



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Herb plants	No	No	Oregano, Sage, Rosemary, Thyme
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf and green leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers, dried	No	No	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	French Breakfast
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	

Welcome to the 2011 season!

Welcome to the first box of the season and our 9th farm season here at Hog's Back Farm. It's always a challenge to switch into harvest mode here on the farm. We spend a lot of time in May working on projects, planting, weeding and getting things ready. Once the shares start we shift to getting most of the farm work done on Mondays and Tuesdays while the harvesting, packing and delivery of the shares takes up most of Wednesday and Thursday. Fridays are when we do everything else that didn't get done earlier, and mow the lawn.

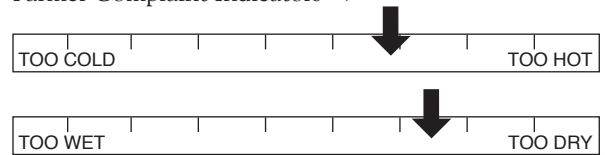
It's also really nice to start getting the veggies out to everyone after working hard on them for the last few months. Timing everything so that it's in great shape to get to you each week is one of the most challenging and rewarding things we do on the farm. I hope everyone enjoys the first efforts of the season.

This is a pretty typical box for the first week around here. The early boxes are known for their salad greens. The lettuces this week are a little immature but not too bad considering the wild weather we've been having. The green leaf is a fairly tough little lettuce, while the red is much more fragile.

Arugula is the tall bunch of spicy tasting greens in the box. We just mix it in with the clean lettuce for our salads, or you can eat it all by itself. One thing we've been enjoying lately is arugula salads with just olive oil and lemon vinegar on. There's something about lemon

Farm Report 6/9/11

Rainfall so far in June0.02"
 High Temperature 98°
 Low Temperature 51°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



that's a great complement to arugula. As a general rule of thumb, the stronger the flavor of the salad green, the better it combines with other strong flavors.

The radishes got a little plus-sized in the heat this week, but are still lovely and tasty. These are a traditional French heirloom radish that's still very common today across the pond. But at breakfast I'd opt for a croissant instead of a radish.

Pea shoots are common in the first couple of boxes at our farm. Cut them a couple of inches above the rubber band and wash them like you would a salad green. They're great in salads, but we mainly make pesto out of them. Nothing tastes quite so fresh and green as some lovely pea shoot pesto. They're also great as an Asian cooked green.

The spinach is doing well this year. We planted plenty since we were so short of it last year. It's nice to have it back.

The scallions are a little small, but they're such a nice fresh taste this time of year that I couldn't resist putting some of them in the box this week. We may let the rest size up a bit.

There's a couple of dried cayenne peppers from last year in the bag with the herbs. They kept so well that I thought it'd be fun to send them out in the first share of this season.

The paper bag has four nice little herb plants grown here on the farm. One each of oregano, thyme, sage, and new this year, rosemary. We started sending these out last year and are keeping it going another year. These are to service your everyday herb needs as we progress through the season. Plant them in large pots,

or in a sunny place in the yard. They'll also all survive the winter except for rosemary. We still plant rosemary in the ground and just dig it up and put it in a pot for the winter. Rosemary plants do best from cuttings so we brought these in as already started plants, the rest were started from seed in the greenhouse. For you gardeners the varieties are German winter thyme, Greek oregano, common sage and Tuscan blue rosemary. You can plant them pot and all, the pot biodegrades and the roots are already grown into it so you probably couldn't get it out if you tried.

I'd love some feedback about the herbs this year and last, whether you killed them off, or if they're flourishing in your yard still. Photos would be awesome.

Farm News

We've been busy as bees around the farm so far this spring with the majority of our planting already done for the season. By no means is it all done. Typically we're still transplanting plants from the greenhouse all through July and seeding greens in the field into September.

It's been hot on the farm the last couple of weeks as it has been everywhere else. Quite a change from most of the month of May. You may wonder how can the lettuce and scallions still be a little small in the box this week? It's all about soil temperatures. Things don't grow in cold soil. Two weeks ago I walked around the farm taking soil temperatures and mostly we were at about 43°, so up until then the plant's roots had essentially been in the fridge. On Wednesday soil temperatures were mostly in the 75-80° range, with the soil under the plastic mulch where the tomatoes are planted at a whopping 93°. The biological life of the soil is quite dormant in the low 40's, as is the availability of many nutrients. As the biological life of the soil takes off so does the nutrient uptake of our plants. So, for the most part, some of the transplants have really only had about 15 days to put any real growth on. And grow they have! Give them ideal conditions and when the soil warms up it's like someone flipped a switch on.

The heat has been mostly welcome at the farm, good timing for the heat loving crops that are getting transplanted now, like tomatoes, peppers, cukes, zucchini and melons. The excessive heat and wind on Tuesday made some of them look pretty sad, but they'll bounce back for the most part in the next few days. The tomatoes are already showing some new growth which is great for them. There's nothing worse than putting in the tomatoes in a cold year and they just sit there trying to hang on until it warms up.

Speaking of tomatoes, our experimental ones in the high tunnel are setting fruit and doing nicely. The high tunnel is our new unheated 2000-square-foot greenhouse which has plants growing in the soil. We're hoping to have some earlier tomatoes out of it, as well as some early cukes. It will also help us control the environment better for them so that hopefully in bad years (like 2010) we can have some assurance that we'll still have a decent tomato crop. It's already survived some very strong winds the last couple of weeks, so that's encouraging.

For the most part crops are looking very nice at the farm thus far this season. We've been able to plant pretty well according to our schedule ever since it finally warmed up in May. The garlic looks phenomenal this year, the onions are finally taking off. Most of the potato varieties are up, and the first pea planting is looking very good. Even the first green beans are up already and growing nicely. Early plantings of beets and carrots look good and I'm guessing that we'll start to see some broccoli in two weeks. By the time you're picking up your share today we will have gotten the winter squash transplanted which is one of the last major things to get out of the greenhouse. The greenhouse is suddenly looking very empty.

One excellent project that got done this wet and cold spring was to have one of our workers (Thanks Kara!) copy all of the recipes from the last eight years out of the newsletters (that's 180 newsletters and about 280 recipes) and put them on our website so that they're searchable by vegetable. They're all available at www.hogsbackfarm.com/recipes. So if you're one of many of us who are looking for a recipe that you made out of the newsletter three years ago but don't remember what month it was in or whatever, now just head to the website and click on the veggie and scroll down until you find it. It's also awesome to have all the recipes for a particular thing in one place, so that you can just click on arugula and see every recipe for it. We're still working out some of the bugs on it so let me know if you have any problems and feel free to leave comments at the bottom of your favorite recipes.

Because of the recipe archive there may be fewer recipes in the newsletter this season. We'll still include them when we have the space and time.

Coming next week: Arugula, radishes, lettuces, scallions, pac choi, rapini, pea shoots, turnips, spinach.