

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	
Collards	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Butter or Green Leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar Snap
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Fuego
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Hakurei

Peas

This will be the peak week for peas. There should be at least a pound of sugar snaps in your box this week. The heat was really forcing them to come a little too fast. We ended up having to harvest a bunch of them last Saturday to keep them from going by. There's nothing worse than overmature peas. I like them to be plump and firm and sweet, but still a nice deep green. As the pods get lighter green they tend to get a little starchy.

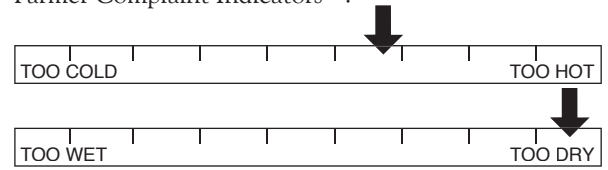
Peas are an ancient crop but the edible-pod type peas are a fairly recent innovation. Those of you who have had real shelling-type peas know what a sweet treat they can be, but their sugar turns to starch very quickly after they're picked. The edible pod types were an innovation both because you could eat the pod, and because, since their pod is so much thicker, they held their sugar much better. Sugar snaps were first introduced in 1979.

We'll have a few more next week and then that will be it for the peas

Farm Report

Rainfall0.00"
 High Temperature 88°
 Low Temperature 56°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™ :



Collards are a non-heading member of the cabbage family. Up until the 20th century they were mostly referred to as coleworts. They have outgrown most of the flea beetle damage and are looking good. Always remove the tough stem of collards and just use the leaves.

Garlic scapes are the flower stem of the hardneck garlic plant. They curl in little circles as they come out of the plant. You can use them in a number of ways. You can treat them like scallions and add them to stir-fries, make pesto out of them with the pea shoots, dice them and add them to the top of pizza, or just let your children play with them. Just use the stem portion and not the actual flower bud.

There's mostly butter lettuce in the boxes this week, with a little green leaf in some of the boxes.

Arugula, pea shoots and spinach are all familiar by now. The radishes this week are a regular round red variety. There's also a few more of the white turnips in the box this week.

Scallions are also in the box this week, we've been experimenting with growing these and should have them for a few weeks.

Farm News

Well this is turning out to be the year of the beetle here at the farm. All types of beetles are thriving in this warm dry weather. This week my big concern has been an explosion in the cucumber beetle population. Cucumber beetles generally are not a concern at our farm but conditions this year have really been favorable for them. We are in crisis mode on the cukes, zukes, squashes and melons. I'll be spraying some organic pyrethrum (marigold) based spray on them to try and get them under control. Typically I try and avoid even organic sprays, but sometimes circumstances get out of our control.

The other concern this week has been a much stronger Colorado potato beetle population than I have seen previously. The potatoes are looking pretty good so far but I need to get them under control.

Some of you may have noticed that we haven't had any broccoli in the box yet this year. This is also due to the flea beetles and the weather. They were hit very hard when the plants were young and just have never recovered since we've had so much warm dry weather.

All of this points to an importance of operating a farm like ours, diversification. With over 45 different crops we always have something planted that likes the way the weather is at any given moment. And when one thing gets eaten by the bugs we hopefully have something else to replace it. It's a tricky business but one that's increasingly important as our weather just seems to get more and more bizarre. The ever increasing insect levels seem to be a direct result of the mild winters we've been racking up lately. There never are any definitive answers but we keep looking for alternatives that can help us to diversify.

The tomato crop is looking good so far. This week we've been getting the cages put on them before they get too big. We've got a little over 300 tomato plants in the ground this year, or about 4 plants per share. That may not seem like much but our tomatoes are very productive, averaging about 15lbs. of tomatoes per plant. We end up throwing about half of those on the compost pile for various reasons, bruises, bad spots, etc.

The farm has been missing any of the rain that has gone through lately. It is very dry. The field crops around are starting to look rather bad, if they don't get some rain soon farmers will start to see some decreases in yields. We're keeping up just barely with the irrigation now that we finally got some calm weather. Irrigating when the hot wind is blowing is just a waste of electricity since so much of the water evaporates before it hits the ground. I've been running the well about 8 hours a day, or about 15,000 gallons of water per day. It costs a lot of money to make your own rain. Not to mention the time involved. Needless to say I am ready for it to rain.

Thanks to everyone who bought some syrup or honey. I forgot to mention that we abandoned the pre-ordering system we had last year, it was too much work. Just help yourself to some honey or syrup when your at the pickup site and leave the money in the box.

Collard Ribbons with Sesame

- 1 bunch collard greens
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 Tbs molasses
- 1/4 salt
- 1/2 Tbs peanut oil
- 1 tsp dark sesame oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tsp cider vinegar
- 1 Tbs toasted sesame seeds
- Chili flakes to taste

Strip stems from collard leaves and discard. Rinse leaves in several changes of water. Stack leaves 5 or 6 at a time and halve lengthwise, then cut across into 1/4-inch strips (to make about 5 packed cups)

Combine collards in very wide deep skillet with water, molasses, salt and peanut and sesame oils. Bring to a boil, twisting greens with tongs or turning with spatula until wilted. Cover and boil until collards are tender but still chewy—about 15 minutes.

Uncover and add chili flakes and garlic. Raise heat and boil, stirring often, until liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Season, adding vinegar gradually. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve hot.

Here's an interesting untested recipe:

Lettuce-and-Mint-Braised Sugar Snap Peas

- 1/2 pound sugar snap peas
- 8 large Butter lettuce leaves
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 1 Tbs butter
- 1 bunch mint
- 2 scallions, halved across
- Salt

Rinse peas and remove strings. Rinse lettuce leaves and arrange half of them, with water still clinging to the leaves, in a smallish heavy saucepan to hold ingredients snugly. Add sugar snaps, sugar and 1/2 Tbs. butter. Divide the mint into 4 bunches and tie each with one of the scallion halves. Add the bundles to each leaf. Press remaining lettuce over to enclose contents.

Turn the heat to high. When contents steam, reduce heat to moderately low and cover pan. Cook, shaking several times, until sugar snaps are just tender, 4 to 7 minutes. Remove lettuce covering and mint bundle, discard. Transfer sugar snaps to a warmed serving dish. Toss with salt and remaining 1/2 Tbs. butter.

Coming next week: Lettuce, arugula, radishes, chard, kohlrabi, peas, scapes, scallions.