



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red gold
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	
Tomatoes	No	No	
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Basil

I never really take the time to talk about basil, since there's another nice sized bag of it in the box this week I thought I would. As most of you know, basil is an aromatic herb used in Italian cooking. The basil we grow is also known as 'sweet basil' as opposed to the more pungent basil like Thai basil. After 3 inches of rain this week the basil will need to be washed.

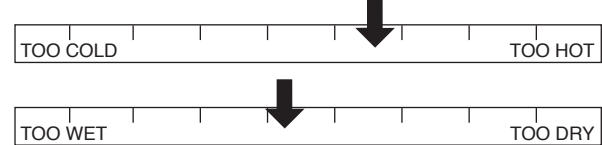
The rain combined with the warm weather has been good for basil production this year. Usually it starts to get bitter after a couple of weeks of harvesting, but this year it has held up very well. I've included a simple pesto recipe this week at the end of the newsletter.

Another use when we have extra is to puree the fresh leaves with olive oil and spread it into ice cube trays. Pop them in the freezer and when frozen crack them out of the trays and store the basil cubes in a zip-loc bag in the freezer. These make great additions to winter cooking.

There have been studies which have shown that basil is toxic to mosquitoes, which would make for a very nice insect repellent. Basil has also long been associated as a gateway herb to the spirit world. In some parts of Europe it is placed in the hands of the dead to ensure a safe journey, while in India it is placed in the mouths of the dying to ensure they reach the afterlife. The Ancient Egyptians and Greeks both believed that it would open the gates of heaven for the dead.

Farm Report 7/29/10

Rainfall 3.01"
 High Temperature 91°
 Low Temperature 59°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Fennel is new to the box this week. The results from our customer survey last fall showed that fennel was one of the most challenging vegetables in our share box. Plenty of people wanted us to grow less of it or drop it entirely. Variety is the spice of life, and we have some very enthusiastic fennel fans among our membership, so we'll have fennel this week and next.

All the rain we've been having has helped the potatoes to get a lot of the water they need to size themselves up. You'll notice that you may have a large potato or two in your box this week. Normally we have to irrigate frequently this time of year while the potatoes are sizing—a full-sized potato plant can utilize over a quarter of an inch of water per day—so anytime we get adequate rainfall in July it is a blessing. These are more of the new potatoes from a couple of weeks ago, red gold. The plants are dying back enough that these could be dug and washed without doing too much damage. They'll keep best in a cool, dark location with good air circulation, don't keep them in the plastic bag.

The cukes and zukes continue their production. They, like the basil, are crops that love hot weather and plenty of moisture. Zucchini grow so fast that a lack of moisture can show up in them over night in the form of fruit that are shaped more like light bulbs than zucchini.

More of the lovely Masai green beans are in the box with more to follow next week. There were just a few recipe ideas posted to the green bean blog last week, so add your own there if you get a chance.

The tomatoes are ripening faster now. There should be 3 for everyone this week. I'm not sure how long these early ones will hold out with their disease problems.

The good news is that the main tomato crop is looking good and just starting to ripen. They, too, are showing some early signs of disease, but hopefully we can get ahead of it with some well-timed sprayings of an organic fungicide. The wet, humid, hot weather this year has made it a wonderful year for fungi.

Carrots, corn and garlic round out the box this week.

Farm News

We had quite a bit of rain at the end of last week, especially while we were packing the shares last Thursday. For the most part we've been able to get our work done around and in between showers, but a little dry weather would be all right. It really has been a treat not to have to irrigate much at all. The onions are reaching maturity right now and I've only irrigated them once all year.

A big thanks goes out to my crew this week, Alissa, Cheryl and Jesse. They got to run the farm by themselves for four days while I took some time off with the family. That's the first time I've taken off four days in the summer in at least 10 years. Even though I do try not to work on Sundays, it's just about impossible to relax unless I can get at least 150 miles away from the farm.

While I was gone they got the last of the main planting of fall broccoli in. There's just a few more late broccoli and we'll be done transplanting for the year. They also got the first planting of fall carrots hand weeded which is a big chore, it's almost 2,000 row feet of carrots. Some dry weather would favor keeping the weeds down in the fall carrots and beets.

A few crop updates: All signs are pointing towards an excellent year for the winter squash. The vines have completely covered their 1/3 acre and are fruiting heavily. There's plenty of bees buzzing around and pollinating the flowers and I have yet to see the first squash bug. It's also looking like we'll have a bountiful harvest of pumpkins for the pumpkin day on September 25th. Right now the melons are also looking very good. It would be nice if it dried out a bit for them since their flavor is quite a bit better if they've had some dry conditions to ripen in. We should see melons a little earlier this year since it's been so consistently warm this summer, maybe in a couple weeks.

Coming next week: carrots, onions, beets, cucumbers, zucchini, yellow squash, fennel, tomatoes, corn, garlic.

Here's a simple basil pesto recipe for those of you who need one. Pine nuts are ridiculously expensive right now in the co-ops (why?) but you can find them on-line for around \$25/lb, you could substitute walnuts or almonds, but it's just not quite the same.

Basil pesto

- 2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Pecorino cheese (see Cook's Note)

Combine the basil, garlic, and pine nuts in a food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add 1/2 cup of the oil and process until fully incorporated and smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

If using immediately, add all the remaining oil and pulse until smooth. Transfer the pesto to a large serving bowl and mix in the cheese. Toss with 12 ounces of your favorite cooked pasta.

If freezing, transfer to an air-tight container and drizzle remaining oil over the top. Freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw and stir in cheese.

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If you're not into corn on the cob this is a good way to use the corn and fennel together:

Summer Corn Chowder with Bacon *Bon Appétit | June 2004*

- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- 6 cups fresh corn kernels (cut from 6 to 8 ears)
- 1 chopped fresh fennel bulb
- 1 cup diced zucchini or yellow squash (about 2)
- 1 cup 1/2-inch cubes peeled potatoes
- 3 cups (or more) low-salt chicken broth
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Sauté bacon in large pot over medium-high heat until crisp and brown. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. Add corn, fennel, zucchini, and potatoes to drippings in pot; sauté 5 minutes. Add 3 cups broth and simmer uncovered over medium heat until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Transfer 3 cups soup to blender. Holding blender top firmly, puree until smooth. Return puree to soup in pot. Stir in cream and cayenne. Bring chowder to simmer, thinning with more broth if too thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Ladle chowder into bowls and sprinkle with bacon and chives.