

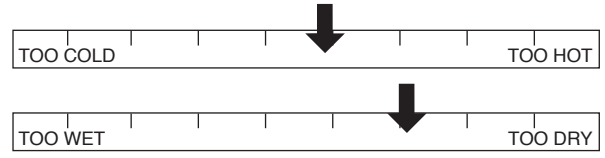


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Dill	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	Provider
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Parsley	Yes	Plastic	Italian
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 7/24/08

Rainfall 0.7"
 High Temperature 84°
 Low Temperature 54°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



are still quite small, but fresh and tasty.

Beans

The first green beans of the year are in the box this week. These are an early bean known for their sweet flavor and good germination in cool soil. Last year I had finally settled on one bean variety which was my favorite, and I was only going to grow multiple successions of that variety. Then this winter I couldn't get any seed for it and had to go back to the drawing board.

Beans fall into the large group of plants which were first discovered in the New World. Broad beans, or favas, were known to the Europeans, but no other variety of bean was until their introduction. It's strange to think of the thousands of years of civilization which didn't have any beans as a staple of their diet. Now, of course, they are deeply entrenched in virtually every cuisine around the world.

The green beans are usually also referred to as snap beans, since the stem and pointy ends easily snap from the rest when preparing them to eat. You sometimes also hear them referred to as string beans, but any real stringiness has long since been bred out of them. They are planted primarily to harvest at the young, immature stage which is also why they are called green beans, green also meaning not matured. Green beans will eventually mature and dry out leaving hard beans filling the pods, similar to dried beans for cooking.

The first bunch of carrots is also in the box this week. These are also an early variety for spring growing. They, along with everything else are a couple of weeks behind this year. These were planted on May 9th and really should have been ready a week or two ago. Some

Fennel is back for another round this week. It has been some of the nicer fennel I've grown. It does have quite a bit of variability in size, but I think that must be a soil condition issue. I leave the tops on the fennel which are yours to enjoy or compost. They may be used as you would use the herb fennel, or use them as a base for plating a fennel salad with a little of them minced on top. Fennel is one of the three herbs traditionally used to prepare absinthe.

Dill is the third member of the *Umbelliferae* family in the box this week, carrots and fennel are the others. A combination of dill and fennel fronds chopped in some yogurt with a splash of sherry vinegar and a dash of salt and pepper makes the best dressing to drizzle over your fresh sliced cucumbers.

The weather this last week has been fairly mild and pleasant, which means that it's been very pleasant to work in, but not real conducive to growing vast quantities of cucumbers and zucchini. The cukes are showing a few plants with bacterial wilt, but should hold up for a while, and the zucchini are doing fine.

More nice parsley rounds out a transitional box this week as we move from the lettuces into the peak summer fare.

Farm News

As I said we have been having some very nice weather lately. We did manage to squeeze out about three-quarters of an inch of rain on Saturday which gave me a break from irrigating for a few days. All the crops need a lot of water this time of year, from the onions which are busy sizing up to the potatoes which are doing

the same. It's also always a bonus to get rain on the weekend since it doesn't interfere with the work week on the farm.

This is also the time of year where weeding is a daily chore. Monday it was finishing up the hand weeding of the first large carrot planting, while Tuesday we started on the second carrot planting and the rutabagas. We also got a bunch of broccoli and cauliflower transplanted for the fall. Tuesday afternoon we had set aside to attack the large weeds in the winter squash. That was an unpleasant job which will have to be finished up another day. The good news is that the squash plants are looking good, with only minimal squash bugs present right now.

Wednesday was a busy harvest day with all the beans to pick. We were also down an employee because Heather, who had been the master of washing all your veggies had to go back to her old job full-time and couldn't be our washer anymore. I haven't figured out if I'm going to replace her yet or just figure something else out.

I also received my latest piece of farm equipment on Wednesday. It's a 1962 Scott-Viner harvester for harvesting carrots and other root crops. It gets pulled behind the tractor and digs the carrots, cuts off their tops and deposits them in a box. It does the same for beets, turnips and other roots. It looks like the kind of equipment for which the federal government created OSHA, I think I'll post a sign on it somewhere that says "This harvester has harvested XXXX pounds of carrots with no major accidents." I'm sure that in October I'll be able to write an entire newsletter about learning how to harvest with it. The first thing I'll have to do is figure out how to line up it's 5 wheels with my row spacings. I think this puts me over 70 tires which need to be kept inflated on the farm.

A mid-season reminder that shares are to be picked up by 7pm, unless other arrangements have been made. If the pickup site host has not heard from you by 7pm they are authorized by me to give away your share to someone who will use the produce. Please do not get grumpy with them about it, they don't make the rules.

A few of you have asked whether or not we have any additional winter shares available. For now I do not, but by September 1st I should have a better idea of how the storage crops are doing and whether or not there's room for a few more shares.

Coming next week: Beans, potatoes, cukes, zukes, basil, thyme, carrots, beets.

Green Bean and Fennel Salad www.epicurious.com

- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons water
- 1/2 pound green beans, trimmed, cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 2 fennel bulbs, trimmed, quartered lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise (about 4 cups)
- 4 ounces button mushrooms, trimmed, quartered (about 2 cups)
- 2 cups chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon peel

Whisk first 4 ingredients in medium bowl to blend. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook green beans in large pot of boiling water until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Drain. Transfer to large bowl of ice water. Drain beans. Pat dry. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill dressing. Wrap green beans in paper towels and chill.)

Place beans in large bowl. Add fennel, mushrooms, parsley, chives and lemon peel. Drizzle dressing over; toss. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and chill 30 minutes. Toss again and serve.

Szechuan Green Beans

- 1 pound green beans
- 1 tablespoon garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon ginger, chopped
- 2 scallions (spring onions, green onions), white parts only
- 1/2 teaspoon chili paste
- 1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Pepper to taste, optional
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or peanut oil for stir-frying, or as needed

Wash the beans, drain thoroughly, and trim the tops and bottoms. Cut the beans on the diagonal into slices approximately 2 inches long.

Chop the garlic, ginger and white part of the scallions.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add the beans and stir-fry until they start to shrivel or "pucker" and turn brown (5 - 7 minutes). Remove the beans and drain in a colander or on paper towels.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in the wok on high heat. Add the garlic, ginger and scallions. Stir-fry for a few seconds, then add the chili paste and stir-fry for a few more seconds until aromatic. Add the beans and the remaining ingredients. Mix together and serve.