

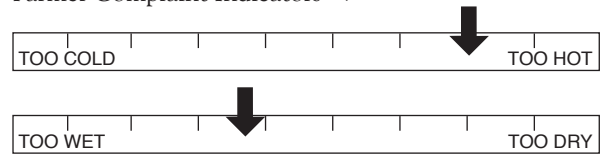


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red w/tops
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Onions	Yes	Plastic	Walla walla
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell and jalapeño
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	
Tomatoes	No	No	Early reds
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 8/5/10

Rainfall 1.74"
 High Temperature 91°
 Low Temperature 65°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Even with the fungicide, I think we'll have a lower than average tomato year. Tomatoes like warm weather, but when it's hot for a long period of time it can actually hurt the tomato crop. If it stays above 70° at night tomato blossoms won't set fruit and will drop off the plant.

Speaking of fungal issues, more of the blighted Walla wallas are in the box this week. We may have a few more of these and then we'll be done with them. My apologies if you get one that isn't entirely sound, the fungal problems has caused some of them to have a rotten spot. It's been a rough year in the onion field which is very frustrating. Usually the main consideration in the onions is weeds, if you keep ahead of the weeds (no small task), you get a good crop. Not so in 2010. We kept the patch very free from weeds and then the purple blotch moved in. I'm still optimistic about the rest of the onion crop. A number of farms have had some big onion losses this year. We'll start harvesting the main crop late this week and we'll see how they look.

The first peppers of the season are in the box this week. The bell peppers aren't thriving like they normally do, so we won't see as many green peppers this year. The good news is that the sweet long red peppers are looking great. They won't be ready for a couple of weeks yet. The hot peppers are looking pretty good. This is the first time I've grown jalapeños for the box, I trialed this variety last year and it was very nice. Obviously the jalapeño is the small pepper in the box.

Beets are back for another week. Some of the beet tops are showing some of their own fungal issues, which is quite common with beet tops in the middle of summer.

Fungal Fun

Nearly constant moisture combined with high humidity and high temperatures is setting us up to have an ongoing battle with fungal disease in the crops for the rest of the season. One of the reasons we farm on the top of a hill is to avoid most of the fungal problems which our colleagues in river bottoms have to deal with regularly. This year it just won't dry out anywhere.

We're just starting to pick from the main season crop of tomatoes, having abandoned the early ones because of a fungal disease known as septoria leaf spot. The leaf spot is in the main season ones as well but is not as pervasive yet. For the first time in my farming career, I've started spraying the tomatoes with an organically approved fungicide to try and slow the spread of septoria. Even though it's allowed for organic production it's still kind of nasty stuff, mostly because it's copper. Copper is fairly toxic, but it is a good natural fungicide. That said, I hate having to spray it. It's hard to make the decision to use a fungicide like this, part of me would like to let the disease take it's course and chalk it up to a bad year for tomatoes. But then another part of me feels like it's my responsibility to do whatever I can to bring you tomatoes for your family, as long as it's still organic. For now, we'll be using the copper so please, as always, wash your tomatoes before eating them.

The fall beets are all weeded and thinned and we'll see some of them in the last half of September.

There's just a mini-bunch of carrots in the box this week. A few to give the kids until next week. The next round of carrots was still pretty small so we wanted to give them another week to size up.

There's a couple more fennel bulbs in the box this week, that'll be it on the fennel front.

I know I sound like a broken record on the fungal stuff, but even the garlic in the greenhouse can't get dried out properly. The humidity has been so high everywhere that my lovely garlic crop all has a little black mildew on the outer wrappers. It doesn't affect the good stuff inside at all.

The green beans have been liking all the hot, humid weather. We had more of them in the field but when the box starts to have more than a dozen different items in it there aren't enough hours in the day to get it all done. I love these little beans, but it takes twice as much time to pick the same amount as it does a regular-sized green bean.

The cukes and zukes keep coming, as does the basil. We had some good creamed corn at lunch on Wednesday sprinkled with some basil. I'm starting to see a little powdery mildew in the zucchini, so they'll start to slow down over the next few weeks. I can't believe the basil is still going as strong as it is, those poor little plants have been in overdrive lately.

More sweet corn from the Sam's this week. The corn has been very good this year, we had some in our fridge all week and it still was quite tasty.

Farm News

Fungus! No, seriously, I'll stop with the fungus. Let's switch to weeds. The weeds have been on steroids all summer. They, too, love the heat and humidity. We have giant ragweed that's easily 12 feet tall in places. What do we do on an organic farm when the weeds get out of control? At some point pulling weeds goes by the wayside in favor of chopping them down. They were getting so bad that I went out and bought a weed wacker last weekend so I could somehow rescue some of the trees we planted. Mowers are always our cultivation tool of last resort. We also finally got our flail mower fixed so that I could get through the fields and cut down some of the grasses that were going to seed. Unfortunately when it had just about dried out from the rain we got Monday morning, we got hit with a tiny cloudburst Tuesday evening, which dumped

almost an inch of rain on us in about 15 minutes. That was the single most frustrating weather incident we've had this season.

Before that cloudburst I had finally also gotten the rest of next year's fields mowed and was just starting to plow it up. Hopefully I can get back to it before the next round of showers comes through this weekend.

The crew did get some solid weed control done on the fall beets and carrots. They're looking good and will really be ready to grow as soon as it dried out enough for me to get through there with the cultivator.

We've also been busy spraying for the cabbage looper this year which had done a lot of damage on some of the fall cabbages and brussels sprouts. I think we're starting to get the upper hand though.

All in all things are looking pretty good around the farm, we're all just getting a little cranky about the heat and humidity. Normally we can rely on a pretty steady breeze on top of our hill, but it has been eerily calm for much of this summer. At least now that it's August we can start dreaming about frost.

Coming next week: Basil, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, corn, tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, garlic, cilantro, carrots, a melon?

Roasted Fennel and Beet Salad

- 4 beets, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges (1 1/2 pounds)
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large fennel bulb with fronds—bulb cut into 1/2-inch wedges, 1 tablespoon chopped fronds
- 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar

Preheat the oven to 400°. In a medium baking dish, toss the beets with the thyme, the water and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and cook for about 40 minutes, or until tender. Let cool slightly. Discard the thyme.

In a small baking dish, drizzle the fennel wedges with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until tender and lightly browned.

Pour the beet juices into a bowl and whisk in the vinegar. Add the beets, fennel wedges and fronds and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.