



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	Not all shares
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	Last of 2011
Garlic	No	No	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Leeks	Yes	Plastic	Beautiful!
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell and Serranos
Potatoes	No	Paper	Desirée
Shell Beans	Yes	Yes	Tongue of Fire
Tomatoes	No	No	Reds and heirlooms
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	and Pattypan

Shell beans

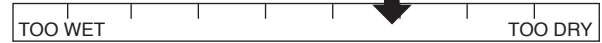
It's been a couple of years since we had a nice crop of shell beans. They're such a wonderful treat that we never really see in this country unless you happen to be shopping at a very fancy farmer's market. Basically shell beans are usually a fairly large bean that reaches maturity in the pod, but doesn't completely dry into a dry bean. In fact many beans you can pick at the green bean stage, the shell bean stage or at the dry bean stage. All three stages are edible. The ones we grow for shell beans are really meant for that purpose. They're nice large beans and the pods and beans are flecked with red.

Ideally shell beans should be picked when the pods have turned beige and are limp and pliable. Some of them will be greener than this, but we do a once-over picking so that everyone can have a larger quantity than if we'd just pick the perfect ones. Just because some of the pods still have some green on them doesn't make them less yummy, just shell them all out of their pods and mix them all together. A great activity for the kids while sitting on the porch or front steps.

Since they are a fresh version of a dried bean, they require much less cooking and should be handled more gently. No rolling boils here, but just a bare simmer.

Farm Report 9/1/11

Rainfall0.22"
 High Temperature 79°
 Low Temperature 57°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



They have more 'beany' flavor than any other kind of bean but it's easily overshadowed with a heavy hand on herbs and spices. We like them with just a little garlic, salt and maybe a little thyme. Regrettably, any splashes of color on the raw beans is lost when cooked.

They also don't keep for very long. This is another thing that we deliver in a plastic bag for convenience, but should really be given more air to circulate. If you're not going to use them for more than 24 hours, transfer them to a paper bag, or even a bowl in the fridge.

We surged ahead into peak tomatoes this week and picked three times as many out of the field as we did last week. Everyone should have a dozen in their box, including examples of our three main heirloom varieties. The weather over the last week was perfect for ripening them up, dry and not too hot. I'm guessing we'll see about the same numbers next week, even with some cooler temperatures in the forecast.

The first leeks of the season are in the box this week. We tried a few new things with the leek planting this year which made the planting and transplanting of them more labor intensive, but I think it's made them much more uniform and easier to harvest. These are beauties and go great with tomatoes or you can always fall back on a potato-leek combo in a soup or a gratin. Sautéed leeks is also a favorite of ours on homemade pizza.

The potatoes this week are the pink Desirée variety. It's a yellow-fleshed with a creamy but firm texture. I haven't grown this variety before, but I was a little disappointed with it's yield in this perfect potato year. It'll have to taste really awesome if it wants to stick around.

More lacinato kale is in the box, it's great with the shell beans or with some potatoes fried up for breakfast. I think people overthink kale, I like it with just about everything.

We're saying goodbye to some of the summer crops this week. This will be the last of the cucumbers that we've been enjoying since Week 3. This may be the last of the zucchini and pattypan too, they're pretty well infested with powdery mildew at this point. We did mow down the first patch of basil already and it's hard to say if this is the last of the second patch, but it might be.

We've had some great feedback about this new variety of cantaloupe but it has one major flaw. It ripens really slowly. Normally you pretty much pick all of one variety of cantaloupe over the course of 7-10 days. This one, tirenno, takes it's sweet time. Because of this feature there won't be one for everyone this week, if you don't get one you'll get one next week.

Hot serrano peppers are in the box this week along with another green bell. More of the sweet red peppers should be ripe for next week.

Ever larger carrots and garlic round out the first box of September.

Farm News

The weather has continued to be just lovely at the farm. I think this was the nicest August I can remember. Just enough moisture without too much heat and plenty of sunshine.

While Iris and I were doing deliveries last week the crew cranked out a bunch of projects like getting the plastic mulch out of the onion field. It's nice to take any opportunity we get to do cleanup now so that there isn't an insurmountable amount of it going into the fall. They also got all of the tomato plants out of the high tunnel so that we can get it planted with some late spinach and other crops for the winter shares.

I also managed to finally get all of the rest of the prairie mowed, or at least managed to get someone else to do it. Our neighbors Matt and Nate have been helping us out on Wednesdays with the bean and pea picking this year and I got Matt to come over and put in enough time to get it all mowed. They're in 7th and 9th grade though so they'll be heading back to school this week just like our kids.

We spent a good chunk of time on Monday cultivating and weeding some of the late season crops. It looks like we should see arugula coming back next week now that we've gotten it cleaned up and ready to go. I'm still planting late greens in the field but that's going to come to an end here pretty shortly, we've only got about 30 days left until we have less than 10 hours of daylight, after that no matter how warm it is things just don't grow very well.

That means it's time to get all my cover crops planted in the next week or two, so that things can get some good growth on before the winter.

Coming next week: Cabbage, carrots, arugula, tomatoes, peppers, onions, garlic, beets? broccoli?

Pasta with kale, shell beans and sausage

- 8 oz rigatoni or other small tubular pasta
 - 1 bunch kale
 - 1 TB olive oil
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 TB anchovy paste
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
 - 2 cups shelled beans
 - 1/2 cup sliced almonds
 - 8 oz. organic Italian pork sausage, if they have Pastures A
- Plenty sausage at your co-op use it, it's excellent

In a heavy saucepan combine beans with water just to cover and bring to a boil, reduce heat to very low and cook until beans are just tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain, reserve 3/4 cup of the bean liquid.

Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling water, cook pasta according to package directions. Drain.

Remove the thick rib stem of the kale leaf by cutting along either side. Stack the remaining leaves in a pile and roll them tightly into a cylinder. Chop the cylinder of leaves into 1/8 inch strips.

In large skillet, heat oil over high heat. Add the pork sausage and cook until done. Remove the sausage from the pan, turn the heat down to medium-low and add the garlic and cook 2 minutes or until soft. Add anchovy paste and kale leaves, salt, and cayenne and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes or until tender.

Add beans, almonds, cooked sausage and reserved bean liquid, and bring to a boil. Add pasta, toss until heated through, check for seasoning and serve.