



What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf and green leaf
Pac Choi	Yes	Plastic	Green stemmed bok choy
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French Breakfast
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	

Salads and Stir-fry

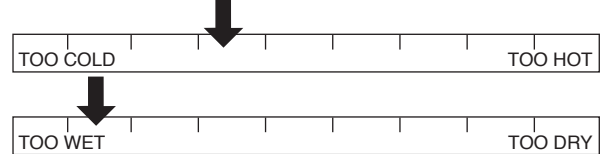
Welcome to the first share of the 2008 season with Hog's Back Farm. We're happy to have you as a member and hope you enjoy this season's offerings. It's been a long time coming this year but we're finally starting to harvest things on the farm. The last week and a half of warmer weather have helped to move things along. We've also had some rough weather which is reflected in just about everything in the box this week. The bad weather barely stopped long enough to get the harvesting done yesterday. We had to quit twice because of lightning. I don't mind picking in rain, wind, sleet or snow (o.k., I mind picking in snow, but I'll do it) but we don't pick in lightning.

We've had 6 inches of rain in the last week, but the worst weather we had was the wind that came through last Friday. It wasn't even a storm, it was just a period of a couple hours where the wind was gusting up to 40mph. It's been so cold that I've had to use more floating row cover than normal. The row cover keeps the heat and moisture in and helps the crops to grow. If we get 40mph winds it beats down on the leaves of the crop until it eventually gets ripped off and sent into the next township. This is why the leaf tips of many things look beaten up this week.

The arugula and radishes were hit hardest by the wind, and the spinach was hit hardest by the rain. The lettuce is still about one warm week behind where it should be for this time of year. With all the hard rain also comes more dirt than usual, it's really a perfect storm of sorts, the plants absorb all this rain and become very brittle and also become very dirty which makes it much harder for us to wash the dirt off at the farm without destroying them. So, you may get a

Farm Report 6/12/08

Rainfall 6.0"
 High Temperature 82°
 Low Temperature 49°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



little more dirt this week, but you're also getting a little more of the edible portion with it.

The bright spot in the box this week is the pac choy. It, too, spends it's whole life under row cover, but is a lot tougher than the arugula. The main reason it's under row cover is to protect it from flea beetles, who prefer it above all else. We kept most of them off of it but some always get through, they make the little holes in the leaves. Use the pac choy in any stir-fry type recipe. You can use the whole thing, stems and leaves.

Several of you have asked why we don't grow more spinach in the spring instead of some of the lettuce. This is something I'm working on, but spinach is much trickier to grow than lettuce. It's very prone to being damaged in hard spring rains, and is very brittle to harvest when saturated with water. It also cannot be row covered to protect it from the rains because it is way too fragile for the row cover. Be patient, I'll keep working on it.

Farm News

It's been such a crazy spring this year I don't know where to begin. The big story is the long winter and cool spring. We're still seeing the effects of that with most things about two weeks behind where they should be. We had a wet winter into spring, then nothing in May, and now back to a wet period. This has made keeping up with planting difficult, but we're mostly on track with the planting, even if they're not growing very fast.

Most crops are looking good, with a couple exceptions. The potatoes are a weedy mess this year. They took a full month to emerge from the ground, while all the weeds emerged rapidly. We will be dedicating large

chunks of time in the next week or two to rescuing them. They have emerged quite well now so they should be able to get ahead. I was seriously starting to wonder if they had rotted in the ground. The other casualty has been the peas. Peas are a cool season spring crop but it was so cold this year that getting them to germinate was difficult so we won't be seeing many of them. Even the pea shoots will be limited, probably just to next week.

With all the rain we've gotten this week we've gotten behind in the field until it dries out. All the winter squash transplants are waiting patiently on the wagon to get in the ground as are the celeriac and sweet potatoes. Normally we get 3–4 inches of rain for the whole month of June, instead of 6 inches in one week.

We've been busy getting ready to start the deliveries, which means cleaning up the packing shed, getting all the boxes washed and ready, sharpening the tools and figuring out how to put it all together. I've got some great new carts to carry the shares on this year which were made by one of our members who lives near the farm. This means I'll be able to roll the boxes right up to the pickup site instead of carrying them all. Between the new truck and the carts I'm hoping to make the deliveries much faster and easier.

When we weren't getting ready this week we were seeding fall crops in the greenhouse, repairing some storm damage that plants endured in the field last weekend and taking care of the hundreds of chickens around the farm. This year we have our first batch of 300 meat birds out on the pasture, 20 hens laying eggs and 70 heirloom breed chicks, some of which will be egg layers in the fall.

Speaking of eggs, with only 20 hens we're only going to have about 8 dozen a week to sell. It's an experiment so we like to start out small. Obviously with only eight dozen it doesn't make sense to try and have some at each pickup site so I've made an arbitrary decision to just offer them at the two pickup sites in St. Louis Park. There will be 3–5 dozen available each week at the two sites on a first-come first-served basis. If it goes well we'll offer them to everyone next year. We could also use your egg cartons, clean, paper ones only. You can leave these at any of the pickup sites. Next week we'll have maple syrup and honey available at all the pickup sites. The syrup is very good this year.

Stir Fried Pac Choi with Garlic

- 1/3 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons peanut or vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced garlic (about 8 cloves)
- 2 lb pac choy, chopped into large pieces
- 2 teaspoons Asian sesame oil

Stir together broth, soy sauce, cornstarch, and 1/2 teaspoon salt until cornstarch has dissolved.

Heat a well-seasoned wok over high heat until a drop of water evaporates instantly. Pour peanut oil down side of wok, then swirl oil, tilting wok to coat side. Add garlic and stir-fry until pale golden, 5 to 10 seconds. Add half of pac choy and stir-fry until leaves wilt, about 2 minutes, then add remaining pac choy and stir-fry until all leaves are bright green and limp, 2 to 3 minutes total. Stir broth mixture, then pour into wok and stir-fry 15 seconds. Cover with lid and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are crisp-tender, 2 to 4 minutes. Stir in sesame oil, then transfer to a serving dish.

Sesame-Soy-Glazed Baby Bok Choy

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons chicken stock or canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 1 lb baby bok choy, coarsely chopped
- 3 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 2 medium scallions, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted in a small dry skillet over medium heat until lightly browned and fragrant, about 4 minutes

Combine soy sauce, stock, vinegar, sesame oil, and sugar in small bowl. Heat large nonstick skillet over high heat until hot, about 2 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons peanut oil, swirl to coat pan bottom. Place bok choy in skillet, cut-side down, in single layer. Cook, without moving, until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Turn bok choy and cook until lightly browned on second side, about 1 minute longer; transfer to large, warm platter.

Add garlic, ginger, and scallions to now-empty pan and drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon peanut oil. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 20 seconds. Add soy sauce mixture and simmer until reduced and thickened, about 20 seconds. Return bok choy to pan and cook, turning once, until glazed with sauce, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve immediately.