

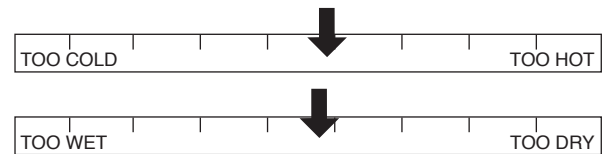


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	Maverick and Athena
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	Last of them
Onions	No	No	Yellows and a walla walla
Parsley	Yes	Plastic	Italian
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell, serranos and carmen
Tomatoes	No	No	Red and heirloom
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	Maybe a yellow squash too

Farm Report 8/19/10

Rainfall 1.63"
 High Temperature 89°
 Low Temperature 53°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Round 2 of the cantaloupe harvest is in the box this week. Everyone should have two in their box. You may get two Mavericks or a Maverick and an Athena. Athenas tend to be larger with less ribbing and have more of an oval shape. I weighed one Athena that was almost 9 pounds. That's a lot of melon. Again, both melons will be ripe, so eat them up. If you can i.d. your Athena, eat it last since it stores better.

Onions

The first efforts of the storage onion harvest are in the box this week. The vast majority of onions we grow on the farm are of the yellow storage type. They're the most versatile of the different onion colors and we've had very good crops out of them over the years. We used to grow some white onions, but they weren't a huge hit so now we just stick to the yellows, reds and the walla wallas for fresh picking early in the season. There are several onions in your box this week so that we can free up some space in the packing shed. Just leave them out on the counter and they'll store fine.

Onions are an Old World plant with a long history. There are records of them going back over 5000 years to the first ancient Egyptian dynasty. The onion was revered in Egypt, but also looked on somewhat warily. Egyptian priests were forbidden to eat onions. In Rome and Greece the commoners ate onions galore, mostly raw, but the upper classes not so much. Even today some Brahmins and strict Buddhists abstain from onions.

Onions were first brought to the New World by Columbus on his second voyage, and found favor quickly with Native Americans, since they were much better than any of the small wild onions which were native to the New World.

The first of the sweet red Carmen peppers are in the box this week. These have become a perennial favorite here at HBF. They are the large long red peppers in the box. They are sweet, just like a red bell pepper. These are ready at least two weeks earlier than usual. The Carmens are joined by another green bell and a hand full of serranos. The serranos may be either green or red, the red ones are a little hotter than the green.

The Italian parsley was finally ready for an initial picking this week. It's a tasty herb to add to many dishes. Use it along with the basil to make a little pesto. Speaking of basil, it is winding down. We may have it next week or not.

It looks like we'll have a little better group of tomatoes this week, last week we were really scraping by to get them. It's just simply not going to be a normal year for tomatoes around here. Everyone should have a couple heirlooms this week. We tend toward the smaller black heirlooms, Nyagous and Japanese Black Trifele, but there are a few of an orange variety as well as some Cherokee Purple, which doesn't look like what I think of when I think of CP. Open pollinated varieties can vary quite a bit depending on the source of the seed. There's also a very few of a new one called Black Zebra, kind of looks like a cross between a Nyagous and a Green Zebra. I'll be saving some seed from these.

Another small bag of green beans rounds out the green bean season for the year. I wish I had a couple more plantings of them, I had intended to have shell beans the next couple of weeks, but they have been a major dud this year. Both plantings of them have suffered from fungal disease and massive weed pressure combining to equal crop failure, I don't even think I can save enough of them to get my seed back.

This is about it on what I would call the spring plantings of carrots. Next week we'll move on to the first of the fall plantings, which are looking nice.

The cukes and zukes have slowed down with the cooler weather and are getting near the end of their productive lives. The yellow squash are succumbing to powdery mildew and are close to being done for the season. We should continue to see one or two for the next couple of weeks.

Farm News

No complaints from your farmer about the weather this week. It has been a joy to be outside. We had quite a storm last Thursday night as part of the change in the weather. Only about 1.5 inches of rain, but some pretty strong wind. I don't have anything to measure wind speeds, but I bet we had some 50-60mph gusts. The chicken coop that our laying hens live in flipped completely upside-down. It's not real tall and probably weighs around 500 pounds so it had to blow pretty hard to flip it over. The chickens were fine for the most part, we have one that's still in sick bay but I think her prognosis is good. She might be better still if I had realized she was still in the coop before I flipped it back over with the tractor. The wind also ripped a couple of pieces of tin loose on the barn, which are right up at the peak so we'll have to listen to those rattling in the breeze until we figure out a way to get up there and fix them.

The crops survived the winds for the most part, although a number of tomato cages got blown over. Honestly the tomatoes seem cursed this year. I'm expecting a very localized frost in the tomato patch any time now. We've also got a late planting of chard which got beat up pretty badly. It'll still be fine, but will have to wait a week or two longer to harvest so that it can recover.

More hard rain in the storm also sealed the fate of the first planting of fall spinach and arugula, entombing them in a crust that had become impenetrable. The winds and lower humidity levels dried things up in a

hurry this week, so I was able to dispatch those plantings and get new ones seeded. Time is of the essence now, there's really only about 3 more weeks left to get things seeded for the fall. Spinach planted now will be ready the last week of September or the first week of October depending on the weather. Since I took the time to correct the soil from this spring I'm determined to get some spinach for the fall.

It's just kind of a weird season this year. So much warm weather has accelerated some of the long-season crops like squash, and with the disease on the tomatoes it looks more like the middle of September in the fields. I wouldn't be surprised to see some trees starting to change color in the next couple of weeks.

Coming next week: Leeks, potatoes, watermelon?, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, garlic, carrots, peppers.

Onion Soup and Gruyère Crostini Epicurious | February 2009

- 1 pound yellow onions, halved and thinly cut lengthwise
- 3 to 5 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- Fresh cracked pepper
- 1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups beef stock
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/2-inch-thick slice of ciabatta bread cut in half
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups grated Swiss Gruyère cheese

In a heavy 5-quart pot melt the butter over low heat. Add the onions, thyme, bay leaf, and salt and pepper to taste and cook until the onions are deep amber and exceedingly soft, stirring occasionally, 25 to 30 minutes. Add the flour and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, then add the wine, increase the heat, and let the wine bubble away for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the beef stock and water, and let the soup simmer for 25 to 30 minutes, allowing the flavors to meld together. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Preheat the oven to broil. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven. Place the ciabatta on the middle rack of the oven and toast until crispy, about 2 to 3 minutes per side.

Remove the bay leaf and thyme sprigs from the soup and discard. Pour the soup into two ovenproof bowls, float the toasted ciabatta on top, and cover it with a thick layer of the Gruyère. Put the soup bowls under the broiler on the middle rack and cook 3 to 5 minutes, or until the cheese is fully melted and golden.