

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	
Komatsuna	Yes	Plastic	Mustard
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red Leaf, Green Leaf and Butter
Pac Choi	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French Breakfast
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	

Salads and Stir-Fry

Hello and welcome to the 2007 season here at Hog's Back Farm. Accompanying this newsletter is the first delivery of the season. If you're new to our farm, welcome, we hope you enjoy the season.

The lettuces are the star player this time of year, with about four heads in each box. The red leaf is easy enough to recognize, being the only red one. The green leaf is the frilly green one while the butter is the tender one which forms a small head. The weather has been wet and mild the last couple of weeks which makes for large heads, hopefully we got them all into the box without smashing them.

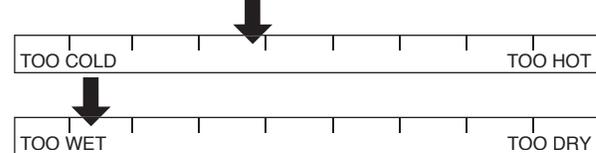
The arugula is the smooth lobed leaf, almost like a skinny white oak leaf. It has a peppery smell and flavor. Because of the flea beetle pest we grow it entirely under row cover which gives it a fairly pungent bite. Enjoy it as you would lettuce, but use more aggressively flavored dressings since the spiciness of it can handle it.

The komatsuna is a japanese mustard green which is very tender and mild. It is sometimes known as mustard spinach and could be eaten in a salad as well as stir-fried. Unfortunately during the middle of the harvest day yesterday we received 3/4 of an inch of

Farm Report

Rainfall 3.20"
 High Temperature 79°
 Low Temperature 49°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



rain in about 10 minutes which beat the leaves of the komatsuna and spinach up pretty good.

Pac choi is another of the stir-fry type greens. I'm always looking for more variety at the beginning of the season so the komatsuna and pac choi are filling that spot this year. Let me know what you think of them. I planted way too much pac choi, so if anyone wants to make some kim chee let me know.

Pea shoots are actually my favorite thing this time of year. I think I'm their #1 advocate. They are just young shoots of the pea plant, in this case a variety of peas called dwarf grey sugar. I always like to include my recipe for pea shoot pesto with the first box of the year. We just had it for supper again tonight. I don't think I'll be able to fit it in today so look at the Week 1 newsletter from 2006 for it on the website. And you'll have to substitute regular garlic for the green garlic.

Spicy little French Breakfast radishes are in the box. If I had a dollar for everytime someone asked me if the French really eat them for breakfast, I'd be vacationing in France myself.

The spinach also got a little hammered on in the rain while we were harvesting. Prior to that it was looking lovely. It should taste just as lovely. You may want to use it and the komatsuna up in a timely manner since leaves with damage are much more prone to decay.

I should warn folks too that there were a few aphids on the pac choi and komatsuna, so if that freaks you out just soak them in water with a splash of white vinegar before using.

Farm News

I have no earthly idea where to begin. The last two months have been chaotic to say the least around the farm. I cannot believe that it's June and time to pack the boxes. For those of you who don't know—we've

been moving the farming operation from one location to where our house is over the last few months and it has been crazy. We started out here with the back half of a dairy barn full of stanchions for the cows, milking lines and a gutter for the manure. After lots of work with the sawzall, 60 yards of sand and 30 yards of concrete we've got a lovely packing and washing area, all with a roof overhead and drains in the floor. In order to level out the space we had to raise the floor so much that by the time we were done my walk-in coolers wouldn't fit. So last week I had to spend two days cutting down the walk-in cooler panels and putting it all together. Finally on Wednesday of this week my refrigeration guy got the cooler running, and not a moment too soon. We were rolling boxes of lettuce into it while he was still finishing up. We still need to install some garage doors where I tore the wall out but that can wait.

Other projects have been building a road to go around to the back of the barn, fixing up the granary as a living quarters for some folks who are working for us this year and tending to the first batch of 300 chickens we're raising for meat. This is all on top of the usual planting, transplanting, weeding, etc. The good news is that I haven't had to irrigate for the last couple of weeks. The bad news is that I was right on schedule in the field until it started raining two weeks ago and now we're up to about 7 inches in 15 days and that has made things get behind. When the field is wet we can't get into it to cultivate, transplant or seed and when it never dries out things get behind. I'm a week late on getting green beans in the ground and the winter squash are ready to transplant right now but it's not going to happen until we get at least 3 dry sunny days in a row. We couldn't buy a quarter inch of rain a month ago and now it just won't quit. Man, do we farmers like to complain about the weather.

One nervewracking thing about moving the operation is that you can't move the soil. I've been working on the soil at the other farm for five years and I know what it is capable of, but the soil at the new farm is new to me. I've planted some hay and cover crops on it but no vegetables until now. As I've been working with it the last six weeks I'd have to say I'm quite pleased. My gut feeling is that it's a little better quality soil than the old place. It could also be that I have a little more experience than I did five years ago. One way I judge the quality of the soil is the uniformity of a given crop. I want every head of lettuce down the row to be the

same size. I'd have to say that the lettuce we harvested for these boxes was the most uniform lettuce I've ever grown. Hopefully this bodes well for the entire summer.

Other than being a bit behind on some plantings things are looking good. The potatoes and onions are looking really happy with the soil. The tomatoes and peppers are braving what will hopefully be the last of the spring storms. I've also got a few tomatoes in some hoop houses (basically unheated primitive greenhouses) in the hopes of having a few earlier this year. The onions have some dandelions in them but otherwise are looking excellent. The only crops that might not like the soil here is beets and chard, they just seem to not doing as well as usual.

Other quick news: we'll bring in syrup and honey starting next week, and don't be surprised if you see some gray boxes show up with your veggies in, I was running low on the yellow ones and had to order some new ones which only come in gray. If you didn't get the Member Handbook I emailed out a couple weeks ago it's on the website now.

Coming next week: Lettuce, radishes, arugula, spinach, pea shoots, turnips?, peas?, collards.

Stir-Fried Asian Greens

- 1 pound asian greens, pac choi, komatsuna
- 2 tablespoons chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon oyster flavored sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons thin soy sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons corn starch
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 3 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 ginger slices
- 1 clove garlic, crushed and peeled

Separate the bok choy into stalks. Wash in several changes of cold water and drain thoroughly in a colander. Trim 1/4 inch from the bottom of each stalk. Halve each stalk lengthwise and cut stalks and leaves into 2-inch-long pieces. In a bowl, combine the broth, oyster sauce, soy sauce, corn starch, and sugar.

Heat a 14-inch flat-bottomed wok or skillet over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil and ginger, and stir-fry 10 seconds or until ginger is fragrant. Add the remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil, bok choy, and garlic, and stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes, or until leaves are just limp and bok choy is bright green. Restir the broth mixture and swirl into wok. Stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly and coats the vegetables. Serve immediately.