

COWBOY CAVIAR

Adapted from twopeasandtheirpod.com

15 oz black beans, rinsed, drained	Dressing:
15 oz black eyed peas, rinsed, drained	1/3 c olive oil
4 medium size tomatoes, diced	2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
2 bell peppers, diced	1 clove garlic, minced
1 c sweet corn	salt and pepper
1/2 c onion, diced	
1 jalapeno, seeds removed, diced fine	
1/3 c chopped cilantro	
2 avocados, pitted, diced	
2 Tbsp lime juice	
Tortilla chops for serving	

1. In a large bowl, combine beans, black eyed peas, tomatoes, peppers, corn, onion, jalapeno, and cilantro. Gently fold in the avocado and add fresh lime juice (Note: If waiting more than 30 minutes to serve, instead hold avocado and add right before serving).
2. In a small bowl, whisk together dressing ingredients.
3. Pour the dressing over the cowboy caviar and stir until well combined.
4. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes so flavors can marinate. Enjoy with tortilla chips.

ELOTES MEXICANOS (MEXICAN STREET CORN)

Adapted from mylatinatable.com

8 corn on the cob	1 c queso fresco or queso cotija
1-2 Tbsp lime juice	1/4 c chili powder
2 tsp salt, divided	1-2 bay leaves
1/2 c mayonnaise	1-2 tsp dried thyme

1. Add 1 tsp of salt, bay leaves, and thyme to boiling water. Add the corn on the cob and cook for approximately 30 minutes.
2. Strain water from corn and cover all corn cobs with lime juice and remaining tsp of salt.
3. Cover in mayonnaise and roll each corn cob in queso fresco. Sprinkle with chili powder.



Summer CSA News



July 22-28, 2024
Week 10 of 20
Volume 21, No. 27



Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Cantaloupe: If your melon seems a bit short of ripe, keep it at room temperature until there is a sweet smell coming from the stem end. When the melon ripens, refrigerate. Cover cut melon with plastic wrap. Keep cubes or slices in an airtight container. Eat within a week.

Squash: All summer squash and zucchini can be used interchangeably. Store unwashed in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable bin of your fridge. They should keep for more than a week.

Onions: This week's onions are not yet dried. For best storage, keep refrigerated. If you start to see green sprouting, it's still good, just use soon.

Sweet Corn: Plan to eat your corn soon after you receive it. As time elapses after harvest, the sugars turn into starches, and the corn loses its sweetness. To store, refrigerate sweet corn as soon as possible. Keep husks on.

hello@elmwoodstockfarm.com | 859.621.0755

Sweet, Sweet Corn

Sweet corn looks like it would be easy to grow, and kinda is. But there are lots of reasons why things might not go so well along the way. Some ears will inevitably look better than others, but they will all be awesome on your plate. Corn is a big seed that grows fast, making it easy to get started and keep the weeds cultivated away around it. That's the easy part. As the plant approaches sexual maturity, that's when things get interesting, go figure.

Let's back up and begin with genetic potential, since so much of what happens begins with the traits of the different varieties. 99.99% of the corn you see driving down the road are corn varieties grown for maximum yield of dry hard grain for livestock feed, ethanol, or one of the thousands of processed foods or plastics seen in the supermarket. The lion's share of this type of corn is now genetically modified for chemical compatibility with herbicides and insecticides. Somehow, scientists found a gene that protects corn from a herbicide that kills every green living plant tissue in the field, known as Roundup. Then they figured out how to insert genes to protect the plants from insects, drought tolerance, milling quality, and the list goes on. Combining these traits is known as stacking, just tell the salesman what you want, and they will design some for you, and sell you the associated chemicals to apply. The original idea was to get away from aerial spraying, but they still spray a lot, and now there are Roundup-resistant super weeds that can only be controlled by physical cultivation. For the record, that's how organic farms deal with weeds from the start.

Back in the day, farmers would pull the immature grain crop ears, called roasting ears, to eat fresh. It was so well liked, that many research and breeding programs were established to develop really good corn just for people to enjoy. While selecting for certain traits like sweetness, flavor, ear size, etc. with the knowledge about cross pollination, sweet corn stormed onto the scene and Silver Queen was born. Now there are thousands of varieties to choose from, even genetically altered ones, so be careful what you buy at the market—and remember that organic is always non-GMO! We use “supersweet” varieties because they are bred so the sugars do not rapidly convert to starch after picking, but we also look for good husk coverage to protect the ear from insects and birds, cold tolerance for early plantings, and very important is flavor.

Enough about the parents, because pubescence of the maturing crop is where the action is. If you did not know, or if you need a refresher, it always starts with

biology. The tassel at the top, which is the male part of the flower, sheds millions of pollen grains when the plant reaches sexual maturity. These tiny particles can be airborne for miles. The female portion of the flower is the ear with silks that extend into the air to catch the falling pollen. Each silk is actually a tube that must catch a pollen grain, then migrate it thru the tube to fertilize the zygote, thus forming a kernel. Each kernel has its own silk. If these silks are damaged by insects or weather conditions, a kernel will not be formed. In a perfect world, or with numerous applications of highly toxic insecticides, or genetic manipulations, every kernel will develop.

But many things can disrupt perfection. There are many silk clipping insects in this world: Japanese beetles, june bugs, corn root worm adults, corn earworm adults to name a few. These pests like the fresh tender silks, attacking them right where they emerge from the husk, effectively cutting the tube in half, so there is no way the pollen can travel to the awaiting egg. Japanese beetles and June bugs emit a pheromone in their saliva that attracts more of their kind, so often you will see upwards of 10 beetles on one ear, with none on the adjoining stalks. In extremely hot dry weather, the silks can dry out and shrivel up, closing off the tube.

Corn earworm larvae and numerous little black beetles will burrow through the husk to get to the tasty morsels once they have formed, which is one reason we look for varieties with good husk coverage. Blackbirds may come in droves, pecking down through the silks to get at the tender developing kernels. This not only tatters the tips, but opens them up to aforementioned marauders. Some have figured out that Mylar Happy Birthday balloons can act as effective scarecrows. As if that weren't enough, every patch must be protected from raccoons, skunks, deer, and coyotes (yes, coyotes) with electric net fencing.

With all this going on out there 24/7, it is very difficult to have picture perfect, certified organic sweet corn. Rather than using toxic remedies, we tolerate some degree of poor pollination at the tip. Each season is a little different, sometimes in our favor, sometimes in the pests'. Organic corn varieties that give the farmer a fighting chance and provide the eater a high degree of satisfaction are best.

When you see organic sweet corn at a farmers market, please don't peel it back to see if it's full to the tip. Whether it is or not, it is the best corn you will ever eat, free of pesticide residues, unaltered by gene transfer technologies, frustrating but not harmful to wildlife. This is confirmation that organic farming is really sweet to see. - Mac Stone