



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	Sun jewel <u>or</u> muskmelon <u>or</u> watermelon
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Celery	Yes	Plastic	
Chard	Yes	Plastic	Rainbow
Cilantro	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Onions, Dry	No	No	1 red, 3 yellows
Parsley	Yes	Plastic	Italian
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	1 red carmen, 2 hot cherries, 1 green bell
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds and an heirloom <u>or</u> two
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	and pattypan

## Tomatoes

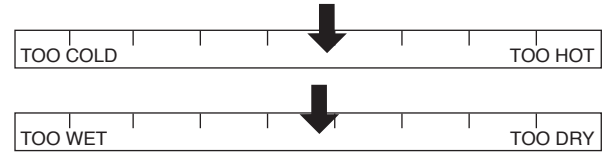
We had the first picking of the main season field tomatoes on Tuesday. They're really just getting started. You'll have a variety of tomatoes in your box, and some of them will be a little under ripe, just leave them on the counter to ripen up.

The heirlooms this year are not radically different from last year. We have a couple of small 'black' varieties, Japanese Black Trifele and Nyagous. We have a larger black variety called Cherokee Purple and just a few plants of a larger yellow called Jubilee, which was first offered by Burpee in 1943. What heirlooms all have in common is that they're open pollinated varieties, meaning that you can save seed from them from year to year. The red tomatoes we grow are hybrids. If you try and save seed from a hybrid you get a mishmash of parent strains instead of what you want.

The tomato patch had been looking formidable this year but it has started to succumb to powdery mildew, which is actually quite rare on tomatoes and is a differ-

## Farm Report 8/25/11

Rainfall . . . . . 1.04"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 84°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 56°  
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



ent organism than the powdery mildew on the zucchini. I've never seen it before this year. There's always something going on in the tomatoes. I don't think we'll see a huge reduction in yield from it, but I could be wrong. It's already stripped the Nyagous of a good percentage of its leaves.

On the melon front this week I was hoping to have enough of the new muskmelon variety for everyone, but it has been slow to ripen. It's a very nice firm Tuscan-type muskmelon. I took a brix reading on it and it was a little over 16, which is an excellent reading for a melon. What is a brix reading? It's a measurement taken with a refractometer to measure the dissolved solids in the crop. Technically it measures the % of sucrose, but when you have higher brix you have higher mineral content, higher protein content, greater specific gravity and above all better taste and nutrition. I don't spend a lot of time using my refractometer, but it is a good way to measure the nutritive quality of the food you're growing.

Anyway, like I said there wasn't enough of this type of muskmelon for everyone, so you'll either have it or the yellow sun jewels or a watermelon.

More delicious rainbow chard is in the box this week. It took a little bit of a beating in the storms that rumbled through on Monday night, but still is looking pretty awesome.

For the first time ever here at Hog's Back Farm we have a small bunch of celery in the box. I ordered some seed for my daughter, who loves it, and since I can't seem to plant less than 100 of anything we had some to put in the shares as an experiment. Since there were only 100 we couldn't send everyone a whole head,

but just sent a small bunch of stalks with the leaves attached. We can't grow giant celery like we see from California here since we're not in an irrigated desert, but ours is actually quite delicious. Let me know what you think. It could become a summer addition to the shares if people were into it. The leaves are great for flavoring soup stock or even cooking with.

A few varieties of peppers are in the box this week. The first sweet carmen peppers were turning red so we found enough for everyone to get one. These are the long pointed red peppers. They are sweet and delicious like a really good red bell pepper. Speaking of bells there's another green bell in the box and two of the hot cherry peppers. If you've been with us a while you'll notice these cherry peppers don't look the same and that's because it's a different variety. These are bigger and bumpier and honestly I haven't eaten one yet. The seed company dropped the variety we used to grow so I tried their new one, but I'm not impressed, maybe we should just increase our serrano planting next year.

Another small bag of green beans this week. They just weren't quite ready to pick but we went ahead since it looks like next week we'll be picking shell beans. This is probably the last of the green beans.

The first of the onions from the big harvest are in the box. One red onion and a few yellows along with the weekly head of garlic. Does everyone keep up with a head of garlic per week or do you need a break?

Italian flat parsley and cilantro add to the two other crops from the umbelliferae family this week (celery and carrots). One day we'll go for all of them at once adding in celeriac, parsnips, fennel and dill.

### Farm News

The weather has continued to be lovely at the farm this August. We're getting some decent rain each week, even if some of it comes down a little hard for our new seedlings. It's better than no rain.

The harvesting continues at the farm, with the red onions coming in this week at right around a thousand pounds. The garlic is done curing and we clipped up and boxed it all and sorted out most of the fusarium symptomatic bulbs. A check of the numbers shows that we should be fine for getting through the season with what we have, unless it starts to go downhill suddenly.

The cukes and zukes are starting to wind down, I think next week may be the last one for them. They've

all been quite productive considering some of the issues we've had with both of them. And I'm guessing that folks are starting to get a bit sick of them by now.

Now that we've gotten into the field tomatoes that takes up a bigger chunk of time on Tuesdays. There's still cover crops to plant and prairie to mow, but those will have to wait until after the shares go out.

**Coming next week:** Kale, tomatoes, cukes, zukes, cantaloupe, shell beans, carrots, garlic, potatoes, leeks?

Lots of chopping on this recipe, but it's a good fit for what's in the box this week:

### Gazpacho Salsa *Bon Appétit* | August 2008

- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 medium tomatoes, cored, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded, cut into 1/4-inch cubes (about 1 cup)
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped pitted Kalamata olives
- 1/2 red bell pepper, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley or cilantro

Whisk oil, vinegar, garlic, paprika, coarse salt, and pepper in large bowl. Add all remaining ingredients and toss to coat. **DO AHEAD:** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Toss to blend before serving.

### Gremolata

One thing we really like to do with Italian parsley is to make gremolata. Gremolata is just a combination of parsley, garlic and lemon zest, but it's just fabulous on top of fish or chops from the grill, or we love it on roasted chicken with chorizo, it gives a great bright flavor to top off something hearty. The classic Italian use is on Osso Buco. Here's a good general ratio for making it.

- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh lemon zest

Just combine the ingredients in a bowl and spoon it onto whatever you fancy. I think it'd even be great on top of some earthy roasted vegetables.

You can also make it substituting cilantro for the parsley but I've never had it that way.