



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Chard	Yes	Plastic	Rainbow
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	Only some boxes
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Romaine, green leaf and butter or red leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar snap
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Strawberries	Yes	No	The rest of the sites
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Hakurei

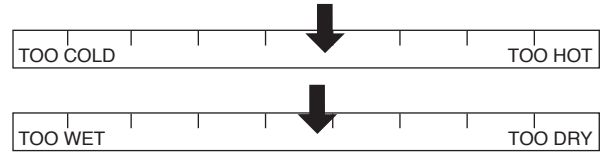
Chard

Chard is one of the favorite crops to pick on the farm, not because it's particularly easy or quick, but because it's the most beautiful. Standing in a field of it and selecting each stem for its color is a feast for the eyes. Each plant has its own unique color, we don't get multiple colors from one plant, so we pick from several plants to get a bunch that has a nice range of color to it. There never seems to be enough yellow, so that you're always looking for just a little yellow to add. My favorite is the very bright pink, almost a fuschia, but some of the oranges are also very nice. They all taste the same, so don't worry about that.

The beautiful colors are not a new fad, multiple colors of chard have been around for a couple thousand years. The interesting colors were lost for many years because they just weren't as productive as the red and white chard. The genetics were still there, however, and large scale chard growers would still get pesky off-types of these beautiful colors in their fields. At some point someone in New Zealand thought it might be a good idea to select for some of these colors and combine them. In order to grow the seed for it they have each color in separate fields and then mix the seed together to come up with a mix of colors.

Farm Report 6/30/11

Rainfall0.42"
 High Temperature 81°
 Low Temperature 51°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



I took this picture of Baker when we were in France just to give you an idea of how wide the French like their chard stems. Most French recipes for chard emphasize the stem so the French have bred it for more stem. Rarely do we see stems in our chard that are more than half Baker's head wide. This was chard they were growing in unheated greenhouses in Provence at Christmastime.

Peas! A nice bag of them is in the box this week. These are the only kind we grow, the sugar snap variety. The pod is edible, just snap off the stem and pull it towards the concaved part of the pea to pull out the string, which is tougher than the rest of the pod. They are the favorite kid food around our house when we have them, just eaten raw. Kids from about 3 years on are excellent pea de-stringers once you train them in. The only problem is getting them not to eat them all while doing it. If you do cook them, just a quick saute until they turn bright green.

The crazy curly things in the box this week are the garlic scapes. The scape is the flower stem of the garlic plant. It needs to be removed so that the plant can put all of its energy into the bulb, but it also just needs to be eaten. Generally the usable part of the scape is everything up to the flower bud. This year they seem to have a stronger garlic flavor than usual, so we've been using them instead of the crappy regular garlic that's in the stores this time of year. You can slice them in to 1" chunks and saute them like green beans, or chop them smaller like a scallion. They're great with eggs, or even throw the whole handful on the grill and turn them until they get a little charred and soft. If you give them a chance they will likely become a favorite.

There should be enough broccoli for everyone this week since the sun finally came out again. This is still our early variety which is always a little funky. You can't really get broccoli this early without it being a little funky. It looks like we'll be starting to pick the nicer stuff next week.

The cucumbers kind of shut off last week with all the cloud cover, so there's not very many of them this week. We'll try and get one to most everyone who didn't get one last week, so if you got one last week you probably won't have one today.

The spinach was much nicer this week so we have two bunches for everyone. It takes quite a while to harvest over 350 bunches of spinach, so much so that it made us run behind all the rest of the day yesterday while harvesting. We'll have more next week but by then it'll be too hot for spinach.

The same can be said for some of the lettuces. Next week we'll be switching to some of the smaller heat-tolerant lettuce varieties. This week we still have some of the spring varieties. There wasn't enough red leaf and butter so you'll either get one or the other. We were also having some wilting problems yesterday so if you get a couple of wilted leaves my apologies. The giant lettuce in the box is romaine. I'm trying a new variety of it this year and so far it's o.k. I was hoping it would head a little more before bolting, but with the hot weather coming these wouldn't have made it to next week.

The turnips are babies this week. I think the seed is planted a little too close together so it keeps them smaller. Nice roots, but the tops are kind of meager and have a couple of yellow leaves. Normally we get most of those off but we were scrambling to get done on Wednesday.

Oh, and there's strawberries for the rest of you who didn't get them last week. We lost an awful lot of them to mold with all that wetness last week, but managed to get enough for the rest of the shares.

Farm News

The clouds finally parted last Friday and ever since we've been busy catching up in the fields. Monday and Tuesday were all-day assaults on weeds. We almost covered the whole farm over the course of those two days, stopping to transplant some late chard and the fall kale. Things are looking pretty good around here now, although I think we'll have to repeat our efforts again next week to really get things cleaned up.

We also finally got the guy over to seed our prairie that we've been prepping for. We're putting in about 40 acres of tall grass prairie around the vegetable fields this year, which thankfully doesn't require a lot of work on my part, we're just hiring it out. The seeder to plant that kind of seed is not a very common one.

Lastly, I wanted to get on my soapbox this week and urge everyone to take a moment today or tomorrow and call your senators to encourage them to support more conservation programs in the FY2012 budget. The house has passed a 2012 budget that guts conservation programs and leaves in place bloated entitlement programs for conventional agriculture. They've also zeroed out funding for local food programs that the USDA has been supporting. And, in my mind, the most egregious wrong is that they've eliminated funding for something called the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, also known by its old acronym ATTRA. You may not be familiar with ATTRA, but if you've ever bought food from a local farmer, like me, than you've bought food from someone who has used their vast pile of information and publications to solve real world problems on the farm. It's the single most functional non-convoluted program that the USDA supports. There would be no resurgence of a local food movement without ATTRA's invaluable expertise and information.

With commodity crop prices at record levels it's just silly that we as taxpayers are subsidizing crop insurance for commodity farmers, and at the same time pulling the plug on so many valuable programs to preserve and protect our resources. Urge your senators to drop the funding for the subsidized crop insurance instead of gutting conservation. The commodity crop farmers have more than enough resources to subsidize their own insurance when prices are so high. Thanks.