

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	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Chard	Yes	Plastic	Fordhook Giant
Eggplant	Yes	Plastic	Japanese
Kohlrabi	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red and Green Summer Crisp
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar Snap

Last of the peas

This will be it on the peas for this year. It's been a good crop with everyone getting over 4 pounds of peas over the last few weeks. With all the hot, dry weather it is somewhat surprising that they've been as nice as they have. The ones this week are getting a little mature, but they're still pretty darn good. If you have some oversized ones you can shell them and use them as you would shell peas.

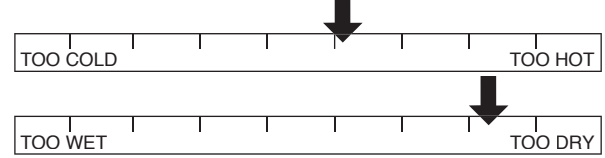
There's a couple of either or items in the box this week. There's just a little broccoli and a few Japanese eggplant so you'll either get one or the other in your box. Don't get your hopes up on the eggplant front, this will probably be all we get because of the usual pest problems. I keep planting them and the same bug keeps eating the flower buds. But you for sure don't get any eggplant if you don't plant any. As for the broccoli there should be more next week if the heat doesn't kill it.

The chard this week is the green and white Fordhook type. It's an old variety of 'leaf beet' (as chard is sometimes called) that's been around since the 19th century.

Farm Report

Rainfall0.00"
 High Temperature 88°
 Low Temperature 54°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Please note: We've cancelled the field day this coming Saturday, July 8th. Interest was minimal and it's going to be too hot for it.

The beets this week are of various ages, you may get some large ones or you may get small baby beets. They had reached a point where they weren't going to get any larger because they were in a lousy patch of soil so I decided to pick them now. We'll have some more consistently sized ones in a couple of weeks.

We've got one or two more weeks of lettuce and arugula. The lettuce we grow this time of year doesn't get bitter in the heat the way that most springtime lettuces do. The one we had the other night was delicious. The arugula gets a little ratty in the heat but it should be a little nicer next week.

One or two more kohlrabis are also in the box.

Farm News

This is really the time of year at the farm when things are just growing out of control. We finally got all of the tomato cages on last week which was getting a little tricky because the plants were getting so big. The pigweed is growing everywhere at a dizzying rate. At some point you put away the cultivators and hoes and get out the mower. The mower is the last defense against weeds. If all else fails it's important to get the weeds mowed down before they can set any new seed.

I got a little behind on the cultivating because on Saturday my cultivating tractor caught on fire. I had been having some issues with the electrical system shorting out, but hadn't had time to get to the root of the problem. This is a big problem at the farm during the summer months there isn't time to adequately address problems that come up because it's so busy. The unaddressed problems tend to turn into emergencies.

So it went on Saturday when I tried to start the tractor and the starter switch shorted out causing the metal contacts to become red hot and start the paint on the switch on fire. The starter switch is unfortunately right below the gas tank on this particular tractor. Thankfully the tractor was still parked in the shed where I have hoses full of water handy. It wasn't burning too long before I got it doused. It could've been much worse. As it was I just had to replace the starter switch and the cable running from the battery to the switch.

All in all it was a little too exciting. Once the tractor was fixed I managed to get quite a bit done on Monday and Tuesday. The potatoes got hilled for the last time and some younger crops got cultivated.

This time of year is also when I start turning my eye towards the fall crops. The first seeding of fall carrots went in this week as did the rutabagas. The last broccoli transplants also got seeded this week. That means that I'm all done seeding transplants for the year, hooray! I never added up the numbers this year but we've got to be doing at least 15,000 transplants a year now.

On the insect front we're making some headway. I don't think we'll completely lose any crops but may lose a variety here or there. Right now it looks like we may be out of luck on the buttercup squash and one variety of cantaloupe. There's still plenty of cucumber beetles but the plants have had a chance to catch up. My other concern is that the squash bug eggs haven't started hatching yet. There are a lot of adult squash bugs in the field and when the new generation starts hatching it could be a big problem. Squash bugs produce just one generation per year but the nymph phase of their development can be devastating on the squashes. I'll be trying to control them with the same pyrethrum-based pesticide that I've been using on the cucumber beetles. It is OMRI approved for organic production and extracted from the flowers of a certain variety of chrysanthemum.

On the weather front it is still continuing to be a very dry year. It makes me think that we will have a bad year for grasshoppers too. We must be a good six inches in deficit for moisture right now. With the coming weekend in the 90's it's really going to get bad. I would like a break from irrigating sometime this summer. My well is having trouble keeping up with running all day every day. It's running about 10psi lower than it usually does.

Speaking of the hot dry weekend to come, I've made an executive decision to cancel this Saturday's field day. I didn't hear from too many folks who would be coming and I think that their numbers would be down even more with the hot weather. I'm pretty sure next year that I'm going to get rid of the field days and just have a harvest party at the end of the season at the farm. Let me know what you think. But for now we will not be having a field day this coming Saturday.

One of our neighbors, Randy and Lynn Anderson have organically-raised chickens available for purchase in August. Please call them for more info, 715-285-5226.

Penne With Swiss Chard And Garlic

- 1 bunch Swiss chard, stems cut from the leaves and the stems and leaves chopped separately
- 1/8 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes, or to taste
- 3 large garlic cloves sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup drained canned tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 pound penne or other tubular pasta
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan

Rinse and drain separately the Swiss chard stems and leaves. In a large heavy skillet cook the red pepper flakes and the garlic in the oil over moderate heat, stirring, until the garlic is pale golden, add the stems and 1/4 cup of the water, and cook the mixture, covered, for 5 minutes, or until the stems are just tender. Add the leaves with the remaining 1/4 cup water and salt and pepper to taste and cook the mixture, covered, for 5 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and cook the mixture, covered, for 3 minutes, or until the leaves are tender.

While the chard is cooking, in a kettle of salted boiling water boil the penne until it is al dente and drain it in a colander. In a large bowl toss the penne with the chard mixture and 1/4 cup of the Parmesan and serve it with the additional Parmesan.

Coming next week: Arugula, radishes, lettuce, collards, scallions, new potatoes, broccoli.