

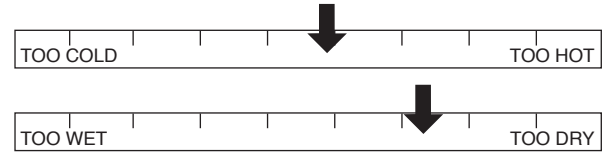


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Chard	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 6/19/08

Rainfall 0.00"
 High Temperature 77°
 Low Temperature 51°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Farm News

Chard

It's always nice when the chard is ready for the boxes. It's really the most stunning thing we harvest and is very satisfying. It doesn't look quite this stunning in the field since each plant is only of one color, so in order to bring you nice multi-colored bunches we have to pick separate leaves from different plants. This is somewhat time consuming but we think it's worth it. Some years it seems like we have an abundance of one color and not another. This year we seem to have more yellow than usual.

We are just beginning the harvest of the zucchini. You may get a large or slightly misshapen one with the first few. The plants will settle in to producing a more consistent size quickly. We've managed to keep them free of cucumber beetles and weeds so they should be cranking them out full speed next week if we get a little heat. Shortly behind them we should see the cucumbers getting their act together.

This week we say good bye to several things which bring the early boxes to an end. This will be the last arugula until the fall, as well as spinach and turnips. This variety of spinach really wasn't liking the warmer weather so there is some yellowing in it. I need to find a different variety for next year, or even this fall. The turnips this week are perfect and sweet.

We continue with the summer-crisp type lettuces this week. We should have these about two more weeks.

Scallions round out an early July box. A couple of things I thought would be ready this week decided to hold off until next week.

This week has been busy on the farm getting ahead of the weeds and getting some water on everything. We haven't had a decent rainfall in a couple weeks now so things are starting to dry out to the point that if we want them to keep growing we need to get them some water. The cukes and zukes are also starting to produce and once they begin they need a steady supply of water.

Late last week we got all the weeds cleaned up in the cuke, zuke and melon patch. They're looking very nice now. We also got the very last of the transplants for the year seeded, some late broccoli which will be harvested for the winter shares in October.

Last Thursday after Jesse left with the truck it was time for me to sit down and get ready for our first-ever visit from the organic inspector. This will be our first year being certified organic, and in order to achieve this we have an inspection, both of our farm and of our records. I spent a couple of hours at my desk and then felt like I was prepared and went out and hilled one of the fields of potatoes for a second time. I spent many more hours than that in January filling out my organic application and field histories for everything that's been done in the fields since 2007. The inspector arrived at 4pm and we went on a tour of the farm. Afterwards we went back to the house and sat down to go over records, maps and receipts. It's kind of like having an IRS audit, except they're auditing your growing practices and documentation. As it turns out, I keep much more detailed records than really required by the inspector.

Why have I decided to become certified organic? A few reasons. First is that I've been in a USDA program

to transition to organic for the last three years so as a part of that I have to become certified, at least for a year anyway. Secondly we have between 50 and 60 acres of hay on the farm and I can sell it all to a neighbor's organic dairy provided it's certified, and get a better price for it. Third I think it's become more important in the last few years to have the third-party verification that comes with organic certification. With the arrival of all the 'green' adjectives to the public relations lexicon the waters have become muddied with non-definable nonsense phrases like sustainable, 100% natural, cage-free, free-range and so on. The only one that has a clearly defined standard in the marketplace is certified organic. And lastly, when I do have extras that the CSA can't absorb or when I start to grow more of a crop like carrots, it's much easier to market them when they are certified organic. I think it's important to have a set of standards that you adhere to, although I've never had one of my member's request it of us.

I still feel that the best way to be assured of the integrity of your food is to know your farmer, but when that's not possible to choose something certified organic, which at least is held to a clearly defined standard instead of an advertising buzz-word. For our part we keep very detailed records, so if you ask me about this week's arugula I can tell you it was from field CA, row 2, seeded by me on June 4th with organic arugula seed from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

Monday was another busy day. I did a bunch of field work and got the second hilling on the rest of the potatoes and the second large planting of carrots seeded. It was also time to seed the rutabagas. Meanwhile Jesse and Tricia attacked all the weeds in the tomato/pepper field. It's now virtually weed free and looking great. We also managed to get the drip irrigation going on all the onions, squash, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, melons and zucchini.

Tuesday was spent picking scapes and zucchini and transplanting the rest of the herbs. We row covered the carrots, tied and staked tomatoes, row covered the sweet potatoes and ran more irrigation.

The real news around the farm this week was that Melinda's mother, Marilyn McInroy passed away on Sunday after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Melinda and her brother and sister were able to be there at her side those last hard days, which was a great comfort to her. Marilyn was a tough southern farm girl, growing up on a red-dirt farm in northeast Louisiana. After picking cotton as a girl she decided

that farming was not for her. She met Mel's dad and moved north to Iowa, marrying a damn yankee, just like Melinda. While she was content to leave the farming to me, she always appreciated the fruits of our labors and was a big advocate of our chickens. We will miss her.

Our family will be headed to Iowa first thing Thursday morning to attend services for Marilyn, so Jesse and Tricia will have to pack the shares by themselves and Jesse will be doing the deliveries. I have complete confidence in them to get your veggies to you. This is also why we have had to reschedule the first farm field day, it will not be this Saturday July 11th, but will be on Saturday August, 1st.

Coming next week: Carrots, peas, broccoli, lettuce, zucchini, scallions, dill, new potatoes?

Sauteed Swiss Chard with Onions

Gourmet | November 2007

- 1 large bunch rainbow chard
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped

Cut stems and center ribs from chard, discarding any tough portions, then cut stems and ribs crosswise into 2-inch pieces. Stack chard leaves and roll up lengthwise into cylinders. Cut cylinders crosswise to make 1-inch-wide strips.

Heat oil and butter in a large heavy pot over medium heat until foam subsides, then cook onions and garlic with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper, covered, stirring occasionally, until onions begin to soften, about 8 minutes. Add chard stems and ribs, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until stems are just tender, about 10 minutes. Add chard leaves in batches, stirring until wilted before adding next batch, and cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until tender, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a serving bowl.

Swiss Chard from Riverford Organic Vegetables, U.K.

Roughly chop a big bunch of swiss chard at 1-2 inch intervals. Melt some butter in a wide, heavy bottomed pan like a cast iron frying pan or similar with lid. Add a clove of chopped garlic and the chard. Put lid on and allow to wilt for few minutes, then add 8fl oz of hot vegetable or chicken stock, salt if needed, and black ground pepper to taste. Replace lid and simmer for about fifteen minutes until chard is tender. Serve in a shallow bowl with plenty of fresh grated parmesan and some good bread. A simple and delicious lunch, or you could try serving as a side vegetable with risotto, potatoes etc.