



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	Blue wind
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf, green leaf and butter
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Cherriette
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Strawberries	Yes	No	
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Hakurei

Garlic Scapes

I think one of the more underappreciated things that we grow are the lovely garlic scapes. It's the number one thing that we find left behind in people's boxes each year. I'm not sure why this is, we really look forward to them. I guess it's because people get hung up on what to do with them.

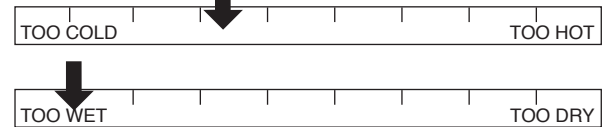
First of all, what is a garlic scape? It's actually part of the garlic plant. So these come off of the plants that we're growing for the garlic bulbs. The scape is the flower stalk that the plant sends up as the final act of it's vegetative growth stage. Picking the scapes off helps send more energy into the bulbing of the garlic, so that makes them kind of a by-product.

But what a tasty by-product they are! We like to think of them as a cross between garlic, scallions and asparagus. The general preparation of them is to use everything below the flower bud, which is the part that comes to a point. They are fibrous enough that you don't really want to use them raw, but it doesn't take much cooking to soften them, especially if you slice them into small pieces, like you would a scallion.

We tend to substitute them for scallions when cooking, or use them as their own deal. They make a nice pesto, we eat them in stir-fries, on pizza, in quiche, or just in scrambled eggs. When we use them in eggs or on pizza we tend to slice them a little on the bias into 1/4-inch pieces. A recipe for garlic scape pesto follows.

Farm Report 6/17/10

Rainfall this week 1.45"
 High Temperature 78°
 Low Temperature 53°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Not all varieties of garlic produce garlic scapes, but we only grow one variety and it does. The typical white California soft-neck garlics don't produce a scape. If you let the scape flower it will produce little tiny garlic 'seeds' called bulbils. If you were really patient you could grow those on for several years and end up with a head of garlic.

The first broccoli of the year is in the box this week. I'm always a little skeptical of the early varieties of broccoli, but this one does pretty well. It's a week earlier than our regular broccoli, and it makes pretty decent sized heads. Our kids always enjoy when the first broccoli is ready, it's one of their favorite raw veggie at meals.

There's strawberries for all the rest of the pickup sites this week, but this will be it on them. Have I mentioned that I really don't like growing strawberries for the shares? I'm just never satisfied with the quality of them. We've lost a large amount of them to mold in the field. Soft fruit and this year's constant moisture are not a good mix. It's also next to impossible to have the strawberries ripe when we need them, they ripen so fast that we lost many to over-ripeness between last week and this week, and when ripe they really don't keep more than a day or two.

There is spinach in the box this week. It struggled to get large enough, but we finally decided to harvest it. I still haven't completely figured out the issues, but am leaning towards a pH problem, the field it's in tested quite acidic last fall and it turns out that spinach is very sensitive to acidic soils. Next week I'll spread some high-calcium lime to correct this where we'll be planting spinach in the fall, it's a little late for the spring crop.

The lettuce is nice this week, some of the heads of green were absurdly large. I think we ran a few heads short on red so you may get two greens instead. The butter lettuce looks very nice. Again, we do rinse it on the farm, but there will be a fair amount of dirt down inside the heads yet.

The radishes this week are a round red radish called cheriette. Some are approaching beet size, but they're still nice and crisp.

The first scallions are in the box this week, we should have these for the next six weeks or so.

More young arugula, yummy salad-type turnips and pea shoots round out the box this week.

Farm News

The rainy weather has continued at the farm, with only two days without measurable precipitation in the last week. It's starting to be public enemy number one around the here. After a while it gets really hard to come up with projects for everyone to do when it's too wet to go into the field. It's also putting us behind on some major tasks, principally hilling the potatoes. It has made for some incredibly lush plants, but if you can't get in to cultivate them then it makes for some incredibly lush weeds. It also makes for a lot of dirt on all the crops, so wash them well. You wouldn't believe how much dirt we already washed off them at the farm.

It's also been really nice to not have to run the irrigation. I don't think I've had it on in June so far, which is unheard of. It's also been a nice temperature for working, not too hot, not too cold, just a little too wet. Only 4 of the last 17 days have passed without rain.

I thought I'd take a couple paragraphs in the newsletter this week to introduce you to the 2010 crew here at Hog's Back Farm. We actually do all of this with a smaller crew than you might think. Besides myself we have 3 full-time workers on the farm this year.

Jesse has worked for us for the last few years, and lives about 15 miles away. He's kind of the classic 'hired man' that all farms used to have, back when farms were small and run by a family. He does a lot of the maintenance on the equipment which is something that your intrepid farmer is not that great at and can also build just about anything.

Cheryl is new to the farm this year. She lives on the farm with us in a little hut that we built for her down by the edge of the woods. Her family moved to Mon-

dovi, WI last year which is about a half-hour from the farm. She is helping us out with the kids a couple of days a week and working with the farm crew the rest of the time, as well as caring for the small flock of laying hens we've got.

Alissa is also new to the farm this year. She comes to us with several years of experience on other farms, including one in Connecticut which Cheryl also worked on. Maybe we need to have some sort of 'sister farm' relationship with them, like when you drive into a town and it has a sign at the edge of town saying they're a 'sister city' to somewhere in the Ukraine. Anyway, in my desire to be more than just a job for folks I've encouraged Alissa to put that experience to work by starting her own small csa share operation this year on some of our land. So, she works for us full time and also grows veggies on her own plot for her dozen or so members of Rusty Hoe Farm. If you google her farm name you can find her blog. She lives in the old granary on the farm.

Geoffrey is also back with us one day a week to help with the harvest, having finished college down at Warren Wilson in North Carolina. And we'd all be nowhere without my lovely wife Melinda who cooks us harvest lunch on Wednesdays. I sometimes have some serious trouble going back to being bent over in the field after eating so much.

Coming next week: Radishes, lettuce, peas, collards/kale, broccoli, scallions, scapes, turnips.

Garlic Scape and Almond Pesto www.doriegreenspan.com
Makes about 1 cup

- 10 garlic scapes, finely chopped
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan (to taste and texture)
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds (you could toast them lightly, if you'd like)
- About 1/2 cup olive oil
- Sea salt

Put the scapes, 1/3 cup of the cheese, almonds and half the olive oil in the bowl of a food processor (or use a blender or a mortar and pestle). Whir to chop and blend all the ingredients and then add the remainder of the oil and, if you want, more cheese. If you like the texture, stop; if you'd like it a little thinner, add some more oil. Season with salt.

If you're not going to use the pesto immediately, press a piece of plastic against the surface to keep it from oxidizing. The pesto can be stored in the refrigerator for a couple of days or packed airtight and frozen for a couple of months, by which time tomatoes should be at their juiciest.