

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
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red with tops
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Dill	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	German Ex. Hardy
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Rosemary and Thyme
Onions	No	No	Yellow, White and Red
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green or Red Bell and Hot Cherry
Shallots	No	No	
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds, Persimmon, Cherokee Purple

Stormy Weather

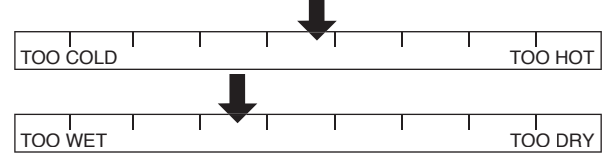
A week ago today we had some pretty severe weather roll through the farm. I was on my way back from the cities and didn't drive through any real bad weather, but by the time I got back to the farm it was clear that it had been pretty bad. I don't know how strong the wind was but I'll bet it was at least 40 mph. The wind was strong enough to lay a lot of things down but not do any permanent damage. A number of tomato cages were pushed over, any growth above the tops of the cages was just flattened, and it knocked a lot of fruit off of the plants.

The main problem was that we did have some pretty significant hail. Hail is the worst weather we can have on the farm, short of a tornado or frost in August. I'm actually really glad that I wasn't there to watch it come down. It's one thing to find out that your child hurt themselves while they were at school, but it's much harder to watch your child get hurt. If I had to stand there and watch the hail come down on the vegetables

Farm Report

Rainfall 2.2"
 High Temperature 82°
 Low Temperature 58°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



it probably would have made me sick. Things always look so much worse right after a storm than they do a few days later.

It could have been much worse than it was. It looked like it was mostly pea to marble sized hail. There is damage on many things, but most will outgrow it just fine. The beet tops in your box this week were hit real hard, unfortunate because before this they had been gorgeous. The tomatoes have some damage on them, but fortunately the plants are large enough that they mostly shielded the fruit. The bell peppers seem to have gotten hit the hardest, one little hole on them and they start to rot, so we may have fewer of them in the coming weeks.

We also had some very hard rain which washed some soil around and thoroughly packed down the soil that remained. Once it dries out a little more I'll be able to get back in the field with the cultivator and loosen some of that up.

Back to this week's box...

Weather aside, things are looking good in the box this week. Tomato continue at their peak this week. There are less reds on the plants now and so we'll probably see them slowing a little bit in a week or two. There's also a fair amount of disease showing up in the tomatoes now so it must be September.

The first of the fall beets are in the box, with aforementioned beat up tops.

The carrots have enjoyed enough cooler weather so that they are starting to sweeten up better. It looks like there will be enough for another bunch next week.

Dill is a great companion to beets, especially in a yogurt, beet, dill type dish. A recipe follows.

It's another onion week with red, white and yellow onions. These are the first of the main yellow onion crop.

They look very nice this year and are averaging a very respectable 9 ounces apiece. That means that I've got 1,000 pounds of yellow onions kicking around here.

Shallots, garlic and hot cherry peppers are also in the onion bag. Remember not to store these items in the plastic bag, they're just in there so they're easier for you and us to handle. They store best in a bowl on the counter.

A bunch of thyme this week is complemented by a little sprig of rosemary. Our rosemary plants are quite small and slow growing so don't look for half a pound of it in the box anytime soon. I like to mince fresh rosemary and add it to my pizza crust when I make it. These herbs will keep a couple of weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge, or are easily dried by spreading out on a cookie sheet and leaving in a place with good ventilation and no sun. If you decide to dry them it's best to wash them first and then prep them as you would if you were going to use them, i.e. strip the leaves from the stems, but leave the leaves whole to preserve flavor.

Farm News

Besides the storm there wasn't a ton of news at the farm this week. I've been busy trying to get caught up with cutting the tops off of all the onions, shallots and garlic. There's more fall greens to seed once it dries out just a little more, maybe I can take care of that before we pack the shares.

I'm also hoping to get next year's ground worked one more time before planting a cover crop of oats and peas. Now is the perfect time to get it planted. I'm hoping the storms they're talking about for Saturday hold off so that I can get that done. It'll be a little tricky because somewhere we also have to fit in our annual visit to the Minnesota State Fair.

Next week at the pickup sites we're going to have a little experiment. A friend of ours, Ann Hallstadt, is going to can some salsa for us using ingredients from the farm. Some of you may know Ann as the proprietor of Angelica's Garden, she sells her canned products as well as fresh pizzas in most of the co-ops. She has a USDA-inspected kitchen and can process stuff for us that we can sell without getting ourselves into trouble. We should have some jars of salsa available to purchase at the pickup sites next week. Let us know what you think. If you have other things you'd like to see made from our produce let me know and I can look into it. Pickled beets anyone?

Speaking of canning some of you may be scratching your head and saying 'What happened to the Labor Day Tomato Canning?' Well, while it was a great success last year, it was way too much work for an already overworked farmer. I also found out later that it was basically illegal to do without a certified kitchen. Details, details. I hope everyone can understand that we can't risk the future of the farm on someone getting sick from a spoiled jar of tomatoes.

Let's end on a positive note...After much concern earlier in the season it looks as though we'll have a very nice crop of winter squash. We should start to see these in the box in the next week or two.

Roasted Beets with Dill-Walnut Vinaigrette

- 3 large beets
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons juice from 1 lemon
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- Salt and ground black pepper

Heat the oven to 400°. Trim all but about 1 inch of stem from the beets. Wash the beets well and wrap them in aluminum foil. Place the beets on a shallow roasting pan in the middle of the oven. Roast until a skewer inserted in a beet comes out easily, 45 minutes to an hour.

Remove the beets from the oven and carefully open the foil, keep your hands away from the steam. When cool enough to handle, carefully peel the skin from the beets. Slice 1/4 inch thick and cut each slice in half, place in a medium bowl. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil and toss.

While the beets are cooling toast the walnuts in a skillet on the stovetop over medium heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 3 minutes. You could also toss them in the 400° oven in a cast iron skillet and give the pan a shake every couple of minutes. Careful not to let them burn.

Whisk the vinegar, lemon juice, shallot, dill and remainder of the oil together in a small bowl until thoroughly combined. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss the dressing, sliced beets, and walnuts together in a medium bowl. Serve immediately.

Next week in the box...Arugula, Tomatoes, Basil, Peppers, Potatoes, Broccoli, Carrots, Chioggia Beets, Sage.