

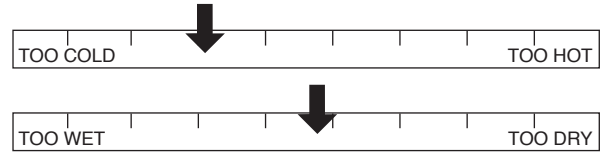


What's in the box and where does it go?

|             | Fridge? | Bag?    | Notes & Varieties                |
|-------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Beets       | Yes     | Plastic | Red with tops                    |
| Cantaloupe  | Yes     | No      | Athena, Halona or Sivan          |
| Cilantro    | Yes     | Plastic |                                  |
| Cucumbers   | Yes     | Plastic |                                  |
| Garlic      | No      | No      |                                  |
| Peppers     | Yes     | Plastic | Green bell, hot cherry, serranos |
| Potatoes    | No      | Paper   | Nicola                           |
| Shell Beans | Yes     | Plastic | Tongue of fire                   |
| Tomatoes    | No      | No      | Reds and heirlooms               |
| Watermelon  | Yes     | No      | Sugar baby                       |
| Zucchini    | Yes     | Plastic |                                  |

## Farm Report 9/3/09

Rainfall . . . . .0.00"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 74°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 48°  
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



The Italians like their shellies. They fared quite well and we'll even be able to save one row as seed for next year. The pods are a striking red and white and the speckled beans are as well. The large beans shell out of the pods very easily and it's a great thing to do with the kids. Regrettably, once cooked the color fades. Boil gently until tender and toss with pasta, garlic, olive oil and Parmesan.

The one watermelon of the year is in the box this week. With the cool weather they haven't sweetened up as much as I'd like, but it'll still make for a nice Labor Day treat.

The cantaloupe are winding down, we may see another one next week if we get a little warmer weather. Some of these are a smaller variety called Sivan. They're a nice melon but they haven't been faring too well with the wet weather earlier this month.

The potatoes this week are a new variety called Nicola. Nice looking spuds, but I haven't tried them yet. They're supposed to have a 'nutty' flavor.

Another green pepper, along with a few hot peppers in the box this week. The hot peppers are the smaller ones. The hot cherry is short and fat, while the serrano is long and skinny.

We like to make a quick sauce out of cilantro, a little hot pepper, a clove of garlic and a tomato. We throw all these in the blender together and use it for chips or put it on eggs or tacos. Try a little cantaloupe in salsa!

More beets in the box this week. Some of these tops are a little rough looking, but they'd still make a nice companion to the shell beans with some small cubes of roasted beet on top.

## Shell Beans

Shell beans are one of those crops that has passed so far out of our memory that few people know what they are anymore. Southerners have a much more lasting tradition of shell beans with limas, cowpeas and black-eyed peas. When Southerners say peas, they're talking about black-eyed peas and the like which are really similar to shell beans, but technically not a member of the genus *phaseolus*. The last time we were in Louisiana there was a sign out in front of a tiny store in the middle of nowhere. On the front stoop of the store were a cluster of unoccupied ladies and the sign read "We shell peas".

For Yankees and Europeans shell beans are in between green beans and dried beans. Shell beans, or shellies, as they're affectionately referred to, have sized up to full size in the shell, but haven't dried out yet. Imagine them as fresh dried beans, before they've had a chance to get so dry and hard that you have to soak them overnight and then boil them. The most important thing is that the pods are NOT edible, nor should you eat the beans raw.

Our shellies are of the 'Tongue of Fire' type, most of the seed this year I got as imported seed from Italy to see if it was better than the what was available here.

The tomatoes are coming at a consistent, if slower rate than normal. No signs of late blight yet, and it seems as though the rate of spread of it has slowed with the drier weather.

This will be the last of the cukes and zukes for the year. No one around here will be too sorry that we are done with them. While they're producing they have to be picked every couple days and it gets a bit tedious after nine weeks of it.

### Farm News

September is a busy time of year around here. Harvesting and cleaning produce is taking up most of our time now. We actually ran out of time this week or there would've been basil in the box too. It's nice to have the dry weather to get some things done around here without having to keep an eye on the sky.

Jesse and Tricia spent the better part of Monday doing some serious hoeing in the late beets and carrots. The ground was too crusted over to get into with the cultivator so hoes were the only option to clean up the weeds. It was critical timing too, with all this dry weather those weeds would have tripled in size this week. While they were killing weeds I was busy plowing up the last of the fields for 2010.

Tuesday was mainly a harvest day, with a little time in the morning removing the plastic mulch from the onion field. The rest of the time was eaten up with potatoes and tomatoes.

The fall crops are looking pretty good except for some of the greens that got seeded during the period of heavy rains. We won't see any fall spinach until the end of the month and the salad mix looked good as it was germinating, but the silty topsoil is slowly turning into concrete as it dries out.

The broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and kale are all looking great. I think we'll see the first fall broccoli in the box next week. The brussels sprouts seem a bit behind but they should come around if the weather continues to be mild.

The squash crop is looking very good. The whole patch has succumbed to powdery mildew now, but this mainly affects the leaves and the plants will slowly die over the next few weeks. They should have plenty of energy to mature their fruit, and some are already looking mature. We may see an acorn squash in the box in a couple weeks.

The fall carrots are starting to size up now, although I'm a little concerned about how much hard rain they endured. The hard rain can create a crust of very fine silt on the top of the soil which gets very hard when it dries out. This could lead to some strangely shaped carrots when it's all said and done.

Another reminder that our pumpkin day will be on Saturday, September 26th and we do still have a few winter shares available.

**Coming next week:** Chard, tomatoes, broccoli, onions, garlic, leeks, cantaloupe?, red peppers.

### Herbed Summer Succotash

Gourmet | August 1999

- 1/4 pound bacon (about 4 slices)
- 1 pound fresh shell beans in pod or 1 cup frozen baby lima beans
- 3/4 pound cherry tomatoes (about 1 1/2 pints)
- 4 ears corn
- 1 small Vidalia onion or other sweet onion
- 1 large garlic clove
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Sherry vinegar
- 1/4 cup packed small fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup packed small fresh arugula leaves

In a skillet cook bacon over moderate heat until crisp. Drain bacon on paper towels and crumble. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon bacon fat from skillet and set skillet aside.

Shell fresh beans if using. In a small saucepan of boiling salted water cook beans, covered, over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 15-20 minutes. In a sieve drain beans and rinse under cold running water to stop cooking.

Cut larger cherry tomatoes in half. Working over a bowl to catch the juices, cut corn kernels from cobs. Chop onion and mince garlic.

Add oil to bacon fat in skillet and cook onion over moderate heat, stirring, until softened. Add garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add tomatoes, corn, and vinegar and cook, stirring, until tomatoes just begin to lose their shape. Remove skillet from heat and gently stir in beans and half of bacon. Cool succotash to room temperature and gently stir in basil, arugula, and salt and pepper to taste.

Serve succotash spooned over focaccia or other crusty bread and sprinkled evenly with remaining bacon.