

## A Message From Karen Vollmecke

### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING YOUR FRESH PRODUCE

- Rinse thoroughly before cooking or eating
- Handle it gently

**WASH YOUR VEGGIES:** Please do not assume that when something is organically grown, or “naturally grown”, it has not been sprayed, because this may or may not be true. We may spray organically approved materials for cucumber beetles and squash bugs as they can decimate cucumber, squash and melon plants. Fleabeetles and cabbage worms, likewise, do serious damage if we don’t control them in some way. Beans attract Mexican bean beetles which kill the plants. Potatoes are magnets for Colorado Potato beetles, and the list goes on and on.

We always choose spray materials that are the least harmful to the environment and to humans. Pheromones and predatory species help control pest species, and we use these tactics especially in the orchards. As we continue to bring our soils into further balance and good health, we hope that the pressure from some insect species will be lessened in ensuing years.

I always suggest washing/rinsing your produce before it is eaten, not just because of any possible presence of a spray material, but because the most natural and organically grown produce is still at the mercy of other “naturally occurring” pathogens, such as spoiled leaves breaking down and bird droppings. I have attended many food handling seminars that have made this quite clear!

Sometimes, I will eat things right from the field, but I must admit that I can feel like I got into my car without buckling my seatbelt or I sat down to a meal without washing my hands. Rinsing your produce is simply a smart practice/habit to get into!

**HANDLE IT GENTLY:** We like to pick our produce at peak ripeness for excellent flavor and best nutrition. Please remember that as you transfer your fruits and vegetables from share box to bag or from bag to refrigerator, you will get best results if you handle your produce gently to avoid bruising. Pick up each one with a gentle hand and set it down without dropping it.

For your convenience, we try to give each member a mixture of “today ripe” and “ripe in the next few days” produce. This will give you a longer storage and eating time and hopefully lessen the pressure to use a large volume of produce all at once. Especially with tomatoes and peaches, check to see which are most ripe for eating right away and set the others aside for a day or two later.

I hope this information is helpful to you all. As always, if you have further questions, send us an e-mail message at [vollmeckecsca@hotmail.com](mailto:vollmeckecsca@hotmail.com).

Wishing you happy and healthful eating!