

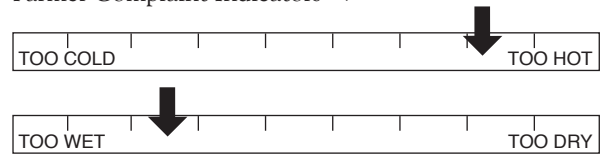


What's in the box and where does it go?

| | Fridge? | Bag? | Notes & Varieties |
|---------------|---------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Arugula | Yes | Plastic | |
| Collards | Yes | Plastic | |
| Cucumbers | Yes | Plastic | |
| Garlic Scapes | Yes | Plastic | |
| Lettuce | Yes | Plastic | Romaine and red leaf or red butter |
| Scallions | Yes | Plastic | |
| Pea Shoots | Yes | Plastic | |
| Radishes | Yes | Plastic | Cheriette |
| Spinach | Yes | Plastic | |
| Turnips | Yes | Plastic | Hakurei |

Farm Report 6/21/12

Rainfall 5.04"
 High Temperature 93°
 Low Temperature 58°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



The spinach had quite a bit of damage so we tried to make fairly large bunches so that there's plenty of undamaged leaves in a bunch.

The lettuce is in the same boat, there is damage there, but you should be able to find plenty to use, especially if you don't leave it in the crisper until next Thursday. I should also just note that this has been a terrible year for lettuce. Hopefully it hasn't been too apparent on your end, but here on the farm we're leaving more lettuce in the field than we're harvesting. The heat is not kind to lettuce, which likes cool spring conditions. Not only does the lettuce plant in general not like heat, but wet and hot conditions create a perfect incubator for all of the rust and rot diseases that lettuce is susceptible to.

The other, even more pernicious problem this year is an incredible population of leafhoppers. Leafhoppers are quite a common insect that plagues everything from carrots to lettuce to alfalfa to potatoes. They feed on the plants by piercing the leaf with their tiny proboscis. The feeding can cause a problem in potatoes called 'hopper burn' where you have so much feeding that the leaves get a stippling on them. For lettuce and carrots, however, the issue is not the feeding of the hoppers but a disease that they transmit from one plant to another. What we see on the lettuce and carrots is the aster leafhopper and it transmits a disease called aster yellows. Aster yellows causes both carrots and lettuce to grow deformed, we almost always see a few here and there with the problem, but this year we've rejected well over a thousand heads of lettuce with this problem. We also should be delivering escarole this week and next, but all 500 of those heads have been a total loss to aster yellows. Unfortunately there really

Rain

The good news is that we've taken a break from irrigating this week. The rain started with the share deliveries last week and has barely stopped since. It has certainly put us behind in some respects, but has also brought ample water to some things that were continually short on it. The bigger problem is the weather-who-must-not-be-named. The storms that streaked through here on Tuesday at about 5am brought some unwelcome frozen bits of rain. Hint: it starts with an H and rhymes with mail. I do not like to speak of it. There is nothing that we fear more than the weather-who-must-not-be-named. Virtually everything in the box this week shows some damage from said weather.

The spinach and lettuce are the most fragile and show the most damage, although it could have been much worse. I was listening very closely and I don't think we had more than one minute of H. We had to scramble this week for harvesting to find crops that were less damaged than others. Even with our efforts there will be holes in leaves in many things this week.

These holes represent an opening for decay and disease in the leaves. Consequently things in the box this week will not keep as long as our standard offerings. I know it's a tall order to suggest you eat everything right away, but I would wash and sort out damaged leaves to the lettuce and spinach in the next couple of days to keep them in good quality.

is no organic control for this. I only hope that things balance out and improve going forward. It has the potential to be a major problem for our carrots this year.

O.k., enough about that. The arugula looks nice this week since we had it covered like we always do. The radishes were also under the same cover so they were both spared any real damage. One might ask why we don't cover more things like the lettuce and spinach. A couple of reasons, first of which is that they really don't like the extra heat that the covers provide, and secondly, the leaf edges of spinach and lettuce are incredibly fragile. Having them covered during the storm might spare them some damage from stuff falling from the sky, but by the time the cover was done being whipped against the plants by the wind the edges of the leaves it would be worse than if it hadn't been covered at all.

The turnips are looking good. There may be a few holes in the leaves, but the roots are perfect. We find that turnip greens are one of our favorite greens in the springtime.

Tougher greens, like the collards, can endure quite a bit of abuse and still come out looking great. The collards have been growing like weeds and some of the leaves are just huge. It was raining off and on while we were picking these and some could almost double as umbrellas. The leaves are quite tender, use them as you would kale or other cooking greens, but remember to remove the coarse ribs.

Another cuke or two from the high tunnel is in the box. Lately we just slice them into a bowl with a little salt and a splash of sherry vinegar and let the kids gobble them up.

The last of the scapes and more scallions are in the box this week. One of my favorite uses of scapes is to saute 1-inch pieces lightly and then sprinkle them on the top of homemade pizza.

The storms came back with a vengeance at the end of the day on Wednesday when we were harvesting the pea shoots. My apologies if you get a bunch that looks like it was made very quickly, which in all likelihood, it was. The rain started hammering the trees a half a mile to the west and that was our final warning to get out of the field, now!

Farm News

Well you already know that the news is the weather that had us jumping all week. Hopefully we're on our way out of this pattern and we can begin to dry out

and clean up. There is a massive amount of weeding to do now that things have been hot and wet. It's very unusual for us to get 5 inches of rain in a week, total precipitation for the month of June averages around 4 inches, and we fared better than some farms. Gardens of Eagan down in Farmington received over 10 inches of rain this week, meanwhile the farms down around Viroqua, WI didn't get a drop and are painfully dry.

The timing of the rain was perfect for our potato crop. Potatoes want 'field capacity' when they're in the tuber formation phase of their growth. Field capacity is another way of saying 'all the water that the field can hold without ponding. The potato fields were already looking quite good, and this rain should help them set a good number of tubers. They also are a little ahead of their usual schedule so we should see them in the shares a little early this year, maybe week 5? Thankfully I've kept ahead of the weeds and gotten them hilled a couple of times already.

The onions and garlic also appreciate ample water this time of year when they're switching over from their vegetative growth stage to bulbing. The onions did sustain quite a bit of damage with the Monday storms and we may see a reduction in their size, but it shouldn't be too dramatic.

We tromped around the mud on Tuesday putting the tomato cages on for the year. They grow so rapidly under these hot moist conditions that the cages really couldn't wait. It was a blessing that they really hadn't set any fruit yet, since the H word is brutal to fruit. Almost every plant did have a shoot that had been broken off by the storm.

Coming next week: Arugula, peas, spinach, lettuce, scallions, turnips, broccoli, collards or kale, cukes.

Collard ribbons with Sesame

- 1 large bunch collards, stems removed, washed and cut into 1/4-inch strips, stack 5 or 6 leaves at a time to make this easier.
- 2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon peanut or safflower oil
- 2 teaspoons Asian sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon chili flakes
- 1 garlic clove minced
- 2 teaspoons sherry or cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Combine collards in a very wide deep skillet with water, molasses, salt and oils. Bring to a boil, twisting greens with tongs or turning with spatula until wilted. Cover and boil until collards are tender but still chewy, about 15 minutes. Uncover and add chili flakes and garlic. Raise heat and boil, stirring often, until liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add vinegar gradually to taste, sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.