

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

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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cilantro	Yes	Plastic	
Dill	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green or red bell, Serrano
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red
Tomatoes	No	No	All kinds

### Tomato Time

We're entering into the peak season for tomatoes. We picked a little over 800 of them yesterday. Don't worry there's still a few left out there, a few thousand that is. Every day this time of year I have a generous 1/2 inch thick slice of tomato on my sandwich at lunch. If you start to get behind there's a couple of recipes at the end of the newsletter.

I made what I thought was a huge bowl of salsa last weekend for a family get-together and it disappeared in a flash. I used both yellow and red tomatoes in it which was quite eye-catching.

You should find some of each variety of tomato in your box this week. The Cherokee purples are having problems with cracking. For every one we kept yesterday we pitched three into the weeds. I had been holding off on watering them for a week to see if the water had been causing the cracking, but it appears not. That's why heirloom tomatoes are expensive, they're very prone to problems.

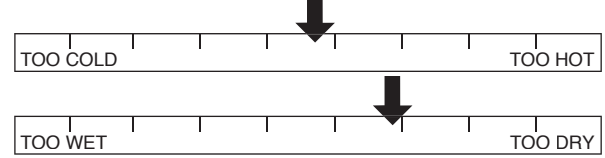
A couple more herbs to accompany the tomatoes this week. Basil is the natural companion, as is cilantro if you're making salsa.

I like to use the dill with potatoes, but it's equally good

### Farm Report

Rainfall . . . . .0.65"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 86°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 58°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



for many other dishes.

The carrots are holding up nicely and will continue for another week. Then you'll have a couple of weeks off of them to get caught up before the fall carrots are ready.

It has been nice to have some milder weather but it's slowing the peppers down a little bit. I'll take the mild weather over hot any day, even if it means fewer peppers.

The potatoes are the usual Dark Red Norlands. They have been very nice this year. In two weeks I'll start digging some of the later varieties.

### Farm News

The box seems a little empty this week since we're done with the corn and we don't have any muskmelons this year. If you missed the muskmelon report they were destroyed by cucumber beetles which feed on the plant and spread a disease throughout the field. What the beetles don't wreck slowly dies as the bacterial wilt takes hold.

September crops are looking good. The fall carrots and beets are plentiful; the first of the fall broccoli should be ready in a week or two; and it seems like we'll have a good bunch of cabbage and cauliflower for the fall too.

I did manage to get the small tractor running again after it had been stranded in the broccoli field for several days. It needed new points in the distributor. It's hard to believe a \$5 part can make such a difference. I also took the opportunity to change the spark plugs which helped it to run better than ever. With the repair done I was able to finish up the cultivating I had started a week ago. I also found time to mow the field edges since things were getting a little out of control. I also mowed all the potato rows down since the plants

are now completely dead and the weeds are growing unchallenged.

One problem with leaving the tractor stranded in the field for a few days is that the bluebirds love to sit on top of the muffler. While there they tend to leave little presents for me all over the muffler. Then when you use the tractor again the muffler heats up and you get the wonderful smell of burnt bluebird poo wafting back in your face as you drive along on the tractor. It's a small price to pay for having bluebirds around, though.

Speaking of bluebirds, they are starting to gather in flocks a little right now. There are a lot of them flying around and singing. There also was a frenzied flock of tree swallows feeding on bugs today, there must have been at least 50 of them zooming and swooping around. Here's hoping they were eating something troublesome. I may look into trying to attract more tree swallows in the future.

There seem to be a few yellow boxes missing lately. Please get them back to a pickup site if you have any. If you had someone else pick up your share while on vacation make sure they didn't take a box, or get it back from them if they did. Thanks for your help.

I wanted to share a recipe we enjoy from one of Diana Kennedy's cookbooks. If you're not familiar with her she is to Mexican cooking what Julia Childs was to French cooking. She treats tomatoes and peppers differently in some recipes. In the following recipe she roasts the tomatoes and toasts the chiles. To roast the tomatoes place them whole (don't core them) in a foil-lined pan under a medium-high broiler. You want them to cook through which should take about 20 minutes, so put them far enough away from the heat that they don't burn up right away. It's o.k. if the skins get good and black. For toasting the chiles she suggests putting them on a comal, which is a mexican earthenware heating plate placed over a fire. I use a cast-iron griddle on the stovetop. Any heavy saute pan should work. Put the pan on medium-high heat and toast the chiles in the dry pan, turning them frequently until they're blistered and softened.

### **Salsa de Jitomate (Cocida)** *Cooked Tomato Sauce*

- 3 medium tomatoes, roasted
- 3 chiles serranos, toasted
- 1/4 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 small clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 Tbs. safflower oil
- 1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste

Blend the tomatoes, peppers, onions and garlic to a fairly smooth sauce, it should have some texture. Leave the core and seeds in the tomatoes, they add extra body to the sauce. You may seed the serranos if you'd prefer a milder, but still hot sauce.

Heat the oil in a small frying pan, add the sauce and salt and cook over a medium flame for about 5 minutes until it has thickened and is well seasoned.

Use this sauce as an alternative to fresh salsas or as an enchilada or taco sauce. I like to add a little vinegar to mine since good fresh tomatoes tend to make it a little sweet for me.

### **Tomato Salad with Feta and Olives**

- 5 large tomatoes (about 3 pounds), cored, sliced
- 1 red onion, halved, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley or basil
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 ounces feta cheese (about 1 generous cup), crumbled
- 1/3 cup brine-cured olives, preferably Kalamata (optional)

Overlap tomato and onion slices on large platter. Whisk oil, vinegar, parsley and garlic in small bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour over salad. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour or cover and refrigerate up to 3 hours, basting occasionally with dressing. Sprinkle salad with cheese and garnish with olives, if desired.

### **Tomato, Mozzarella, and Basil Salad**

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon English dry mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon sugar
- 1 large vine-ripened tomato, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 pound mozzarella cheese (preferably fresh), cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 6 to 8 large fresh basil leaves, sliced thin

In a small bowl whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, mustard, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. On a platter arrange tomato slices alternately with mozzarella and top with basil. Drizzle salad with vinaigrette.

**Coming next week:** Tomatoes, onions, shallots, garlic, carrots, beets, basil