

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
Basil	No	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Onions	No	No	Red, White and Yellow
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell, Cherry bomb
Potatoes	No	Paper	Reds
Shallots	No	No	
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	

Alliums

Onions, garlic, shallots and leeks are all members of the allium family of plants. A few of all of these except the latter are represented in the box this week.

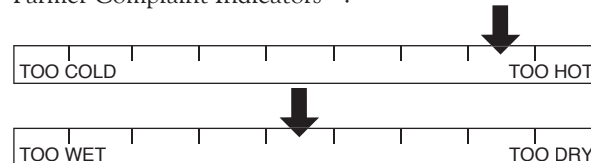
The hot, dry weather has accelerated the maturity and curing of the onions and garlic so they made it into the box this week. The garlic is self-explanatory. We've been propagating this particular variety of garlic for eight years now. I started out with a couple of pounds of it from a farm I was working for. This year we harvested about 350 pounds of it. Lately I've been selecting it to get more, smaller cloves in the bulb. It seems to be working a little bit each year. There are still a number of bulbs with 4 large cloves, but I'm trying to move it towards 6 cloves. Most of what you get in your boxes will have 4 or 5 cloves since I'll save most of the 6 clove bulbs for seed for next year.

The red and white onions have had some time to cure so they'll be fine out on the counter. The yellows are freshly out of the ground so they may be refrigerated, or left out. If you leave them out the green part will wilt, but that's fine.

Farm Report

Rainfall2.45"
 High Temperature 95°
 Low Temperature 66°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



The shallots are a seed-grown type of shallot which technically is considered a mild onion. In France it is illegal to sell a seed-grown shallot as a shallot, true shallots must be grown from the previous years bulbs, much like garlic. Whatever. I grew these for the first time last year and loved them, so this year I grew more. Use them anywhere that calls for shallots. They will keep for months on the counter.

The first bit of basil is in the box this week. It may be a little strong from the heat, enjoy in moderation.

The carrots are continuing. It was wet enough yesterday that we could actually pull the carrots out of the ground without digging them out.

The peppers are looking nice. I'm normally not a huge fan of the green pepper, but I like to take a big one or two off of each plant this time of year to encourage the plants to set more fruit. The red Cherry bomb pepper is a hot pepper. It is not as hot as a Jalapeno, but they do seem hotter than normal this year.

It was my intention to have green beans in the box this week but with the wet weather we were unable to harvest them. Beans cannot be wet when you pick them. They will mold in an instant. Going into the beans while the plants are wet is also a great way to spread rusts, the little reddish spots you sometimes see on the ends of a green bean. Rust can render a whole row of beans useless by spreading it all around. We should have more next week.

As a conciliation we have some nice red potatoes. Since last week's potatoes were a little bit skimpy I thought you could use some more. I also worked on fixing the potato digger on Monday and wanted to make sure that I had it working. As you can see, it works, for now.

More sweet corn from Dan and Tammy Sam is also in the box.

Farm News

We are officially halfway through the summer season this week, and what a weird week of weather it has been. The weekend and beginning of the week were just brutal. It's tough to have that much hot weather. I would say that it cuts down on my productivity by about 50%. Which is unfortunate because there is so much to do this time of year (not that I can think of a time when there isn't). The rain Tuesday night into Wednesday morning was a welcome change. We got soaked harvesting Wednesday morning but by 9am it had stopped raining and by the time the wind came up we were heading to our cars to look for sweatshirts. Quite a change from just 24 hours before.

Ahead of the rain we did manage to get the last round of broccoli and cauliflower transplanted. The flea beetles have been hitting the older transplants hard so we opted to cover the new ones with row cover to get them going. I have really started to wonder if the prevalence of so many flea beetles is a result of poor crop sanitation on my part. During the early part of the season there is always a lot of Arugula left in the field, and I think this is just creating a breeding ground for the flea beetles. Next year I will endeavor to not leave any crops for them to hang out on while awaiting their next meal to be delivered.

There are just a few straggler transplants to go in now, some of which may not make it. My knees and back are glad to see the transplanting season pass, as are my workers. Next week I'll start seeding spinach and turnips and other things for September and the winter shares. Other projects for the end of this week, beginning of next week are getting the rest of the yellow onions out of the field and doing a lot of cultivating once it dries out. It is very nice to cross 'Irrigate' off of the to-do list for the time being.

Ideas on how to use your sweet corn: I made some simple black bean-corn tacos the other night which were quick and tasty. I also saved some leftover grilled corn-on-the-cob and added the kernels to our pancakes a couple of mornings later. We have a little cornmeal in our pancake batter anyway so this just adds a little extra corny goodness. It's not just for corn-on-the-cob anymore.

Another thing I've been meaning to write about is that I finally have a homemade pizza crust that I like. Maybe it's not just the crust, but the method of cooking that makes the difference. We like pizza and it is a

great way to use the summer veggies, but our daughter is allergic to wheat (the protein, not the gluten). Here's the recipe I've been using with much success, I change the flour in it to white spelt flour which my daughter does fine with. If you want to use white spelt use about 20% less liquid.

Pizza Dough (makes 3 crusts)

- 1/2 cup warm water (about 110 degrees)
- 1 envelope instant yeast (about 2 1/4 tsp)
- 1 1/4 cups room temp. water
- 2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cups bread flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- Olive oil or nonstick spray for coating the bowl

Measure the warm water into a 2-cup liquid measuring cup. Sprinkle in the yeast and let stand until the yeast dissolves and swells, about 5 minutes. Add the room-temperature water and oil and stir to combine.

Combine the salt and half the flour in a deep bowl. Add the liquid ingredients and use a wooden spoon to combine. Add the remaining flour, stirring until a cohesive mass forms. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until smooth and elastic, 7 to 8 minutes, using as little dusting flour as possible while kneading. Form the dough into a ball, put it in a deep oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 1/2 hours.

When the dough is about ready place a pizza stone in the lower third of the oven and heat the oven to 500° for at least 30 minutes. (I know this sounds crazy but it works. And when it's 92° in your kitchen already, what do you have to lose? I don't own a pizza stone but use 6" square unglazed 1/2" thick terra-cotta tiles I bought at Menard's for 99¢ each, they work very well)

Divide the dough into three equal pieces, knead a bit and let rest for 10 minutes. To prepare the crust push it down in the middle and pull the edges out with your other hand. This can be tricky. The stickier the dough the better pizza it makes so go easy on the flour. Be careful not to press out all of the air. I get mine to about the size of a pie pan and then transfer it to a floured sheet of parchment on the back of a cookie sheet. Then I finish patting it out, add toppings and quickly but deftly slide it, parchment paper and all onto the tiles. Of course a pizza peel would work best for this. I use parchment because of the spelt flour, you may not need it with wheat. Keep a close eye on it at that high temperature. It's usually done in about 7 or 8 minutes.