

# CSA NEWSLETTER



## Life in the packing shed

In the life of Gathering Together Farm vegetables, the packing shed is where produce is brought after it is harvested out in the fields. Mariana is the pack shed lead and with the help from my mom, Farmer Sally, Patty, Brigida, Carmela, Carolyn, Marina, and myself, we all work to keep the packing shed running smoothly. This is where all the produce is washed, sorted, graded for quality, and packed for 7 different Farmers' Markets, orders for local and Portland grocery stores and restaurants, and our CSA boxes.

Each day has a different flow in terms of priorities. To get ready for CSA pickups, we pack the boxes on Mondays and Fridays to keep the produce as fresh as possible. We pack almost 250 CSA boxes on Monday and around 110 on Friday. Tuesday is our busiest day, as we are finishing orders for local deliveries, for deliveries in Portland on Wednesday morning, for the Market of Choice warehouse in Eugene to distribute our produce through their

12 different stores around Oregon, prepare for two Wednesdays Farmers' Markets (Shemanski and Corvallis), and load five different trucks to get all this produce to the right location. Wednesdays, we prepare New Seasons and Organically Grown Company orders, along with another round of local deliveries to be delivered on Thursdays. We are also preparing and thinking on how to distribute produce to the five weekend markets (Corvallis, Beaverton, PSU, Newport, and Hillsdale) with what's available.

We need a lot of water to wash produce such as lettuce, arugula, spinach, radicchio, bok choy, dill, etc. We spray all these (except lettuce) and then they go into a water bath for a while. After that, we start packing them for either a market, an order, or CSA boxes!

## VEGGIE LIST

**LETTUCE**  
**RED POTATOES**  
**CUCUMBERS**  
**ONIONS**  
**CABBAGE**  
**CARROTS**  
**MINT**  
**JALAPENO**  
**CHARD**  
**CORN**  
**TOMATOES**



Photos top to bottom: Sally and Haylee, Patty, Roberto, Mariana and Haylee, and Carmela and Brigida.

Other vegetables, such as carrots, beets, and potatoes, are run through a barrel washer and go down a conveyor belt. Salad mix is probably the one that takes the longest, we usually do multiple rounds of mixing different lettuces, mustards, and chicories in a big wash tank, then we put the salad mix in spinners to dry it. Some vegetables don't have to be washed, such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, summer squash, cucumbers, and cabbage. However, these veggies still require sorting. So this time of year, we do a lot of sorting.

Walking around the packing shed this afternoon I asked the team what their most enjoyable tasks are. Mariana loves Tuesdays and Wednesdays because they are so busy and she loves the challenge of fulfilling all the complex orders and strategizing about how to make it all happen. She does an amazing job at it! Patty who is an energizer bunny, really likes the dip/spray stations where all the bunch greens come in. She loves seeing the diversity of greens we have.

We have two strong mother-daughter teams; Brigida and her mom, Carmela, are wizards with vegetables. Along with Mariana, they also make beautiful flower bouquets that you can find at the Farmstand and Farmers' Markets. Brigida enjoys working with heirloom tomatoes because of their wide range of colors and shapes. Carmela likes the barrel washer mostly because she likes working with the conveyor belt and keeping her hands moving fast.

I like washing and packing at the dip/spray stations. It's satisfying to wash dirty veggies. I also like washing salad because it is an easy job to get in a rhythm with and have a conversation with the other person working with you. My mom, Sally, loves the sensation at the end of Tuesdays, when we have filled all the orders, cleaned up the packing shed, and we all walk away feeling like we are sending lots of good food out into the world.

Since we had a lot to share about the pack shed, we're not including a recipe this week, but we hope that you make many nourishing meals to share with your loved ones.

Here's to the packing shed crew!

Enjoy this wonderful cool summer week! Haylee

**We'd love to see what you're doing with your CSA box! Tag us @GatheringTogetherFarm**