



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
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Red Russian
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Summer Crisp
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar Snap
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French Breakfast
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Summer Squash	Yes	Plastic	Zucchini or Yellow Squash
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	Maybe

Peas

Sugar snap peas are the pea of the week. Well, mostly all I grow is sugar snaps. There are two other types of peas, snow peas and garden peas (also known as English peas or shell peas). I have found sugar snaps to be the most reliable producers of high quality peas. But I will say that shell peas are my favorite, they're just so difficult to grow for the CSA. The problem with shell peas is that they convert their sugars into starches very quickly, very much like the older sweet corn varieties. Shell peas are really best grown in the home garden where you can get them from garden to table in an hour. Otherwise you're really better off buying the frozen ones, which are harvested, shucked, blanched and frozen all in the same day. That's why the frozen ones actually taste very good.

Shell peas are also at their peak on the vines for just a moment, so if you want to pick the largest amount of peas possible at a given time you end up picking a range of immature, perfect and overmature ones. All that aside I do have a new variety of shell peas planted this year, so you may all get some next week.

The last couple of years I've had folks fill out a year end survey about what they want more of, less of, etc.

Farm report

Rainfall last week 0.10"
 High temp 92°
 Low temp..... 62°
 Soil condition..... Dry
 Weed pressure..... Medium
 Coming next week More peas

Everybody always wants more peas. There are two main obstacles to giving everyone all the peas their hearts desire: The window of opportunity for peas is about 3-4 weeks long, after that it is too hot for peas. And, secondly, peas are the single-most labor intensive thing on the farm to pick. We picked the first of the peas for last Friday's shares and it took four of us an hour and a half to pick 46# of peas. That translates to each of us picking under 8# per hour, which is just lousy from a production perspective. That same amount of labor could easily bring in 500 lbs. of tomatoes. But it's not all about production here at Hog's Back Farm, and thank goodness for that.

Sugar snaps are known for their edible pod, which is a fairly recent innovation, first appearing in the 1970's. Before eating them you 'string' them by snapping off the stem of the pea in the direction of the concave side and pulling away the string along that side. Sometimes if you have a mature one you need to string the back too. This has prompted my daughter to refer to them as 'string peas'. Enjoy these raw or very lightly sautéed in butter until bright green.

The garlic scapes have come on strong in the heat and need to be picked off of the garlic plants to help it to send it's energy into the now bulbing garlic plants. Garlic and most onions are what's called long-day crops. This means that they are sensitive to how long the days are, and as soon as we pass the summer solstice, as we did last week, these crops shift their growth from leaves and roots to the bulb. You can already notice it in the onions. Because of this tendency, you cannot grow the same varieties of onions in the southern U.S. because they don't get the periods of long daylight that we get up here in the north.

The garlic scapes can be used much like scallions. They're tasty in scrambled eggs, potato salad, pesto, pizza and more. The conventional wisdom is that you eat it up to, but not including the actual flower bud. Although I have used the whole thing and lived to tell the tale.

Red Russian kale is in the box this week. This is a delicate kale that is also sometimes referred to as 'ragged jack'. What is it with kales and multiple identities, e.g. lacinato, a.k.a. dinosaur a.k.a. toscano a.k.a. black kale? I much prefer Red Russian for tenderness, compared with the more common red and green kales we see in the stores.

Adjust your recipe times to account for this, checking it for doneness in half the recommended amount of time.

We're moving into the late lettuce season. This week we have a few new experimental summer lettuce varieties. They are constantly improving lettuces to make them slower to bolt and to maintain good flavor in the summer heat. Usually they are smaller than the standard spring lettuces, and the hot, dry weather doesn't lend itself to optimal lettuce conditions.

A few more radishes and spinach this week. This will be the last of the spring spinach. It'll show up again in late summer as temperatures begin to moderate. And we'll have just a beginning smattering of cucumbers, zucchini and yellow squash this week, with much more to come.

Farm News

The hectic pace continues at the farm while we're trying to get things done in all this nice warm weather. One big project that is taking up a bunch of time right now is making tomato cages. Previously I've relied on what's called the 'stake and weave' method of tomato support. Last year I had some major failures of this method and so this year I'm switching to cages. Cages have several advantages to staking and hopefully will be a better fit for the farm. Their big drawback is that they are a lot of work to make and they're expensive. We make them out of 6"x6" concrete reinforcing wire mesh which gets cut and bent to the right size. It's very hard on the hands and you're constantly getting poked and scratched by jagged pieces of steel wire. The materials cost about \$4 per cage and we'll end up making about 230 of them. Come on out and help if you want to test out your tetanus shot.

The heat has really got everything growing like crazy which is why the tomato cages are at the top of the list right now. You have to get the cages on the tomatoes before they get so big you smash the plant while putting on the cage. With the start of the summer squash and cucumbers this week we're running about 15-20 days ahead of last year in terms of crop development. As you may remember last year was horribly cold and wet. What a difference a year makes.

On the maple syrup and honey front, I've got a limited supply of honey this year so far. The folks I usually get honey from are all out and they lost their bees last winter and had to start over with new bees. I will track down some more honey, but at the rate I'm going it'll probably be in a month or so. The good news is that I do have a limited supply of 1 lb. jars available from them. They are \$4 each. We also have the maple syrup available for next week's deliveries. It's available in pints, quarts and half gallons. Pints are \$6, quarts \$12 and half gallons \$22.

Please contact me either via email, the website or by phone if you're not an internet person and let me know how many and of what size you'd like. Please note that I will only be bringing to the pickup site the syrup and honey that has been ordered ahead of time. Please bring cash or a check to the pickup site to pay for it. You must let me know that you'll be ordering some by noon on Saturday, July 2. You'll have another opportunity to purchase these in a few week's time.

Enough rambling, here's a couple recipes to help you get through the share this week. Don't be afraid of the scapes, they're really quite good.

Spinach & Scape Frittata

3 tbs. Olive oil
10 eggs
1 cup finely chopped raw spinach (1/2 lb)
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 Tbs. chopped parsley or basil
1/2 cup finely chopped Garlic Scapes or Garlic Greens
Salt
Pepper

Preheat oven to 350° In a large bowl mix egg, spinach, cheese, herbs, salt and pepper. Heat oil in 10-inch ovenproof skillet on the stove. Add the garlic scapes and sauté until tender on med. heat (about 5 minutes). Pour egg mixture in skillet with garlic and cook over low 3 mins. Place in oven and bake uncovered 10 mins or until top is set. Cut into wedges and serve.

Pasta with Kale and Feta

6 T. olive oil
2 c. chopped onions
1 bunch kale, stems removed and chopped
12 oz. Penne or rigatoni
8 to 12 oz. Crumbled feta cheese
salt to taste
black pepper to taste

Heat the olive oil in a deep skillet or dutch oven. Add the onions and cook for about 10 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Put the pasta water on to boil. Add chopped greens to the skillet, salt lightly, and stir until the greens begin to wilt. Cover and cook 10 to 15 minutes over medium-low heat. Cook the pasta until just tender. Drain the pasta. Add the feta to the skillet and add the pasta. Mix thoroughly. Continue to cook the completed dish for just a minute or two over low heat to combine the flavors. Adjust the salt and add a generous amount of black pepper. Garnish with a few fresh crumbles of feta or some kalamata olives and serve.