

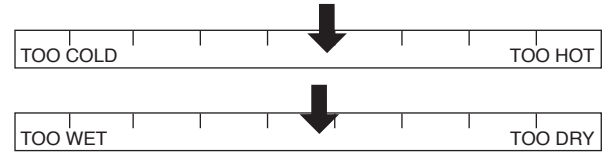


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	Athena
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Leeks	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Carmen and cherry bomb hot
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red gold
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds and heirlooms
Watermelon	Yes	No	Early moonbeam
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 8/26/10

Rainfall0.07"
 High Temperature 86°
 Low Temperature 56°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



marketed our produce wholesale we'd be looking at an almost 50% reduction in our tomato sales this year, and for some wholesale farms tomato sales are a very large part of their operations. But since we're a CSA farm we bring our members the produce we've grown, be it an abundance or a shortage.

Now you might say that the members end up getting the short end of the stick, and maybe they do in a year like this. But if we had to weather a 50% drop in our tomato income this year, we wouldn't be around to farm next year. Thanks to the commitment of our membership we know that we can continue to plan for the future and keep our employees paid even when the weather is fickle. And I think that one thing we can count on in the early part of the 21st century is fickle weather.

If you're new to the farm this year you may just think we don't know what we're doing. That's fine, but I can tell you for certain that this has been a very challenging growing season for everyone in the upper midwest. There are hot years, cool years, dry years and wet years. We've been having consistently dry years for the last 5 years, so this wet year has been particularly challenging. In a dry year we can always add water, in a wet year we can only wait for it to dry out.

It's actually been a pretty decent season, but watching the tomatoes die in August makes me crabby. The other thing making me crabby this week is a new disease in the brassica field. It's called black rot, and it's about the worst thing that can happen in your brassicas. The brassica family is the broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale and brussels sprouts. We've never had black rot before and I'm still learning about it. The best thing

Tomatoes and the farm

This will undoubtedly be the peak week for tomatoes, everyone should have 10 in their box. In a normal year the peak tomato time would be about two weeks from now. But in a normal year the plants would not be 80% dead by now either. As I expected, the applications of copper fungicide have done little to slow the progress of the septoria leaf spot on the plants. Thankfully as the days get shorter and the sun less intense we get less damage from the sun on the fruit as the foliage dies back.

I thought this would be a good opportunity to talk about why we're a CSA farm and how all this really works. Looking back at a few previous years we've averaged over the season around 50 tomatoes per share each season. Right now we're at 24 for 2010 and we'll be lucky to get 10 more. The reason for this drop in numbers is that we've had an unusually wet and humid growing season, not because we've planted less, or not kept them weeded. Wet and humid conditions are ideal incubators for fungal disease and tomatoes are highly susceptible to it.

The idea behind the CSA movement is that the members take a shared risk in the production of the crops on the farm, while the farmer is guaranteed a set income stream for the season. If we were a farm which

that could happen would be for the weather to get unseasonably cool for the rest of the year, but I don't think that's going to happen. Even the conventional growers don't really have a way to control it. For now we're just staying out of that field altogether. We're just a couple of weeks away from fall broccoli and cabbages so we'll just have to see what happens.

I would like to say that this is the last word on fungal issues on the farm this year, but I'm pretty sure that there will be more as we go into September and see how some of the storage crops do.

On to the box...

The last round of melons is in the box this week with a cantaloupe and a watermelon. I'm still looking for a variety of watermelon that I like. This is a yellow-fleshed variety that's been de-hybridized from a standard called Yellow Doll. We had one over the weekend that was fabulous, but we've cut open a couple that were less than fabulous. I hope yours is a fabulous one.

The first leeks are in the box this week. I was a little worried about the purple blotch in them so we're picking them a little early, but they don't seem to have been very affected by it.

Last of the basil this week, it's been a good year for it but it has run its course. Just a handful this week for the top of your tomatoes.

We're getting down to the last of the cukes and zukes, I would say we'll have another one or two next week but that will probably be it.

The potatoes this week are the early red golds. The skins have toughened up now and they should keep well, if you're not going to use them right away just take them out of the plastic and put them somewhere dark at room temperature. A simple potato leek soup recipe follows, or they make great diced potatoes at breakfast time.

The sweet red carmen peppers are doing well, and the cherry bomb hot peppers are having a good year. The cherry bomb are very similar to the canned hot cherry peppers you'd find in the Italian section of your grocery store.

Carrots and garlic round out the box. I finally bought and installed a de-humidistat to control a dehumidifier in the warm cooler, that way we can store the garlic at about 60% humidity and keep the mildew and other problems at bay. The only trick is not drying out the other things that we keep in the warm cooler, like the

cukes and zukes. On a diversified vegetable farm in August you need about 5 different storage areas for all the different things that are coming in from the field.

Farm News

It sure has been nice to have a dry week to get some things done. Lots of weeds have gotten mowed off and crops past their prime cleaned up. I've even gotten some cover crops planted on next year's vegetable fields.

It's dried out enough now so that, as I do seedings for fall arugula and spinach, I have to irrigate them so that they germinate quickly. If I wait for it to rain on them they may not make it before the weather turns too cold. I was starting the irrigation at dusk on Tuesday and the last rays of the setting sun were hitting the late rainbow chard while the full moon was rising behind them, with scenes like these it's hard to stay crabby too long at the farm.

Coming next week: Beets, carrots, tomatoes, zucchini, onions, garlic, acorn squash.

Leek and potato soup www.jamieoliver.com

- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 medium onions
- 1 pound leeks
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 ¾ quarts chicken or vegetable broth, preferably organic
- 1 pound potatoes
- olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Peel and roughly slice the carrots. Slice the celery. Peel and roughly chop the onions. Cut the ends off the leeks, quarter them lengthways, wash them under running water, and cut them into ¼-inch slices. Peel and slice the garlic. Put the broth in a saucepan and heat until boiling. Place a large saucepan on a high heat and add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add all your chopped and sliced ingredients and mix together with a wooden spoon. Cook for around 10 minutes with the lid askew, until the carrots have softened, but are still holding their shape, and the onion and leeks are lightly golden. Peel the potatoes and cut them into ¼-inch dice. Add the boiling broth to the vegetables. Add your potatoes. Give the soup a good stir and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes with the lid on.

Remove the pan from the heat. Season with salt and pepper. Serve like this or pulse until smooth using an immersion blender or liquidizer. Divide between your serving