



Hog's Back Almanac

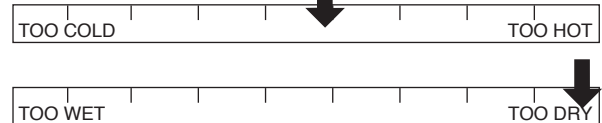
Week 18 October 4, 2012

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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cauliflower	Yes	Plastic	
Cilantro	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	A sweet carmen and serranos
Salad Mix	Yes	Plastic	
Shallots	No	No	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Winter Squash	No	No	Butternut and Delicata

Farm Report 10/4/12

Rainfall 0.00"
 High Temperature 78°
 Low Temperature 37°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



This is the
LAST WEEK
 of the regular season share. The
 winter shares begin next Thursday,
October 11 at the same pickup sites
 and times. Please make sure everyone
 in your group knows this. Thanks.

Week 18!

It's the last go round for the regular summer shares this week. 2012 has been a good season, I think the biggest problem with the 2012 season was the mild winter that preceded it. Mild winters have a way of harboring pests and diseases that would otherwise perish in the frigid weather. It was also a very warm year, going down as one of the warmest on record. The continued mild weather with a continued pattern of widely variable amounts of rain is something I'm concerned about for the coming years.

We had a stellar time at the Pumpkin Day last Saturday, I'm not sure if we made it to 200 people but if we didn't it was awfully close. I was a little nervous there wouldn't be enough pumpkins, but there's always more than you realize. It was great to talk to folks, and find out what they enjoyed this season. A few diehards even went out to try and find just a couple more tomatoes trying to prolong the summer. As the sun set, the harvest full moon was rising over the barn, and the ditchlillies serenaded us on the dusty grass. The potluck was massive, I wish I had seen the spread before folks started digging in, that's a photo for next year. By the time I went through you had to get halfway down the table to find anything that wasn't scraped clean.

The new attractions of crop art and sorghum maze were very well received, although the maze seemed to have quite a few more paths in it than it did the day before. If your child left their crop art masterpiece behind we've enshrined it on the wall of the packing shed until next year. The fire pit was delightful as the moon rose, it's so rare up here on the hill that the air is still enough that you can sit on any side of the fire and not get smoke in your eyes. Considering how many people were here it went very smoothly and was a wonderful evening. Thanks to everyone who came and made it such a success. A big thanks too goes out to my neighbor, Rick Traun, for lending me a couple of larger hay wagons which makes the hay ride go a lot smoother. Thanks also to my crew, Jesse, Cody and Heather for helping get it all up and running which leaves me more time to talk to people. It was fun to see cars parked almost all the way out to the stop sign.

With the passing of the Pumpkin Day it's time for the last box of the regular season share. In most years we put a Brussels sprout stalk in the box, but the continued dry weather has really slowed their growth this year and they're just in a spot that doesn't get irrigated

as often as it should which retards their growth. So, regretfully, there's a pretty puny bag of them in each box, just enough to have a side dish without leftovers. It just wasn't worth picking the whole stalks of them this year.

Everyone will get broccoli and cauliflower in the box this week. The fall broccoli has been nice to have for the last five weeks. The cauliflower finally sized up nicely in the last week of continued warm weather. The heads are heavy and dense and delicious.

Joining the other brassicas in the box is another bunch of the lacinato kale. We made our usual large bowls of our favorite kale salad for the pumpkin day and it's always a crowd pleaser.

Another crowd pleaser Melinda always makes is some of our carrot dip that we love. When you end up having as many carrots around as we do you have to find something to do with them. I can only eat so many raw. Her carrot dip recipe is below.

The arugula and spinach are lovely this week. It's been a nice fall for the arugula. When we never get any rain it looks very perfect. I'd actually rather have the rain myself. The spinach has finally gotten some cooler weather so it's started to toughen up and sweeten.

Usually we just grow shallots for the winter share boxes but they were so nice this year that I thought we'd get some of them in the summer share boxes. Use them just like you would onions. They can be pungent when cutting them up raw, but cooked they are milder and delicious.

The squash this week is more delicata and butternut. Butternut is about the only squash that is easily peeled and cubed to use in a stir-fry or roasted in cubes on a cookie sheet.

Another bag of lettuce, garlic, a few peppers and one late-season bunch of cilantro round out the last box of the regular season.

Farm News

When the pumpkin day is done we breathe a bit of a collective sigh of relief around the farm and start to get ready for the winter in earnest. It's time to start bringing in the rest of the storage root crops like the carrots and beets if they're ready. The weather could change rapidly anytime this time of year so it's better to not be caught by surprise. As illustrated by the 15 inches of snow they're talking about in Northwestern Minnesota this week!

Monday started out with pumpkin day cleanup. It really wasn't too bad. Some of the genius children (including my own) at the end of the night decided to have a fight in the barn with the peas from the crop art table and, honestly, I spent more time sweeping up peas than doing anything else.

With that completed we went back into cleanup mode on the farm. Even though we haven't had much of a frost it was time for the tomato cages to come off and get trucked down to the fields where the tomatoes will be next year. It's kind of a long, slow job, but it was more pleasant this year because without much frost the tomatoes were not completely rotten and stinky.

The pumpkin and squash field got cleaned up and disked in as best as we could in the very dry conditions. The lack of moisture slows down any microbial action in the soil. That action breaks down plant matter so that the bugs don't have anywhere to overwinter. Without additional moisture I wonder if it will add to a difficult pest year next year.

A big thanks goes out to all of you for supporting our farm for another year. Voting with your food dollars to support our farm is a meaningful way to create the kind of food system you want to see in the world. Thanks also go out to Melinda and the kids for their unfailing support of our farming endeavors, I couldn't do it without them!

Remember this is the last pickup week for the regular season shares. Thanks for another great season everyone!
-David Van Eeckhout

Melinda's Carrot Purée

This is a common fall dish at our house that my wife came up with, it's a great use for extra carrots. It's kind of like carrot humus without tahini, we eat it on crackers but it's also a good sandwich spread.

3 cups carrots diced into 3/4-inch chunks
4 cloves garlic, peeled
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
salt to taste

Toss the carrots and garlic with the olive oil and spread out in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Roast them at 375° until the carrots are tender and 20% of the carrots have started to caramelize and turn a golden brown. Remove from the oven and puree in a food processor until smooth, adding more olive oil if needed. Salt to taste. Spread on toast, crackers or just eat it by the spoonful.