

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	
Basil	No	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Butter, Red and Green Leaf
Onions	Yes	Plastic	Fresh spring
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Carrots

The first carrots of the season are in the box this week. It's always a treat to have fresh carrots after all the crummy ones from the store. We still had a few from last year in the crisper drawer up until about the end of May, when we gave up on them.

As most of you know, carrots are a big crop on the farm. We really like carrots and it's been a point of mine for the last few years to have nice carrots. There's a lot of red and yellow carrots coming back into fashion right now in the seed catalogs and up-scale produce departments, but one of the things I like about growing carrots is their color. There's just not that many things which are a better shade of orange. Freshly dug bunches of carrots lying on the soil in the field is one of my favorite sights.

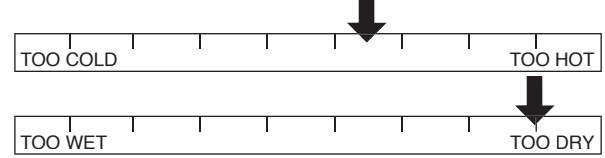
This time of year we just eat most of our carrots fresh and raw. A quick scrub is really all that's needed to clean them up, peeling is really only necessary to improve the flavor of carrots which have been in long-term storage.

One problem I have with carrots is the digging. You

Farm Report

Rainfall0.05"
 High Temperature 94°
 Low Temperature 55°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™ :



can't just pull a carrot out of the ground, it has to be loosened by a digging fork. Finding decent quality tools that are up to the job is a struggle these days. This spring I bought two brand new digging forks which say "Premium Super Heavy Duty" on their labels. Before we were done digging the carrots for today's shares (their first task ever) they were both in pieces. It's getting harder every day to produce a premium quality product when most tools are crap. I encourage everyone to aggressively fight the peddling of useless junk.

One more round of arugula brings the spring arugula season to a close. This time through the plants are tender and spicy from all of the heat we've been having.

Broccoli is also done now for the spring season. We'll see both broccoli and arugula show up at about the same time in September.

Basil is a good indicator that summer is hitting its stride. The first pickings of basil are always the best. The flavor right now is excellent and the plants are thriving.

The first of the onions are also in the box this week. I was going to dig new potatoes this week but I like to have new potatoes and dill together and the dill needed another week in the ground. These onions are a fresh, sweet onions. But I'm guessing that with all of the heat they're not very sweet. The way to get really sweet onions is to grow them over the winter, which is hard to do up here in the upper midwest.

Another fennel or two is in the box to wrap up the fennel season.

The lettuce this week is from the plantings that should have gone in earlier back when we used to get rain. All the heat has ramped up their maturation so we'll get them to you while they're small but still nice and tasty. Enjoy these and next week's since they will be the last lettuce until September. It's such a treat to have good

lettuce and fresh young cukes at the same time.

Cukes and zukes round out the box. They're both going like gangbusters right now. The plants are all growing together into a tangled mess of vine crops. Normally they don't need to be planted 8 ft apart, but this year it would've been a good idea.

Farm News

We had a great turnout for the field day last Saturday, despite the windy 94° weather. We weeded some beets and the kids jockeyed for position while I dug some potatoes for them. There's something so fundamental about getting on your hands and knees and pulling food out of the ground. I still get excited about it. Having that level of child-like excitement of watching stuff grow is one of the biggest things that keeps me going during the crazy parts of the season. At least a few times a week I find the time to meander through the fields checking the size and maturity of various items, but really I am just excited to see how the tomatoes, potatoes or melons are doing.

The crops are all doing great this year, I can't think of anything that's a real loser. It even looks like we'll have a decent crop of parsnips and rutabagas for the winter shares. Speaking of winter shares the time has come and gone to get your payment to me for them. I have about half a dozen folks who still owe money on their winter share. If you think that may be you, send me an email and I'll look it up. Otherwise I'll try and email these people in the coming week.

The hot weather finally broke towards the beginning of the week but with no real moisture to speak of. It's getting very dry out there. I've been irrigating like crazy, whenever the wind dies down enough to make it effective. Keeping things well watered this time of year really makes a difference in the latter part of the season. This is the time of the year when we're transplanting all the fall broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage, as well as seeding all the fall carrots and beets. The first fall carrot seeding came up very well, without irrigation the seed would still just be sitting in the ground.

The chicken share will begin in a few weeks (August 2nd delivery). So these should be paid for now as well. If you want a chicken share and are not sure if you've paid or if I have you down for one let me know. I'm also looking for someone to get a free chicken share for helping with distribution. This would involve about 1 hour of your time on the first Thursday of every

month from about 12pm to 1pm. Let me know if you're interested.

We had a little mix-up at one of the pickup sites last week where someone had written a note on a box that said 'extras' which led someone to take some things out of another box there which just hadn't been picked up yet. We don't have much confusion like this, thankfully, but please be very clear about what you mean if you start writing notes on things. And if it seems too good to be true that someone's peas are extra, it probably is.

Coming next week: New potatoes, dill, lettuce, zucchini, cucumbers, basil.

Fennel, Arugula and Smoked Trout Salad

- 1 1/2 tablespoons sour cream
- 3 teaspoons olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh dill
- 1 1/4 teaspoons white wine vinegar, divided
- 2 cups arugula
- 1 1/2 cups thinly sliced fennel bulb
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced sweet onion
- 2/3 cup smoked trout, coarsely flaked

Whisk sour cream, 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil, horseradish, dill, and 3/4 teaspoon white wine vinegar in small bowl. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper. Place arugula, fennel, and onion in medium bowl. Add 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon white wine vinegar; toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Divide salad between 2 plates. Top with smoked fish. Drizzle horseradish dressing over and serve.

Viennese Cucumber Salad

- 4 medium cucumbers (about 2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1/3 cup white-wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 garlic clove, forced through a garlic press
- 1 teaspoon dill seed

Score cucumbers lengthwise with a fork and slice thin, preferably with slicing disk of a food processor. In a large bowl toss cucumbers with salt and let stand 1 hour. In a small saucepan bring vinegar and water to a boil with sugar, garlic, and dill seed, stirring until sugar is dissolved, and let dressing cool. In a colander drain cucumbers and rinse under cold water. Drain cucumbers well, squeezing out excess liquid. In a bowl combine cucumbers with dressing and marinate, covered and chilled, at least 1 hour and up to 6 hours. (After about 2 hours cucumber skin will discolor, but there will be no effect on flavor.)