

Great-grandfather's barn at Spring Brook Farm, circa 1901

What's in the box and where do I keep it?

Crop	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	German Extra-Hardy
Leeks	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Red bell, Sweet Italian, Serrano
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red Norland
Tomatoes	No	No	All kinds
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

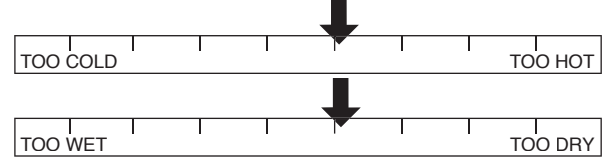
Leeks

Leeks are a nice summer treat which are somewhat underrated. The standard potato leek soup is always nice and the red potatoes this week would go well in it. Leeks are one of the many vegetables popularized by the Romans, in fact Nero was reportedly also known as *Porrophagus*, or leek-eater, because of his appetite for them.

The tomatoes are nearing their peak now, we should have a nice plateau of them for a few weeks. I think everyone got at least one tomato of every variety last week. The Cherokee Purples have been quite prone to splitting this year so you won't see many of them. The frustrating part about growing the 'heirloom' type tomatoes is pitching all the cracked ones onto the compost pile. It's another reason I've been so impressed with the pink Rose de Berne variety. I've had to throw very few of them out. The yellow tomatoes are really at peak ripeness when they're more orange than yellow, but they're so soft by then that you can't even handle them. I do like to have them around for colorful fresh tomato salads. This is also the time of year when I need to walk through the tomato patch and select some of the open pollinated types and save

Farm Report

Rainfall 1.3"
 High Temperature 83°
 Low Temperature 50°
 Coming next week Labor Day Field Day!
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™ :



seed from them. Saving seed from tomatoes is simple and effective, and, over time, you can custom tailor the characteristics that are best suited to your soil and location. For example there are a few Cherokee Purple plants that have very little splitting—I'll be saving seed from these to see if I can avoid that characteristic in the future.

The peppers have also been doing nicely, with a few large red bell peppers starting to show up. There is also a nice harvest of the sweet Italian types going on. These are red peppers which are pointed on the end rather than blocky like a bell. Basically, if the pepper in your box is larger than a golf ball then it's a sweet pepper. Some of the cherry bomb and sweet Italian peppers can get pretty close to the same size, but a cherry bomb will never be pointed and an Italian will. When in doubt, slice the pepper open and touch your tongue to the flesh, have a glass of milk handy if you don't like the hot ones. There aren't any cherry bombs in the box this week, just serranos.

The garlic this week is the German Extra Hardy. It is a larger bulb with large cloves. Sometimes you may only want to use half a clove in some things if you're worried about it getting too garlicky. This is the only really consistently productive garlic I have found and next year will be planting it exclusively. The only problem with this is that I'll have to hold out more of it for seed stock instead of 'table stock'. To grow garlic you plant individual cloves from the previous year's crop, so that means that you're always putting about 25-30% of each year's harvest back into the ground in the fall for the following year, instead of eating it. This year that will mean about 40-50 pounds.

Farm News

We had a pounding rain at the farm last Friday. I almost didn't get out of there with the shares. It's a good thing I had a thousand pounds of vegetables in the

back of the truck. It was good to get the moisture but I wish it hadn't come down so hard. I had some new things that had just been seeded the day before and a very hard rain makes it difficult for them to get up out of the ground.

It looks like we're all set for the tomato day next Monday. Please let us know if you're planning on coming out. We've had such nice weather lately that I'm getting complacent and just assume it'll be another beautiful day. We'll get rolling by 10am and have a big tomato-pasta dinner at 2 or 3. If you'd like to bring something for the dinner we should have the main course covered.

With Labor Day fast approaching next week we're in peak season for the State Fair. We're taking Wednesday off this week for our annual day at the fair. My wife reminds me that we always go on the same day, the one Wednesday that the fair is open. This is not the day to go if your daughter is very into horses, as we learned last year. The middle Wednesday is the day that there are no horses in the horse barn because they're switching from the English horse judging to the Western horse judging, or maybe it's the other way around. Supposedly they have actual tractors back on Machinery Hill this year, I guess the proposed name change to Riding Mower Hill didn't go over so well. We'll see. I think Iris will be old enough to ride in the bumper cars this year, too. We had a bit of a scene last year when we tried to sneak her past the 'You must be this high to ride' sign. We very rarely sample any food on a stick, but go for old favorites like the french fries, root beer floats from the 1919 root beer booth and the honey ice cream in the bee area of the Ag-Hort building. The Ag-Hort building is always where I want to spend the most time. From crop art to the scarecrow competition there's always something interesting. And if you are just on junk food overload you can duck in there and buy a locally grown apple, you could even put it on a stick if you like.

Leek And Potato Soup

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 large leeks (white and pale green parts only), halved lengthwise, thinly sliced (about 4 1/2 cups)
- 2 large red potatoes (about 18 ounces total), peeled, diced
- 4 1/2 cups (or more) chicken stock or canned low-salt broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Melt butter in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks; stir to coat with butter. Cover saucepan; cook until leeks are tender, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Add potatoes. Cover and cook until potatoes

begin to soften but do not brown, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Add 4 1/2 cups stock. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until vegetables are very tender, about 30 minutes. Puree soup in batches in processor until smooth. Return to saucepan. Thin with additional stock if soup is too thick. Season with salt and pepper. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.) Bring soup to simmer. Ladle into bowls. Garnish with chives and serve.

Gazpacho Chopped Salad

- 1 (1-inch-long) piece baguette, crust discarded
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, yolks and whites separated
- 2 tablespoons Sherry vinegar (preferably "reserva")
- 1/4 cup mild extra-virgin olive oil (preferably Andalusian hojiblanca)
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 lb ripe tomatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 medium green bell pepper, cut into 1/8-inch dice
- 2 oz (1/4-inch-thick) slices serrano ham or prosciutto, cut into 1/4-inch dice

Soak bread in 1/4 cup water 1 minute, then squeeze dry, discarding soaking water. Mash garlic to a paste with salt using a mortar and pestle (or mince and mash to a paste with a large knife). Mash garlic paste with bread, yolks, and vinegar using mortar and pestle until smooth (or blend together in a mini food processor). Add oil in a slow stream while stirring constantly (or with motor running) to form a thick sauce. Stir in black pepper. Finely chop egg whites. Divide sauce among 4 salad plates and sprinkle with whites. Scatter tomatoes over whites and season with salt, then sprinkle with bell pepper and ham.

Creamed Leeks With Tarragon, Tomato, And Bacon

- 2 slices of lean bacon, chopped fine
- 1 leek (about 1 pound), halved lengthwise, sliced thin crosswise, and washed well
- 1/2 cup finely chopped seeded tomato
- 3/4 teaspoon finely chopped fresh tarragon leaves or 1/4 teaspoon crumbled dried
- 1/3 cup half-and-half
- 1/3 cup chicken broth

In a skillet cook the bacon until it is crisp and transfer it to paper towels to drain. In the fat remaining in the skillet cook the leek, covered, over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, or until it is softened, and stir in the tomato, the tarragon, the half-and-half, the broth, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring the liquid to a boil, cook the mixture over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, or until it is thickened, and stir in the bacon.