



Covered Bridge Gardens

CSA Newsletter

Week 3 of 15



What does the rain mean to the everyday work on the farm?

We can use the wet days to tend to the tomato plants in the greenhouses or clean up in the barn, but if it's a picking day for the CSAs, we are going to get wet. Keeping a close eye on the forecast helps us decide if we need to pick before it rains or wait it out if possible. We also have to go to the markets regardless of the weather. We were at the Shaker Market in the snow this spring.



What farmer would be without a weather app on their phone?

I bet several of you have such an app on your phones. When the top weather topic of this past June was rain Mick and Steve kept a close watch. These apps are a valuable tool for farmers when planning weekly activities like planting, and harvesting. Temperatures also alert them to frosts in May and heat in June. Both can hurt young tender newly planted crops.

What can a farmer do?

Here is a photo of the high water going down Mill Creek under the Netcher Road Bridge. You can see how high it is on the trees. Being in Northeast Ohio we have gone through the process of tilling the farm. This means that we have installed an underground system of tiles every 24 feet designed to carry water away from the fields. This relieves the high moisture levels of the soil that otherwise would damage plants.



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Tips of the Week:

Try these tips from fellow members:

- To remember your pick up day/time and the bag, program your phone to send you a reminder the morning of your pick up.
- Program the number for Covered Bridge Gardens into your phone to contact us when last minute emergencies arise.

How do plants weather the storms?

Where last year we were hoping for rain, this year we have gotten more than our share. By the end of June we had received over a foot of rain. Although some areas near us got more it was still more than our plants needed. Average the two years together and you have the more desired water level. But tell that to little plants with wet feet.

We took advantage of a break in the rain and were able to finish our planting about three weeks later than last year. You can see in the photo flats of late season plants still sitting on the floor of the barn yard waiting to go in July. You will see a delay in watermelons and eggplants this season. Those plants that have been in the ground are a little stressed. This is why some of you got turnips last week and some peas. As the season goes on and we know the weather evens out, the harvest will be more even.

Ingredient Highlights: *you will find more tips and recipes on our website.*

Pea Pea Pea Pea

Over the next few weeks you will be getting a variety of peas in your shares. Here is a guide to the three kinds we grow. Enjoy these early summer wonders. Don't forget to freeze a few for winter soups.

The pea (*Pisum sativum*) is the best known member of the Leguminosae family. It originally came from the Near East, and was introduced into Europe in the early Middle Ages. It was one of the few vegetables that could be dried for use during the winter months. Pea porridge from dried peas soon became the winter staple for all over northern Europe and remained so until the 17th century. In 1635, a list of supplies required for one colonist for one year included "*one bushel of Pease.*"

It wasn't until new varieties were developed that people started eating peas fresh. All fresh peas are really immature seeds, and the less mature they are, the better they taste.

Snow Peas: prefer a cooler growing temperature and are cultivated in spring when a late snow may cover the plants giving them their name. They will continue to grow into early summer. They are wide and flat, with tiny undeveloped sweet peas inside. You are actually eating an immature pea. When a slight bulge of the tiny seeds is barely visible, snow peas are at their prime eating stage. Snow peas were made for stir-fries and Oriental soups. At one time, snow peas were only seen in Chinese restaurants, but now they are available everywhere. The snow pea is enjoying increasing demand by chefs, ethnic green grocers and farm markets. Because the snow pea is entirely edible, this explains its French name, mange-tout, meaning "eat it all."

Preparation: snap off the stem tip while pulling along the pod to remove the string that comes with it. Rinse under running water and cook whole.

Snow peas and sugar snap are best prepared steamed or lightly cooked in the pods. You can eat the pod and all. You can also eat them raw in a salad or as a snack.

To freeze: prepare as above, and blanch for three minutes in boiling water. Remove and place in ice water for three minutes. Drain, dry and package in an airtight freezer bag or container. Freeze for up to a year.



Sugar Snap Peas:

The sugar snap pea is a hybrid of green and snow peas. It was developed in 1979 to make an edible-pod variety with sweeter, full-sized peas.

Nutritional value:

Peas are a very nutritious vegetable. Young green peas contain good supplies of protein, carbohydrate and vitamins B and E. Fresh peas contain 67 calories per 3 ½ oz.



English or Shelling Peas are also known as shell peas and garden peas. English or Green Peas traditionally have been grown for the sweet little peas that reside inside the pod. The pod has been seen as inedible and, of course there is that fiddly "string" or zipper which you must pull to open the pods and release the peas. Unlike sugar snap peas or snow peas, the fibrous pods of English peas cannot be eaten (although they can be used to enhance the flavor of vegetable stock).



Preparation:

Shell English peas immediately before they're to be cooked: Break off the stem and pull the fibrous string down the length of the pod. Press each pod between your thumbs and forefingers to open, pushing out the individual peas. Rinse and drain the peas, discarding pods, stems, and strings. Prepare them in a multitude of ways:

Boil peas in 1/4 inch of simmering water for 3 to 4 minutes until crisp and tender, then toss into your favorite warm pasta or pasta salad. Add this variety to a springtime salad by tossing in just-boiled peas.