

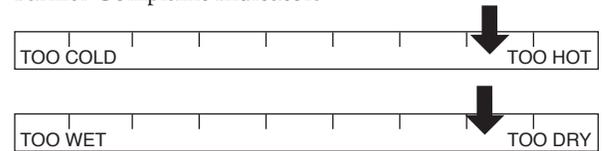


What's in the box and where does it go?

| | Fridge? | Bag? | Notes & Varieties |
|-------------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| Basil | No | Plastic | |
| Beets | Yes | Plastic | Red w/tops |
| Broccoli | Yes | Plastic | or Eggplant |
| Carrots | Yes | Plastic | First of the year! |
| Celery | Yes | Plastic | |
| Cucumbers | Yes | Plastic | |
| Dill | Yes | Plastic | |
| Fennel | Yes | Plastic | |
| Garlic | No | No | |
| Green Beans | Yes | Plastic | First of the year! |
| Onions | Yes | Plastic | Walla walla |
| Scallions | Yes | Plastic | |
| Sweet Corn | Yes | Plastic | |
| Tomatoes | No | No | |
| Zucchini | Yes | Plastic | Green or gold |

Farm Report 7/19/12

Rainfall0.76"
 High Temperature 95°
 Low Temperature 68°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



The box is kind of overflowing again this week. It's been a hard year to pace things well. I'll repeat my warning that we may have some less bountiful boxes in late July/early August because things are maturing at an alarming rate and at some point there's going to be a gap. That's not this week, though!

Where to start...The first green beans of the year are in the boxes today. The potato leafhopper which is attacking our potato plants is also a big fan of green beans. Consequently these beans are not perfection, but I was wondering whether we'd get any off these plants at all, so we'll take it.

Also new to the box this week are some nice early onions. These are the Walla Walla variety, but won't be as sweet as the real deal. Just treat them like a nice yellow onion. They're fresh and juicy and make great caramelized onions. Normally we deliver the first ones of these in a bunch with the tops, but the heat had matured them to the point that they were all ready to harvest this week, so we topped them.

The last newbie to the box this week are the carrots. It's always nice to get back to fresh carrots and away from ones that have been in storage forever. The heat has made them not as sweet as I'd like, but it's still great to finally have some for the box.

The tomatoes in the high tunnel outdid themselves this week, we picked over 1200 of them so everyone should have 7 in their boxes. I think this week and next will be the peak weeks for the high tunnel tomatoes, then we'll start seeing some coming in from the field where we're just starting to see the first one or two ripen.

The Heat Goes On

It's turning out to be a record setting for heat on many levels around here. Until yesterday we'd had 21 days in a row at 85° or above and it's been getting a little unbearable at the farm. I think one of the best things about eating seasonally is the abundance that comes certain times of the season and you eat that thing until you're sick of it. I think the seasonality of the weather isn't much different. I generally don't mind working in the heat, as long as there isn't anything too strenuous that takes all day. But after a while I do get sick of it. Tuesday afternoon was particularly unbearable, it was 94° most of the afternoon, dead calm and very humid. You couldn't change your mind without sweating.

When I do get sick of the heat I try and remember a couple of things. For the most part, it's great for the crops. It's very rewarding to see the things you've planted and tended growing very rapidly, it's as close to instant gratification as we get in this business. The other thing is how wonderful it feels when the weather breaks. It's like the first 50° day in the spring. That's what's been weird about this stretch of weather, it really hasn't broken. Other than our beautiful day yesterday it doesn't look like it's breaking soon.

The tail end of the spring broccoli is in the box this week, there wasn't enough of it of decent quality, so you may get an eggplant instead since there were a few early ones ready.

More lovely beets this week. If you get behind on them just ditch the tops and keep the roots, which will store for weeks in a plastic bag in the crisper. These weren't all supposed to be ready at the same time either, but we're trying to use them up before they get too big. We'll see another bunch of them next week.

We're starting to see some of the zucchini numbers decline as we see some pest damage taking it's toll. They should limp along for a few more weeks yet.

The field cucumbers have finally replaced the high tunnel cukes in the majority. The ones that are more pointed and less smooth are an old variety called Marketmore 76 which I've always thought has better flavor than the fancy newer hybrids, but takes longer to mature.

This will be it on the fennel crop, it held up remarkably well in the heat this year and is only starting to bolt to seed a tiny bit this week. The celery hasn't held up quite as well and I'm not sure if we'll end up picking any more because of the bug damage.

Basil, scallions, dill and more nice garlic round out this week's offerings.

Farm News

With the heat comes a lot of work to be done at the farm. Thankfully we did receive a couple of nice showers over the weekend which gave us about 3/4 of an inch of rain. Every little bit of water helps right now, but with the high temperatures we're still irrigating every chance we get.

We've begun the slow transition from planting to harvesting, and this week barely had any time for weeding which is reaching crisis proportions in some fields. The heat makes weeds like foxtail, pigweed and lamb's quarters grow unbelievably fast. So much so that a one hour project can quickly turn into an all-day chore. The foxtail and pigweed are just starting to try and set seed which accelerates their growth even without a lot of heat.

The weeds take a back seat when there's garlic and onions to harvest. Monday was mostly spent finishing up the garlic harvest and getting it all hung up to cure in the greenhouse. Tuesday was busy with harvesting all of the Walla Wallas and the tomatoes from the high

tunnel. And every day right now has time in it for cucumber and zucchini harvesting. We also managed to find some time on Tuesday to get a large planting of fall cabbages, broccoli and the last of the cauliflower in the ground. We're getting very close to being done with transplanting for the year!

The cover crop of sorghum-sudangrass that I planted in last year's veggie fields is going crazy. It's a heat loving, drought-tolerant crop that turned out to be a great choice for this year. We seeded it on June 25th and it's already 3-feet tall. In another week or so we'll mow it down to about a foot to keep it from getting unmanageable, left to it's own devices it can reach heights of 10 feet. It will continue regrowing sending it's roots deeper and deeper to loosen the soil. The mowed residue will settle to the surface and create organic matter to feed the soil, while the roots will regrow and add organic matter below ground. It's also very frost-sensitive so it will keep building the soil until the first hard freeze puts it to bed for the winter. Even then it will continue to help out by holding the soil in place until things warm up and dry out in the spring.

Coming next week: Basil, beets, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, carrots, garlic, potatoes, sweet corn.

Roasted Beet and Fennel Salad

- 3 beets, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges (1 1/2 pounds)
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 fennel bulbs with fronds—bulbs cut into 1/2-inch wedges,
- 1 tablespoon chopped fennel fronds
- 1 teaspoon sherry vinegar

Preheat the oven to 400°. In a medium baking dish, toss the beets with the thyme, the water and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and cook for about 40 minutes, or until tender. Let cool slightly. Discard the thyme.

In a small baking dish, drizzle the fennel wedges with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until tender and lightly browned. Pour the beet juices into a bowl and whisk in the vinegar. Add the beets, fennel wedges and fronds and season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.