

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	Green top red
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red and green summer crisp
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Potatoes	No	Paper	Dark red norland
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French breakfast
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	Large size

Fennel

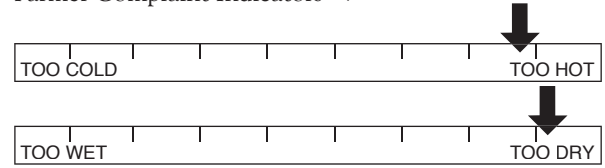
Fennel has been grown for the bulb since at least the 17th century in Italy. It first shows up in the U.S. in Thomas Jefferson's legendary garden at Monticello. It's remarkable how many new and different vegetables show up for the first time in the new world at Monticello. It's interesting how often the garden lures people in after they've completed the big objectives in their lives. Jefferson was just one more retired guy who wanted to start a garden, o.k. so it was maybe a little different in the 1820's.

Fennel comes in two forms, the bulbing type and the type grown just for the fronds. This is the bulbing, or Florence, type fennel. It is not a true bulb but just enlarged stems. Both the bulb and the fronds can be used. We've tried to handle them gently so that you can use the fronds if you like. I recently found an interesting recipe for the fronds, which follows. We will have additional fennel in a week or two. Traditional uses vary from grilling the bulb to slicing it and serving it with desert. I enjoy the bulb sliced paper-thin and sprinkled with some salt or on top of my salad.

Farm Report

Rainfall0.50"
 High Temperature 92°
 Low Temperature 53°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



The potatoes are new and are 'new potatoes'. Technically the 'new' moniker just means that they've been harvested from plants which are still alive and not stored. The skins are very fragile at this early stage of their development, we've tried to preserve as much of them as possible. You may find a little more dirt on them than usual in an effort to preserve the skins. We also have to dig these by hand, the potato digger will really bang them up. It's a bit of a back-breaker but there are few things more beautiful than seeing these red beauties nestled in the soil. New potatoes will not keep as well as storage potatoes so use them up in the next week or two.

The beets are from a different row this week. The heat really boosted the size on these babies. They grew fast so that even though some are quite large they will be nice and tender. These tops are nicer also so don't forget to use them as you would chard.

The arugula is going on summer vacation now. We'll see it again in September. These are also the last of the radishes and scallions.

There is a head of broccoli in the shares this week. Broccoli doesn't like the heat at all so it has been a struggle to get any this spring. We'll have a nice bunch of it late in the season.

The heat has helped the zucchini to recover from the bugs somewhat. Unfortunately I haven't been paying adequate attention to it and they've been getting too large. In 90° weather the zucchini needs to be picked every day and sometimes that just doesn't happen. Don't be afraid of the size, use them just as you would the small ones. The large ones grill up real nice, slice them lengthwise in 1/2 inch slices, marinate and grill.

The summer lettuce has been holding up nice. We'll have the last of it in the box next week.

Farm News

Well it's still a wee bit dry at the farm. We got a nice little shower on Tuesday but it was the proverbial drop in the bucket. My well could really use a few days off, but it's not to be. I've been busy irrigating all week to try and get ahead so that I'll be ready for the hot weather this weekend. We're about 6 inches behind where we should be in terms of rainfall. Some of the farmers down on the sandy ground are really going to start losing some crops next week. I'm going to look into a different irrigation system next year that's less labor intensive. These dry summers are becoming all too common.

The heat isn't a real problem this time of year. Most of the things growing now enjoy it. It can be a little tricky to get some newly sown crops to germinate when the soil temperatures get into the 80's. Luckily it looks like the 6 rows of fall carrots I seeded last week have come up well. I germinate them under row covers to keep the soil from crusting. Under those covers it can get very warm. Last year I lost an entire seeding to burning up under the cover.

Speaking of fall carrots...The winter share payments are now past due. If you still owe money on a winter share I will try and let you know by email in the coming week. If you are uncertain drop me an email and I'll look it up. I have space for just a couple more winter shares, if you're interested let me know. Those of you who post-dated a check for the winter share payments will see those checks go through in the next week or so. We're a little far from our bank out here so sometimes it takes a while to get a deposit together.

The bug update. We still have plenty of cucumber beetles but they are less of an issue now. We should see cukes in the shares next week. The big concern now is that the squash bug eggs are starting to hatch. I will have to keep an eye on these nymphs for the next couple of weeks. A bunch of us got through some of the winter squash this week removing the eggs from the plants before they hatched. This is very labor intensive but hopefully will make a difference. The main concern with this pest is the winter squash.

Lastly I want to thank everyone for how smoothly the share pickups have been going. I've been getting all the boxes back and the word is that the earlier times are really helping everyone out. It's also been working out well for me.

Fennel Puree with Pasta

- Fennel stalks from two fennel bulbs
- 2 or 3 garlic cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- Salt and pepper
- 1 pound good italian pasta
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons dry vermouth or dry white wine

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Separate feathery fronds from the stalks and reserve. Slice the stalks, then drop into the boiling water with plenty of salt. Boil until tender, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile rough-cut fronds (to make about 6 tightly packed cups). When stalks are tender, add fronds to water, cover and return to a boil. Uncover, add halved garlic cloves, and boil, stirring often, until greens are quite tender, about 5 minutes. Drain.

Refill pot with water for the pasta and bring to a boil, add salt and cook pasta. Meanwhile transfer the well-drained fennel to a food processor. Puree, scraping sides often. Add minced garlic to taste and plenty of salt and pepper. Gradually whirl in 1/3 cup of the oil. Add wine to taste, then more oil, salt and pepper as needed. Mix puree with pasta to coat well, serve.

Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

- 3 beets, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges (1 1/2 pounds)
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 fennel bulbs with fronds—bulbs cut into 1/2-inch wedges, 1 tablespoon chopped fronds
- 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar

Preheat the oven to 400°. In a medium baking dish, toss the beets with the thyme, the water and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and cook for about 40 minutes, or until tender. Let cool slightly. Discard the thyme.

In a small baking dish, drizzle the fennel wedges with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until tender and lightly browned. Pour the beet juices into a bowl and whisk in the vinegar. Add the beets, fennel wedges and fronds and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Coming next week: Cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, green beans?, chard, zucchini.