



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	red or gold w/tops
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	Muskmelon
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cilantro	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Eggplant	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell and serranos
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red norland
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	Last week!
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds
Watermelon	Yes	No	Orange
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	and pattypan

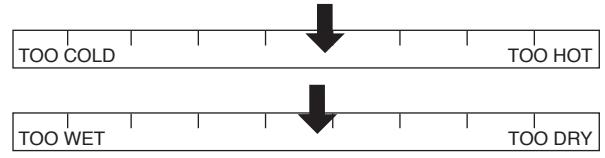
Watermelons

During the winter I do all of the planning for the farm. I schedule the seeding days and planting dates so that we have a nice variety of veggies in the box each week and hopefully have some things that complement each other. I also try and avoid bottlenecks that can come from too many things being ready to pick simultaneously. One of the pitfalls with this kind of planning is that you have to take at face value the 'days to maturity' which the seed catalogs list, particularly if you haven't grown a variety before. So this week we have an unplanned bottleneck of having watermelon and muskmelon in the box. According to the seed catalog this watermelon should have been ready two weeks from now, thankfully we were watching it fairly closely otherwise we might have missed it, especially since it has an undesirable tendency to burst open when ripe.

These are orange watermelons, and have been fabulous. Picking watermelons is a bit of an art. They do not separate from the plant when they're ripe like a muskmelon. And they don't really change color either. The best way is to look at the plants and thump the melons with your hand, listening for a nice warm

Farm Report 8/18/11

Rainfall 1.98"
 High Temperature 81°
 Low Temperature 53°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



'punk' sound. Thin-rind watermelons like these develop quite a bit of surface tension as they ripen. Most of these will 'pop' apart when you take a knife to them because there's so much tension on the skin from the moisture inside. In fact, I had to use a clipper to separate a bunch of them from the vine, because if I just pulled them off the vine they'd split open. This makes them not a great choice for shipping long distances, but delicious one to eat, all the way down to the rind.

Watermelons were cultivated in Egypt well before 2000 BC, and it may be the only thing we grow which is actually native to Africa. They have long been and continue to be useful as a source of potable liquid where water supplies are polluted.

So, we have a muskmelon too this week. Same kind as last week, if you received a muskmelon. These have been sweet and delicious.

Wow, lots of other stuff in the box too.

This is the last week of sweet corn from Sam's Produce. I hope you've all enjoyed it as much as we have. If you're tired of corn on the cob just slice it off the cob and saute it with some butter and salt, tasty. Or add it to some cornmeal pancakes on Saturday morning.

The red potatoes have set their skins nicely now and it is much easier to dig and handle them. These are our favorite choice for potato salads.

Finally, a nice round of beans this week. The hot weather really messed with the beans this year, but now that we've had a couple weeks relief we have a nice big bag of beautiful beans in the box. We love to make a potato salad with a bunch of additional ingredients like blanched beans and corn cut off the cob.

I do believe that we've also got an eggplant for everyone this week. The plants are being demolished by potato bugs right now, but not before giving us something to remember them by. Potatoes and eggplant are both in the solanaceous family so the bugs enjoy them both, but don't touch the peppers and tomatoes next door which are also in that family.

The last of the summer beets are in the box, some red, some gold. We'll take a break from beets now for at least a month.

The carrots this week are the first from our main carrot field. They've sized up quickly this year and are looking good. If you can keep the carrots weeded early they really take off this time of year.

Another bell pepper is in the box, as well as a couple of the serranos. You'll find the serranos in the bag with the basil and the garlic. Sometimes we need to combine a few small things when we have too many items to line up where we pack the boxes.

There was an unexplained outpouring of pattypanns this week, so you should see a couple of those along with your zucchini. And don't forget the cukes.

We round out the box with a nice bunch of cilantro and some more tomatoes from the high tunnel. The high tunnel tomatoes have peaked now and we're still awaiting the first picking in the field tomatoes which are just starting to ripen. Next week we'll transition from high tunnel to field so that we can get the high tunnel ready for some late season crops.

Farm News

The lovely weather continues at the farm, with some nice rains to accompany it. Some of the rain came a little heavy Tuesday night making some of my fall seedings a bit of a mess, but I'm getting used to that happening every year. We'll keep planting spinach and other fall greens for a few more weeks.

The crew didn't pull a single weed this week because it's harvest time around the farm. The main crop of onions took most of the day on Monday. The onions look good this year, although they're a bit smaller than some years. I've been trying to grow onions that aren't quite as large since I think it's hard for folks to use up giant onions. These seem a little more reasonably sized. It's hard to resist the farmer temptation to grow giant produce whenever possible. We had enough of them on a pallet on the back of my old tractor so that the front wheels of the tractor were actually off of the ground, generally we try and avoid tractor wheelies.

The rest of the time we were picking melons, cukes, zukes, tomatoes, potatoes and shallots. The weather has cooperated nicely for harvesting this month. Not too wet, not too dry and a very nice temperature.

I managed to get some buckwheat planted on some of our fallow ground to hold the soil in place over the winter and add organic matter. It went in just ahead of Tuesday night's rain so that should be up and growing in a week. I've also been spending any available time mowing the weeds in our 40 acres of prairie we're establishing this year, hopefully in a few years it will have been worth it.

It's not too early to start thinking about attending our annual Pumpkin Day. This year it will be on Saturday, October 1st from 3-8pm. Put it on your calendar now. Potluck, pumpkins, farm tour and more.

Just enough room for one green bean recipe below, I haven't tried it but it sounds interesting. There's about 15 more bean recipes on the website, including my favorite, Good Old French Bean Salad.

Coming next week: cukes, zukes, muskmelon, tomatoes, parsley, cilantro, chard, onions, peppers, carrots.

Green Bean Salad with Cilantro and Soy-Glazed Almonds *Bon Appétit* | June 1996

- 1/4 cup whole almonds (about 1-1/2 ounces)
- 4 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 pound green beans, trimmed, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large garlic clove, pressed
- 1 teaspoon minced peeled fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced green onions
- 1/3 cup fresh cilantro leaves

Place almonds in small nonstick skillet. Stir over medium heat until almonds are lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Increase heat medium-high. Add 3 teaspoons soy sauce and stir until soy sauce evaporates and coats almonds, about 1 minute. Transfer to plate and cool. Chop almonds. Cook beans in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain. Rinse beans under cold water. Drain well. (Almonds and beans can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover almonds and store at room temperature. Cover and refrigerate beans; bring to room temperature before continuing.)

Whisk vinegar, oil, garlic, ginger and remaining 1 teaspoon soy sauce in large bowl to blend. Add beans and toss to coat. Sprinkle green onions, cilantro and almonds over salad and serve.