



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	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf and green leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red gold
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	!
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Potatoes

We always look forward to the first potatoes of the season. There have been new potatoes from California in the stores for a couple months now but the new ones from our own fields are always a treat. These are a variety called red gold, kind of a sister to yukon gold, but with light red skins and smaller. These come from the same breeders as the yukons, AgCanada. This is the first time I've grown this variety and for the most part I like it. It was the fastest one out of the ground this spring and made big beautiful plants. My only complaint would be that it set a lot of potatoes but they didn't continue sizing up very well. Of course it is still early and maybe I'm jumping the gun a bit.

The skins on these are very delicate so we are careful to dig and wash them. Even so they do end up getting banged up a bit. They won't keep a real long time so eat 'em up. Keep them in a dark, cool place.

My favorite way to eat tasty new potatoes like these is to cut them into 1" chunks and boil them until just tender, then toss with a little butter and dill. It's nice to do something subtle with them so that you can really taste the fresh flavor of potatoes just out of the ground.

We've got quite a few new varieties of potatoes this year. I started buying my seed potatoes from an organic farm in Colorado this year, which has a huge selection of spuds. We'll still have yukons and the yummy french fingerlings, but the rest will be new varieties this year.

Farm Report 7/23/09

Rainfall0.14"
 High Temperature 77°
 Low Temperature 54°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



A late add to the box this week is the first sweet corn of the season. We don't grow our own sweet corn, I get it from Dan Sam who grows a lot of it down in the prairie just south of the town of Arkansaw. The sweet corn is not organic, but it is fresh. Dan picks it for us on Thursday morning before we pack the boxes. My recommendation is that if there's corn in the box, it's what's for dinner Thursday night. Nothing makes me shake my head more than hearing someone talking about the corn that's been in their fridge for a week. The sugars in the corn convert to starches rapidly once it's removed from the plant. Some of the newer varieties do stay sweeter longer if kept refrigerated, but it's always better right away.

Fennel is the next new item in the box this week. We just put one in the box this week because they were still a little small. Generally most people just eat the bulb of the fennel and discard the fronds, but they are edible too. We like to shave the bulb thinly and eat on a salad, or roast it with other veggies on the grill.

Dill is the last newcomer this week. I always try and have some dill ready for the first potatoes.

More carrots this week. It looks like we'll have a gap of a week or two until the next ones are ready. I need to make a note of those planting dates and revise it for next year.

We still haven't cleared the pollination hurdle completely for the cukes and zukes. It'll be another short week for them, you may just get one or the other. It's looking like the cukes are going to start kicking into gear next week, but the zucchini are still not getting adequate pollination. I was out there this afternoon when the sun was shining and there was lots of buzzing.

Lacinato kale is in the box again this week as well as the scallions. This will be the last week of lettuce until we start to harvest some salad mix in September.

Farm news

Dry and cool are the two words to describe things around here lately. We got a piddly little 0.14" of rain on Tuesday which is the only measurable rainfall we've had for the month of July. Thankfully the wind finally died down last Sunday and we could get on top of the irrigation. When it's this dry everything needs to be irrigated. Sometimes I don't bother irrigating some of the deeper rooted crops like carrots that don't mind a little drought. That said, I've been irrigating every day since Sunday and still haven't caught up. There's a few more chances of showers in the forecast so maybe we'll get a break soon.

The other weather problem has been the continued cool temperatures. We had two days last week with a high of 65°. That's the average high for October 1st. I'd really like to see a couple of heat waves to give a boost to the squash, tomatoes and peppers. Last year was a very cool year on average and we're getting close to those numbers again this year. It's also kind of a pesky combination when it's cool and dry, it's hard to know if stuff's not growing because it's cool or because it's not getting enough moisture.

Monday and Tuesday this week were spent getting caught up on some of the weeding in the field. We got the first planting of fall carrots hand weeded and cultivated which is usually a big project, but this year we had the weeds pretty well under control so it was no big deal. Besides that it was a matter of cleaning up some of the later season crops like brussels sprouts, leeks and celeriac.

Tuesday was also the day when a couple of new pieces of equipment were delivered to the farm. I'm trying to streamline some of the operations in the packing shed and bought a couple of pieces of equipment to help our brush washer operate a little more efficiently as well as a different kind of washer which will probably be used just for carrots. The farm crew is overjoyed at the prospect of not having to hand wash a couple of tons of carrots. We tried out the pieces that go with the brush washer on the new potatoes this week and the reviews were quite favorable. We washed 432 lbs. of potatoes in less than a half hour.

I'm terribly behind in my administrative capacity at the farm, especially as it pertains to share payments. If you owe us money I'll touch base with you soon. If

you're getting a winter share and haven't paid for it yet (\$200), it's due now. We also have some winter shares available. The winter share is 4 deliveries, every other week beginning October 15, after the regular season is finished. The final winter share delivery is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Check out the previous year's newsletters on the website to give yourself an idea what's in them. E-mail me if you'd like to sign up.

Lastly is a reminder to attend our Saturday, August 1st field day. The fields are in such good shape this year that I'm not sure what project we'll be doing. Maybe something fun like digging potatoes for the next week's shares. We'll have an activity from 10am to 1pm followed by a pot-luck lunch. Let us know if you're coming and how many folks are coming with you. Friends, neighbors and kids are always welcome.

Coming next week: cukes, fennel, scallions, kale, onions, green beans?, parsley, corn?, zucchini.

New Potatoes in Dill Butter

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped dill
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 1/2 pounds small new potatoes (about 1 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter), scrubbed

In a large bowl, combine butter, dill, pepper, and salt to taste.

In a large saucepan, combine potatoes with salted water to cover by 1 inch and simmer until just tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain potatoes in a colander and add to butter mixture, tossing to combine.

Lettuce, Red Pepper and Fennel Salad

- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar or 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 8 cups bite-size pieces lettuce
- 1 small fennel bulb, trimmed, sliced
- 1 small red bell pepper, sliced
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Combine first 3 ingredients in small bowl. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Set dressing aside. Combine remaining ingredients in large bowl. Add enough dressing to season to taste. Season generously with pepper and serve.