quintessential Southern fruit, here's a quick primer on how to eat them:

How to Eat a Muscadine Grape



- To eat a muscadine, place the grape with the stem scar facing upward in your mouth and squeeze or bite the grape. The pulp and juice will burst through the skin into your mouth. You have several options for what to do next, as there are several schools of thought, and this is often much argued over!
- You can take the skins out from your mouth right away, **OR** you can chew the skins lightly first to get more juice out, **OR** you can chew up the skins and swallow them. Some varieties have skins that are thinner and more flavorful than others.
- You can swallow the pulp and seeds together **OR** you can work the seeds out of the pulp with your tongue and spit them out before you swallow the pulp.
- For the greatest nutritional benefit, eat the skins and seeds as well as the pulp and juice.

We hope you enjoy this week's adventure in fresh, Organic and local food!

Recipes

MUSCADINE ALMOND SMOOTHIE

Yield: 2 servings

- 10 fully ripe muscadines, rinsed
- 2 cups unsweetened almond milk
- 12 almonds
- 2 cups crushed ice

Directions

1. Blend muscadines, almond milk and almonds in blender or smoothie mixer
2. Add ice: pulse/mix until desired consistency
3. Serve in a glass. Enjoy!

ROASTED MUSCADINE GRAPES

Source: Lindsay, Please Pass the Peas blog (pleasepassthepeas.com/roasted-muscadine-grapes/)

Yield: about 2-3 cups

Inspired by the roasted grapes at [Lovey's Market](#) (in Wilmington). I love the tart-sweet flavor of muscadines in this recipe but run of the mill grocery store grapes will work fine. The end result will be more sweet, less tart, and still delicious. Muscadine seeds are easy to remove but if you use other grapes a seedless variety would be best. Try them alongside a rich, creamy polenta laden with gorgonzola for which the grapes are the perfect foil. I think they'd also make an unexpected accompaniment to a cheese plate and I have a hunch they might pair well with ice cream too.

- 1 pound (about 4 cups) muscadine or other grapes (see headnote)
 - 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 - 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 - 2 3"-4" sprigs of fresh rosemary
1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Select a baking dish or rimmed sheet pan that is large enough to hold all of the grapes in a single layer. Line it with parchment paper and set aside.
 2. If using muscadines, slice each grape in half and flick out any seeds. They will be about the size of a sunflower seed and easy to remove. Place the grapes in the parchment-lined pan.
 3. If using other, seedless, grapes you can slice them if you want or leave them whole and put them directly into the pan.
 4. Pour the olive oil and vinegar over the grapes. Add the rosemary.
 5. Toss to combine. Make sure the grapes are in a single layer and then roast in the oven for about 30 minutes or until the grapes have slumped down and begun to give off some liquid.
 6. Discard the rosemary and serve the grapes, making sure to include the syrupy pan juices.
 7. Grapes can be served warm or allowed to cool first. I suspect they would keep for several days in the refrigerator, but we've never had any around long enough to find out.

In case you missed it before and can't find your newsletter....

PAN-SEARED SHISHITO PEPPERS

The peppers can also be roasted in the oven or on the grill – try with okra or other vegetables. A great appetizer or side dish!

- 1 pint shishito peppers
 - 1 teaspoon good olive oil
 - Sea salt to taste
 - Lemon juice
1. Wash and dry the peppers and toss them with the olive oil in a plastic container with a lid – shake well to coat the peppers.
 2. Heat a large heavy skillet over high heat. Add the peppers and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring frequently, until the peppers are slightly brown and blistered. The peppers will puff up and will then deflate – when they deflate, they are ready.
 3. Sprinkle the peppers with sea salt and lemon juice to taste. A sprinkle of romano cheese is a great addition as well.

Love and Lemons had a post just last week about how much they love shishito peppers. They also have some great dipping sauces to consider using with the peppers – haven't tried them yet but they sound delicious! Take a look here: [Blistered Shishito Peppers Recipe - Love and Lemons](#)