

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 |
|---------------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| Arugula | Yes | Plastic | |
| Basil | No | Plastic | |
| Broccoli | Yes | Plastic | |
| Cucumbers | Yes | Plastic | |
| Potatoes | No | Paper | New reds |
| Radishes | Yes | Plastic | Cherriette |
| Yellow Squash | Yes | Plastic | |
| Zucchini | Yes | Plastic | |

Potatoes

One thing about potatoes is they don't like the hot, dry weather. The plants are reaching maturity a little earlier than they should be, which means they're not setting as many potatoes as I'd like. Getting the potatoes to size up is also tricky in this weather, they really need a couple of inches of water a week right now. I think we'll still have a pretty decent potato crop, though.

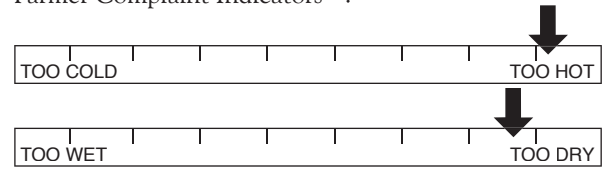
The potatoes this week are dark red norlands, the standard early red potato. These are 'new' potatoes which basically means that they come from plants that were still alive when they were dug. The skins are very tender on these. Red norlands are a versatile potato which lend themselves to everything from hashed browns to roasted potatoes, but they're really the classic potato salad potato. With all the hot weather lately potato salad has been a key part of our meals.

Arugula makes a brief appearance in the box this week. It's probably a bit spicy this time around as are the radishes. Hot dry weather intensifies whatever flavor a given thing may have, whether it's a hot pepper or a sweet melon.

The basil also enjoys this weather. Enjoy some in a

Farm Report

Rainfall0.50"
 High Temperature 94°
 Low Temperature 64°
 Coming next weekSweet Corn?
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™ :



pasta salad, pesto potato salad or in a basil zucchini frittata.

Broccoli is another crop which doesn't like this heat. Heat will also intensify the bitter flavor of broccoli, and the quality of the heads is just lower than usual, I'd recommend cooking it rather than eating it raw this time of year. If this heat breaks for long enough we may get some that is decent, but if not I may just have to mow it down.

The cukes have been going crazy. I picked about 600 of them last week alone, and this week doesn't look much different. It will be interesting to see if this intense production these last couple of weeks will make them burn themselves out sooner than normal. In a normal year I would expect to have cukes for at least 3 more weeks.

The zucchinis and squash have also been growing at an alarming rate. Last week I had to pick the zucchini every 24 hours to keep them from getting too big. And on Monday I had to compost a bunch of them that had gotten too big. I prefer not to pick zucchini on the weekend, and the last one was a hot one.

Farm News

Well the news this week is all about the heat. I don't mind a few days above 90° but too many of them make for weeds growing at alarming rates and workers who are much less productive than normal, including myself. So the weeds have gotten ahead of me on a few things, but it sounds like the weather will moderate this week somewhat and we can catch up a bit.

The lack of moisture is also in the news this week. The storms that came through Sunday night brought us some, but we are really running a deficit now. Some people's corn down in the valley is shriveled and brown. Thank goodness for irrigation, mind you I could use a break from hauling around hoses.

Some crops actually love the hot weather. It looks like we'll have a bumper crop of melons this year. I wonder if the origin of that phrase has to do with having so much you need to go to town and sell it off the bumper of your truck? Anyway the melons look good, as do the tomatoes, peppers and squash. I'm experimenting with row covering the eggplants to solve a pest problem, but I don't know if they can survive under row cover when it's 95°. The idea is for them to develop some blossoms under the cover that the bug cannot feed on, and then when the blossoms open I'll remove the cover so that they can be pollinated. It's worth a try. Normally I should be picking eggplant next week but there's none to be had so far this year.

I did talk to the sweet corn grower and he said he should have some ready beginning next week. Green beans should also be starting next week, and this week or next will be time for the garlic harvest and the onions soon after. I know everyone wants to know how the tomatoes are coming. They are growing wildly and should be starting to ripen in about 3–4 weeks time. Some of the hotter weather is actually too hot for tomatoes and peppers, they will drop their blossoms if it doesn't cool down below 70° at night. The hot wind we had on Sunday really made things look rough.

I also finally got around to checking on my two beehives last week. This year is my first attempt at keeping bees. I would say that up to now I have been a somewhat neglectful beekeeper, but I have one hive which may store up enough honey to survive the winter. That's really the goal the first year is to get the hive through the winter and then you begin to harvest excess honey the following year. But for me the real benefit is pollination, honey would just be a bonus. Last year there were very few bees around and yields on some things suffered as a result. I'm not real comfortable around massive amounts of bees yet but I'm getting better.

Well I'm running short on time this week so here's a couple of recipes I pulled up online. They are untested by me, but sounded like they might work well. Thanks and have a great week. -David Van Eeckhout

Pesto Potato Salad

- 2 pounds red potatoes, boiled until just tender when poked with a knife, sliced into 1/2 inch chunks
- 1 cup packed, washed and spun dry arugula leaves
- 1 cup packed basil leaves
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts or walnuts
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 garlic clove, crushed

Cook the potatoes, slice and cool them slightly. In a blender purée the arugula with the nuts, the oil, the Parmesan, the garlic, and salt and pepper to taste, add the pesto to the potatoes, and combine the salad well. You could also add some sliced radishes to this dish.

Viennese Cucumber Salad

- 4 large cucumbers (about 2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/3 cup white-wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1–2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 garlic clove, forced through a garlic press
- 1 teaspoon dill seed

Score cucumbers lengthwise with a fork and slice thin, preferably with slicing disk of a food processor. In a large bowl toss cucumbers with salt and let stand 1 hour.

In a small saucepan bring vinegar and water to a boil with sugar, garlic, and dill seed, stirring until sugar is dissolved, and let dressing cool.

In a colander drain cucumbers and rinse under cold water. Drain cucumbers well, squeezing out excess liquid. In a bowl combine cucumbers with dressing and marinate, covered and chilled, at least 1 hour and up to 6 hours. (After about 2 hours cucumber skin will discolor, but there will be no effect on flavor.)