



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Escarole	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Green and Red Leaf and Butter
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar Snap
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French Breakfast
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Strawberries	Yes	No	

Peas

Nothing says late June like the first crop of peas. These are a variety of sugar snap pea, meaning that you eat the whole pod. Most folks snap the stem and pull to remove the string on the convex half of the pea. I noticed that this was the way that the first lady was eating hers last week when they were harvesting them from the White House garden.



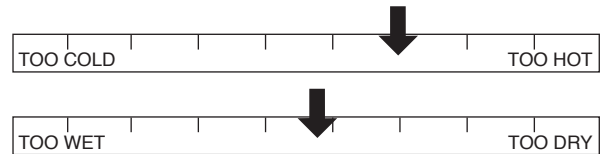
Peas generally fall into three camps: snap, snow and shell. The shell peas are what we buy frozen in a bag in the store with the shell already removed. Snows are most common in stir-fries. Neither are as reliable as the snap. This variety of snap seems a little small this year, so I may start looking for a different variety.

We should have a couple more rounds of peas in the coming weeks.

Strawberries are also a welcome addition to the box this week. The heat really kicked them into gear. They're a tough crop for a farm like ours. When they're ready, they're ready. So if you don't deliver shares for another 5 days you have to let some of them go by. We ended up picking most of them in the heat on Tuesday

Farm Report 6/25/09

Rainfall 1.06"
 High Temperature 90°
 Low Temperature 62°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



so that they wouldn't get overripe. This is a little bigger box of them than last year, but it may be the only week of them. This is also a three year old planting now so it's production has gone downhill. We've got two nice new rows for next year growing in the field right now.

Also new in the box this week is escarole. I'm always looking for new early-season additions to the boxes and this year I had a problem with getting drawn in to the Italian seed catalog. Most cultures eat so much more bitter food than we do that I thought I'd try a couple more things in the endive/chicory family. Dandelions weren't a big hit when I used to grow those so I thought we'd try some escarole. It looks a lot like the green leaf lettuce, but the escarole is the one with the rubber band around it. It also has white ribs and weighs about three times as much as the lettuce. Although it looks like lettuce it's actually much more closely related to dandelion. We had some for supper on Monday and I thought it was excellent. It's a little bitter, but not so much that you couldn't eat it raw in a salad. We had it cooked with beans and chorizo, yum.

The broccoli went into crazy overdrive with the heat this week. We've been picking 150 heads of it every day, so there should be a few in your box. It'll keep just fine in the fridge and there probably won't be any for next week so don't get overwhelmed. One drawback of the heat is that broccoli doesn't really like it, these heads would've been much nicer if we'd have been in the 70's, but that is always the spring broccoli risk.

Scallions are also new to the box this week. They always seem to have 1001 uses around our house. It's hard to have a decent stir-fry without them. We should have these throughout July.

The box is also laden with lettuce, one of each. This will be the last of the early spring varieties and next week we'll move more into the ones that can tolerate some heat.

Arugula, spinach, pea shoots and some micro-radishes round out the box this week. With the heat it was better to get the radishes out a little small than have them next week when they're too large and pithy. These will also be the last of the pea shoots.

Farm News

Weather is always in the news at the farm. Right now it's the heat. We had a cooler than normal May but June is shaping up to be nice and normal. It makes some of the spring crops go racing by but it also kicks the summer ones into gear, I'd expect to start seeing little zucchini and cucumbers on the plants in the next week or so. We've also been having some nice rain this year which makes the heat so much easier to deal with. The moisture in the ground along with the heat can make things double in size in a matter of days. We haven't dropped below 60° at night all week which is almost as effective as the daytime highs.

Working in the heat on the farm is really not too bad. We generally have a bit of a breeze up here on top of the hill and this time of year we can start earlier in the morning and knock off during the hottest part of the day. We drink lots of water and try to always have a few indoor projects going on when we need a break. They were predicting 96° last Tuesday but a nice cloud cover rolled in at 2:30pm and kept it from going any higher than 90°.

Despite the heat we've had a pretty productive week at the farm. It dried up enough to get most things cultivated and some others hoed. We got most of the potatoes hoed and then hilled them on Tuesday, so that they're looking very nice right now. We've been seeing a few potato bugs in them, but nothing to get alarmed about. I think we'll be able to avoid a repeat of last year's weed-pulling in the potatoes field day.

Speaking of field days our annual summer one is rapidly approaching. It's scheduled for Saturday, July 11. Generally the July field day is a working one, where folks show up at 10am and we work on some project for a couple of hours and then have a nice pot-luck lunch. Everyone is welcome. It's a nice time to see all the crops at the farm. Please email us to let us know you're coming, and how many are in your group.

We've kept ahead of most of the weeds in the onions and they're looking great. Now that we're past the summer solstice, the day-length sensitive crops like onions and garlic will start to take note of the slow progress towards shorter days and will start to focus their growth on the bulb instead of the top.

Coming next week: Lettuce, peas, arugula, spinach, garlic scapes, lacinato kale, turnips, rapini, scallions.

Here's an escarole recipe from Chef Pat, it can be found on the blog along with another escarole recipe this week. www.hogsbackfarm.com/blogsback

Wilted escarole side dish

- 2-3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 c. chopped bacon
- 1/2 c chopped onion
- 2-3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 c balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbls brown sugar
- 1 head escarole, outer leaves and core removed, chopped into 2 pieces

In large saute pan or cast iron pot, saute bacon in olive oil until crisp, add onion, garlic and bell pepper and cook until tender. Add brown sugar and balsamic vinegar and cook 1 min, add escarole, stir and cook, covered, about 5-10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, serve with fresh lemon.

Note: you can also throw in a can of cannolini beans and chicken into this (right when you add the greens) and make a meal of it- Yum!

Strawberry Arugula Salad

- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 2 cups baby arugula or torn arugula leaves
- 1 cups sliced strawberries (about 10 ounces)
- 1 ounces Parmesan cheese, shaved and crumbled into small pieces (1/2 cup)
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- salt
- 1 tablespoons aged balsamic vinegar (see Ingredient note)
- 1/2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Toast walnuts in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until lightly browned and aromatic, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a salad bowl; let cool for 5 minutes.

Add arugula, strawberries, Parmesan, pepper and salt. Sprinkle vinegar and oil over the salad; toss gently and serve at once.