

# Hog's Back Almanac



Week 14 September 9, 2010

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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Gold w/tops
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Carmen, hot cherry and jalapeños
Potatoes	No	Paper	Sangré
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds
Winter Squash	No	No	Acorn or sugar dumpling

## Gold Beets

I think I predicted that we'd have chard in the box this week. The chard had gotten roughed up a bit by storms last week, and since these gold beets were looking wonderful we picked them instead. The tops on these are every bit as good as chard, and really they are the same thing, just slightly different genetics. That's not to say that these roots aren't wonderful too. I always think that red beets with their tops are one of the most striking vegetables visually, but these give them a run for their money.

There have been gold beet varieties around for years and years, but they've always been difficult to germinate and fussy to grow. This is a new variety of gold beet called touchstone gold and I'm quite impressed with it.

Beets are derived from a wild seashore plant of the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Europe and North Africa. Originally cultivated beets were long and thin, similar to carrots. It wasn't until the 16th century that they started to be bred for a more swollen root. In Britain the common beets were all light in color, gold, white or pink. The common red beet root didn't show up until the 17th century. Before modern technology made it so easy to cut and bale hay for storage in the winter, beets and other root crops were common as cattle fodder for the winter months. They still are popular in Europe for this purpose, with some fodder varieties weighing up to 100 pounds each!

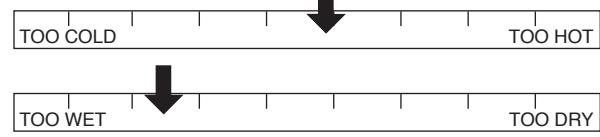
## Farm Report 9/9/10

Rainfall ..... 1.61"

High Temperature ..... 77°

Low Temperature ..... 45°

Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



One of the nice things about gold beets is that their color doesn't dominate whatever dish you put them in, unlike red beets. Roasting them preserves the brightest gold color, but the color never fades completely no matter how you cook them.

The potatoes this week are the Sangré variety. They're a white-fleshed red-skinned spud which matures later in the season. We like it a lot, although it is a little sensitive to skin problems. Some of the potatoes may look a little ugly, but any problems are only skin deep. These make a great potato salad potato and are great when fried up for breakfast.

The carrots continue to size up and sweeten up with the cooler weather. Some are already quite large.

The red carmen peppers continue to be fairly productive, although more and more are giving way to rot. The hot peppers this week are the red hot cherry as well as some green and red jalapeños. The large red carmens are the only sweet pepper in the box.

Tomatoes are winding down quickly now, in fact this may be the last week of them. The plants are in such rough shape that if we get some dry weather early next week we may just mow them off and get them cleaned up so that the soil microbes have a chance to break down the plants and diseases yet this fall. Good sanitation now can save us some headaches next year.

In the squash department we have a few more acorn and then we move on to the sugar dumpling. You may have one of each or two sugar dumpling in your box. The sugar dumpling are a bit sweeter than acorn, almost more of a delicata flavor. I think we'll be harvesting some delicata for next week.

## Farm News

While it was continuing to rain at the end of last week I took the liberty of looking up our rainfall since May 1st, and by Friday we had surpassed 24 inches. Normal precipitation for the whole year is around 30 inches, so it's quite unusual to get 24 inches in four months. In June, July and August we've averaged over 6.25 inches of rain per month, and out of those 92 days we had measurable rain on 40 of them. Even though we've had all this rain this summer, we haven't one 24-hour period where we received 2 inches of rain, 1.95 inches on August 8th was the most. I report our rain gauge amounts each day at [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org) if you're ever really bored and want to look for yourself and see how much rain we got at the farm. Our station ID is WI-PP-1.

In addition to some more moisture we had some chilly nights over the weekend and this week. Strong winds out of the northwest helped to drop the temperature to 45° several nights in the last seven days. It is almost mid-September so it's really not that surprising. It does take a little getting used to after such a hot summer though. The cool weather is a good thing for the most part this time of year. It seems to have slowed down the black rot enough so that we should have some broccoli next week and maybe even a cabbage. We have several rounds of arugula and salad mix planted which could use some heat to get sized up, but it shouldn't take much to make that happen.

With wet fields and driving winds it gets tricky to keep the crew busy around the farm. I've needed a rainy-day project list as long as my arm this year. Last Friday we started cutting some firewood which is a task that's always available at the farm. On Monday (we don't take Labor Day off) we got some cultivating and weeding done on the late season greens and got the potatoes dug ahead of the storms and wind which were forecast for Monday night into Tuesday. Tuesday was really a miserable day around the farm with drizzle and strong winds. The crew spending most of the day cleaning onions and cleaning up around the farm.

We're looking forward to some drier weather this weekend into next week to get back to some of the cleanup projects in the field. The more of these we can get done now, the fewer we have to do in October. One continual project is getting things ready for pumpkin day.

Our annual Pumpkin Day is right around the corner now, just two weeks from this coming Saturday, on

September 25th. For those of you who haven't attended it before, it's a chance to come out to the farm, see the fields, pick out some pumpkins and enjoy a pot-luck with other members. We have a bumper crop of pumpkins this year, big ones, little ones, fancy decorator types, etc. We don't deliver jack-o-lantern type pumpkins in the boxes, so your only chance to get them is to come out to the farm. We ask that people arrive at the farm between 3 and 3:30pm so that we can have everyone here for a hay-wagon ride at 4pm. We'll ride the wagon around the farm and out to the pumpkin patch. Pick out pumpkins and wash them off in the field, and then head back in to set up the pot-luck. After the pot-luck we'll have a campfire or bonfire depending on the weather conditions. Drop us an email to let us know you're coming, and how many kids and adults.

## Warm Golden Beet Salad with Greens and Almonds

1 bunch beets, both tops and roots  
Olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled  
2/3 cup toasted almond slivers

Heat the oven to 425°F. Line a 9-inch square baking pan or cake tin with a big square of foil, large enough to completely enclose the beet roots. Lightly rinse the beet roots to remove any really clumpy dirt and pat them dry. Place them in the foil square and lightly drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Fold up the foil and crease to seal. Bake the beets for 60 minutes or until they can be just pierced with a fork. Set aside to cool.

Meanwhile, chop the beet greens into bite-size ribbons. Discard the stalks between the roots and where the leaves start, but chop the leaf ribs along with the leaves. Rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of dirt and grit. In a large skillet, heat a drizzle of olive oil over medium heat and add the garlic. Cook on low for about 5 minutes or until the garlic is golden and fragrant. Add the chopped leaves and stir to coat with the garlic. Cook on medium-low for about 10 minutes or until the leaves are soft and tender. Remove from the heat.

When the beets are cool, rub them with a paper towel to remove the skin. Then chop into bite-sized pieces and toss with the cooked greens, goat cheese, and almonds. Taste and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm or cold. (This also makes an excellent pressed sandwich filling, especially with some extra goat cheese.)