

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
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Basil	No	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red
Garlic	No	No	German
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Sage
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Onions	No	No	Yellow, Red and White
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Hot Cherry
Shallots	No	No	
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds
Winter Squash	No	No	Heart of Gold

Squash

It's been a rough year in the squash patch. First we had the cucumber beetles and then the squash bugs. That many piercing and sucking insects always spread around various diseases which are now showing up in the mature squash. It looks like overall yield in the squash will be down as much as 20%, with possible additional losses in storage. I generally overplant squash so we should still be in pretty good shape.

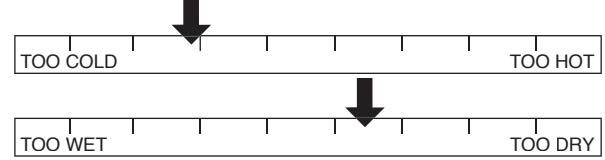
I had hoped to put two squash in each box this week but the maturity on these seems to be a little behind as well. Some of them may not be particularly sweet so we'll let the Heart of Gold variety rest a couple more weeks and go with an early butternut next week.

Heart of Gold is a cross between acorn and carnival types, which generally means it's a high-yielder in a fairly compact plant. It's been my most bullet-proof variety year-in year-out but this year is suffering some of the same losses as the other varieties. I'll be glad to put all the cucurbits behind me this year.

Farm Report

Rainfall0.45"
 High Temperature 82°
 Low Temperature 47°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Maybe the squash won't be as bad as I think. I tend to be pessimistic so that I'm not surprised by a problem. A couple of year's ago the first squash I tried out of the field was the most inedible bitter nasty thing I've ever tried to eat. I panicked. Luckily, I had just happened to pick a squash from the one plant that was somehow a mutant, all the rest of it was fine.

One good thing is that the squash plants are still somewhat alive, so that they can continue to mature the fruit that are on them. Provided we don't get an early frost. Our typical first frost is still two weeks away.

More arugula this week, the cool weather has kept it a very nice size. We had a lentil and sausage salad on top of arugula the other night, it was very good.

The last of the late summer beets are in the box. The tops have recovered from the hail and are looking pretty good.

Garlic, onions and shallots are back again this week. We'll have garlic every week now until the end of the summer shares.

Lacinato kale is one of the favorites around our house. I generally wait until now to start delivering kale, but if people want more kale let me know. We throw lacinato in all kinds of things, from the tops of pizzas to creamed eggs on toast.

Sage and basil are representing the herbs this week. Sage is my favorite accompaniment to winter squash, usually fried in a little butter and drizzled on top. We're nearing the end of the basil since it doesn't really enjoy the cooler weather.

The bell peppers also don't like cool weather and have pretty much shut down production. We'll give them a couple weeks to work on it. Plenty of hot peppers around though.

The tomatoes are ripening slowly which is a good thing this time of year. It spreads them out over as long of a time as possible. The cool weather has kept them a little less ripe and firmer. Just leave them on the counter and use the ripest ones first. I'm sure you're all experts at this by now. This is the end of the peak of tomatoes, the numbers will start falling off over the next few weeks.

Farm News

The big news item is that it's been awfully gray and chilly for the first full week of September. This is one of those times of year when it could be 90° or 40°. It would be nice to get a couple more weeks of warm weather to get things sized up for the end of the month, but the forecast is pointing towards more cool weather this weekend.

With all of the issues in the squash patch it looks like we'll still have plenty of pumpkins for our annual pumpkin day on Sunday, October 1st. We're already seeing a few hints of fall color in the trees so mark your calendar to see the color and pick out a pumpkin.

With pumpkin day on the horizon we must not be that far from the end of the regular season. The last summer share delivery is Thursday, October 5th. Those of you getting a winter share will begin picking them up the following Thursday, October 12th. The winter shares will continue every other week until December 7th. The one exception will be the delivery that occurs during the week of Thanksgiving. That share will be delivered on Tuesday November 21st instead of on Thanksgiving Day. I will publish a little calendar in the newsletter the last week of the summer share. You will be able to pick up your winter share at your current pickup site.

Last week between showers I managed to get the last little bit of seeding done. It's pushing it whether or not this arugula will be ready before the snow flies but it never hurts to put in some more. The nice thing about seeding things this late is that even the weeds don't really bother to come up now. I also finally managed to get all the garlic trimmed, sorted and stored. The largest bulbs get selected out for next year's seed stock. Doing this improves the size of the crop each year, in fact when I went back and looked at the numbers I was surprised to see that the average weight of my garlic has increased 40% over the last two years.

The nice showers we've been having have also got the cover crops up and growing nicely. It's so nice to have bright green fields going into the fall instead of the barren patches of mottled brown that the corn and soybean fields of my neighbors are.

Grilled Tomatoes with Goat Cheese and Sage

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh sage (about 1 ounce), divided
- 1/2 cup soft fresh goat cheese
- 2 teaspoons sliced green onions
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 medium tomatoes

Heat oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add 3 tablespoons fresh sage and fry 30 seconds. Using slotted spoon, transfer fried sage to paper towel.

Combine cheese, onions, shallot, salt, and remaining 1 tablespoon fresh sage in bowl. Season with pepper. Using small sharp knife, remove cone-shaped piece 2 inches wide and 1 inch deep from top of each tomato. Divide cheese mixture among tomatoes; top with fried sage.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Place tomatoes on grill rack; cover barbecue with lid. Cook until tomatoes are soft, about 5 minutes. Serve by themselves or on a pile of arugula.

Beet and Arugula Salad

- 1/2 pound beets without leaves (about 3 medium)
- 1 small bunch arugula
- 1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Peel beets and cut into 1/2-inch wedges. In a steamer set over boiling water steam beets until tender, about 10 minutes, and transfer to a bowl. Discard coarse stems from arugula. Wash arugula well and dry. In a bowl whisk together vinegar and salt and pepper to taste and whisk in oil until emulsified. Pour half of vinaigrette over beets and toss well. To vinaigrette remaining in bowl add arugula and toss well. Arrange arugula and beets on 2 plates.

Coming next week: Butternut squash, carrots, potatoes, salad mix, turnips, arugula, tomatoes.