

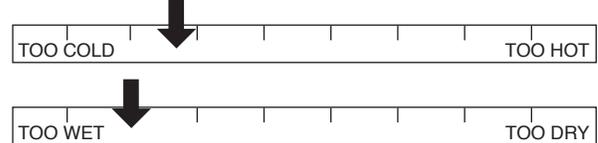


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Asparagus or Green Garlic	Yes	Plastic	One small bunch of either, not both
Herb Plants	No	No	German Thyme, Greek Oregano, Common Sage, Rosemary
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Green Leaf, Red Leaf and/or Butter
Pac Choi	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 6/6/13

Rainfall0.37"
 High Temperature 69°
 Low Temperature 46°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



gives you an idea of how far we are behind this year. The 30-year average would put us at about 550 GDD by now. We'd need about 10 days in a row with an 80 degree high and a 60 degree in order to get almost caught up to normal. I think the sun will need to come out before that can happen.

This is why we find ourself with a box that is missing some of our normal spring goodness, like radishes, pea shoots, spinach and turnips. I have never seen things grow so slowly. Amazingly we have mostly kept on schedule with our plantings, but the crops are like the kids in the Cat in the Hat out there, all they can do is just sit, sit, sit, sit, and we do not like it, not one little bit.

I also should caution that it's going to take more than a nice day or two for things to catch up in the field. The beautiful lettuce this week came out of a protected environment. Next week it has to come from the field, and will be roughly half this size. We will get there, but it's going to take some time.

So what is in the box?

Let's start with the lettuce. Back in May when we had 12 inches of snow on the ground, I thought maybe we should think about transplanting the first round of lettuce in our high tunnel since we couldn't get into the field. So on May 3rd we transplanted the lettuce in there on either side of the tomatoes, while there was still snow on the ground in places. The lettuce in your box this week is everything that was in the high tunnel. It matured very nicely in there, although rapid protected growth makes greens very fragile, like the hothouse flower. Hopefully we can get it to you without diminishing it's beauty too much. We only had

Welcome

Welcome to the 2013 season here at Hog's Back Farm. I'm sure it won't come as a surprise that the bounty for this first week is somewhat limited. What a wild spring we've had. To put it in perspective I thought I'd explain something called Growing Degree Days.

Degree Days are tracked by farmers and the weather forecasters, as well as the utility companies. There are Heating Degree Days in the winter, Cooling Degree Days in the summer that you may see on your electric bill. Growing Degree Days are similar, they are a way to track how much cumulative heat we've had during the growing season. The way that we calculate GDD are to take the average daily temperature and subtract 50. So if we have a high of 80 and a low of 60 we have an average temp for the day of 70, minus 50 and we get 20 GDD for that particular day.

The reason why it's important to watch GDD is that insects and pests only emerge after a certain number of GDD. Also crops can only mature after enough GDD as well. Even if the packet of lettuce seed says it matures in 46 days, it won't if we haven't had enough GDD. Obviously the day length has an effect on maturity too, but we have plenty of day length this time of year.

To date in 2013 we've accumulated about 394 GDD, as compared with 745 in 2012 by this time. In fact, we'd accumulated the same number of degree days by May 10th last year. Last year was unusually warm, but it still

so much room in the high tunnel, so we were a little short of butter and green leaf, so some of you may get two red leaf instead. The lettuce should be fairly clean since it's been in a covered environment, but other items in the box will show more of the mud that has been so much a part of our world this spring.

The arugula comes from the field, it was planted as early as we could get a tractor in the field 5 weeks ago, prior to the foot of snow. I almost always put in an early planting of arugula just in case, and normally it goes to seed before the shares begin and we never harvest it. Well, this year it's still a little on the small size! I'm glad we have it though. If only I had put in some radishes at the same time, they went in a week later and still aren't ready.

The pac choi also usually goes in the ground a little later but this year it went in on one of our frenzied days of activity which followed many wet cold days. It also turned out to be good timing so that it was a nice size for today.

Asparagus is kind of a bonus. We have a fairly large household asparagus patch on the farm which isn't really meant for commercial production. But it started so late this year, and has been quite productive that I thought I'd at least try and get a little out of it for the shares. Unfortunately, there won't be enough for everyone, and those who do get it will only have a half pound. Since we didn't have enough we harvested some green garlic for those of you who didn't get asparagus. Use the green garlic like you would a garlicky scallion. Although it is tougher so should be cooked. I'm sorry we can't have both of these items for everyone, but we are doing the best we can with the conditions this year.

Lastly are our herb plants for your garden. These are organic transplants grown here on the farm in our greenhouse. The rosemary is a slow grower, so since we start them from seed, they're still quite small. believe it or not they were started 11 weeks ago. The pots that most of them come in are peat based pots that can be planted directly into the ground. We ran out of these when we got to the rosemary, so some of them will be in recycled small yogurt containers, re-use! All herbs like full sun and well-drained soil. Don't overwater them, most of them are Mediterranean, so some dry spells suit them and intensify their flavor.

Farm News

The continued cool, wet, dark weather is the biggest news item around the farm. It has been a frustrating

year to be a grower. The season hasn't had any real opportunity to get into any sort of a groove. I think we've only had 12 days so far this year that we could get into the field to work with equipment. What that has meant is that we wait for a window of opportunity and then crank out as much as we possibly can. More than once this year I've found myself seeding in the dark at the end of a long day with the tractor lights on. As a general rule I don't like to have to use the lights, but this year I've had no choice.

Monday this week was a good example. After a sunny day on Sunday we were able to hit the ground running on Monday. By 9am we were transplanting this year's field tomatoes, to be followed closely by peppers, eggplant, watermelon, canteloupe, lettuce, scallions and fennel. Without any real rain Monday night we were able start right up where we left off on Tuesday with all the winter squash and celery but by noon it was raining pretty steadily.

I really would've like to get in and do some cultivating before that rain, but better to get the plants in the ground. As it is we've done a pretty good job of keeping the weeds at bay given the circumstances. The next round of dry weather we get will definitely be more about weeding and less about planting. We aren't quite at a rescue situation, but we're getting close.

Sesame-Soy-Glazed Pac Choi

- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons chicken stock or canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 1 lb pac choi, coarsely chopped
- 3 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
- 2 medium scallions, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted in a small dry skillet over medium heat until lightly browned and fragrant, about 4 minutes

Combine soy sauce, stock, vinegar, sesame oil, and sugar in small bowl. Heat large nonstick skillet over high heat until hot, about 2 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons peanut oil, swirl to coat pan bottom. Place bok choy in skillet, cut-side down, in single layer. Cook, without moving, until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Turn bok choy and cook until lightly browned on second side, about 1 minute longer; transfer to large, warm platter.

Add garlic, ginger, and scallions to now-empty pan and drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon peanut oil. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 20 seconds. Add soy sauce mixture and simmer until reduced and thickened, about 20 seconds. Return bok choy to pan and cook, turning once, until glazed with sauce, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve immediately.