

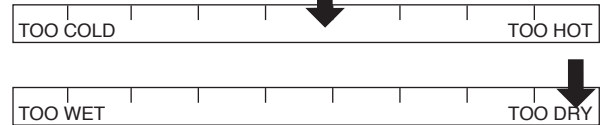


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	Yummy!
Cauliflower	Yes	Plastic	Not all boxes
Garlic	No	No	
Onions	No	No	Yellow and red
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Sweet carmens and/or bell pepper and jalapeños
Salad Mix	Yes	Plastic	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Winter Squash	No	No	Butternut, delicata and sugar dumpling

### Farm Report 9/26/12

Rainfall . . . . . 0.00"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 74°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 34°  
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



which are annuals.

The tops of the fall carrots are always very nice and they are edible, you can find recipes for them online. But honestly I think their best use is on the compost pile. We remove the tops and compost them before putting the carrots in a plastic bag in the fridge.

I was hoping that everyone would get cauliflower this week, but the cool nights have slowed it down considerably. It also has been hard to keep watered in the dry windy weather. To compensate for a lack of cauliflower in some boxes there's extra broccoli and a late season eggplant.

The fall broccoli continues to be nice. We've had some cooler weather which makes the heads a darker green to almost purple. It also sweetens up the flavor, if one can really think of broccoli as 'sweet'.

The squash this week is much nicer than the dumb acorn we had last week. Maybe I should've just composted them. Anyway enjoy the butternut and delicata this week. They matured nicely and some of the butternut are quite large, which can happen in a hot year. There's another sugar dumpling in the box as well. Squash store best on the kitchen counter or in a cool, dry place.

We had a big pepper pick at the end of last week ahead of the (supposed) frost. Actually there wasn't that much left on the plants since they've kind of run their course. We picked a lot of jalapeños and some bell peppers and carmens. Since we didn't get much of a frost we may still have a few more to come.

Tasty salad greens, arugula and spinach round out the box along with onions and garlic.

### Carrots!

Finally we have some decent carrots this year. As someone who prides myself on our carrots it's been an off year for them. Just when you think you have some of this stuff nailed down you get crazy weather that reminds you that just because you know what to do, nature has other ideas.

We took a bit of a gamble with the late season carrots and waited until after some of the hottest weather was over in July before planting them. Typically I plant these late season carrots the first week of July. They were slow to emerge in the hot weather and I was a little concerned that if we had a cool September we might not get them to size up by the end of the season. But that has turned out not to be the case. The main challenge has ended up being keeping them supplied with water as the drought deepens.

Everyone knows that carrots are good for you and high in beta-carotene, but only 3% of the beta-carotene is released in digestion when eaten raw, while cooked carrots release 39% of the beta-carotene. In early use carrots were grown for their aromatic leaves and seeds, not their roots. They still have many cousins who are grown for this purpose, parsley, dill, cilantro and fennel. Carrots have retained their historic tradition of being a biennial plant, it doesn't flower and set seed until it's second year of growth, unlike dill and cilantro

## Farm News

The frost that I was looking forward to on Saturday night never really materialized here at the farm. It was kind of surprising considering there was a freeze warning as far south as Des Moines that night. We did have a little frost right down at ground level, but the peppers, tomatoes, and flowering buckwheat were all fine. The main reason I was hoping for a frost was to kill the buckwheat. Once it starts flowering it sets seed fairly rapidly and then can become a weed. A good frost kills it off and then it can sit there all winter. With no frost and two weeks of warm weather in the forecast we went ahead and disked it in so that it didn't get a chance to set seed. Too bad, though because it would've been pretty for the pumpkin day.

The threat of frost kept us busy nonetheless. Friday we brought in all the rest of the winter squash and got it safely tucked into the greenhouse to continue to cure. Winter squash keeps better if it has some warm temperatures after it's harvested to help the skins toughen up. Sunlight helps as well, but since we're a little short on squash this year I thought it was better to get it safely out of the field than gamble on it staying out in the frost just so it could get some more sunny days.

The weather has continued to be very dry. In fact it's just getting worse with each passing week. I can't ever remember running irrigation this much in September. This will go down on record as the first year that I've ever had a complete failure of a cover crop, my winter oats and peas, because we never got a rain to germinate it. And I refuse to irrigate a cover crop, especially one that's planted on 6 acres or so. Luckily it's a fairly easy one to kill with tillage in case it decides to take off like gangbusters in the spring.

Thankfully by the middle of this week we started to get some calm weather, the hardest part for this whole month is that the wind never seemed to calm down long enough to irrigate. Since the wind dropped off on Tuesday we've pretty much been irrigating nonstop. It may seem silly to irrigate this late in the year, but with what looks like a warm dry week next week without more moisture things are just not going to continue to grow.

This week we've been continuing with cleanup projects ahead of schedule. Since the fields we're in this year are up by the buildings I'm not too nervous about late season deer pressure, so we went ahead and took down the deer fence early. That way it's out of the way for the hay wagons on Pumpkin Day.

We've also been doing a lot to get ready for Pumpkin Day. Iris and I spent a bunch of time this weekend making a maze in the quarter-acre of sorghum/sudan-grass that's up by the barn. It was actually quite a bit of work, but we had fun doing it (mostly), and I think it ended up pretty cool. The kids will have fun running around in there, although adults are welcome too! In fact I'd probably want to accompany my kid if they were younger than 5 just because even though it's only a quarter-acre, you can get kind of lost in there, and in some places the sorghum is a good 7 feet tall.

We also got all the pumpkins clipped from the vines and stood up and inventoried. We had some of the same pest issues in the pumpkins that we had in the squash, but there should still be plenty for everyone. They're all a little smaller this year, and there aren't as many pretty decoration ones as usual.

It's also looking like we'll be at peak fall color this weekend so everyone should have a beautiful drive down to the farm!

Next week is the last week of the regular season share! It seems like it's coming too soon but then I guess Monday is October 1st, it's just the weather that makes it seem like winter is still a long way off.

**Coming next week:** Broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, salad mix, garlic, squash, carrots, kale, maybe Brussels sprouts, they've been slow to grow in the drought.

## Winter Squash Braised In Cider

- 3 pounds delicata or butternut squash
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary
- 3 cups unfiltered apple or pear cider
- Salt
- 1 teaspoon balsamic or apple cider vinegar, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper

Peel squash, halve lengthwise, and remove seeds with spoon. If using delicata, slice into half-moons 1/2-inch thick; if using butternut, dice into 1/2-inch chunks.

Melt butter in a 12-inch skillet over low heat until foamy. Add rosemary, and cook over medium heat to flavor butter, stirring frequently, about 2 minutes. Add squash, cider, and 1 teaspoon salt. If squash is not covered by cider, add water to cover.

Bring to a simmer, and cook until squash is tender and cider has reduced to a glaze, stirring frequently, 30 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle with vinegar, and season with salt and pepper. Transfer to warm serving bowl, and serve immediately.