

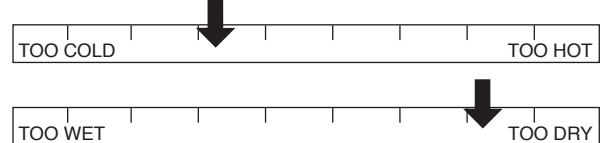


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Celery	Yes	Plastic	
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Green leaf or red
Onions	Yes	Plastic	Fresh
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell or an Eggplant
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	!
Tomatoes	No	No	First of the year
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 8/1/13

Rainfall0.31"
 High Temperature 77°
 Low Temperature 47°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



the equivalent of about 10 80° days, which we seem to have trouble getting right now.

This is the latest I can remember getting sweet corn in years. We don't grow sweet corn on our farm for various reasons. Instead we buy it from Dan and Tammy Sam who grow vegetables and strawberries southeast of us about 5 miles. They are not organic, so the sweet corn in your box is conventionally grown. Dan makes sure to only grow standard hybrid sweet corn for us, so it is not genetically modified. Dan is an excellent hard-working grower, he and Tammy pick almost all of the corn themselves. They pick it Thursday morning for us so that it as fresh as can be for our boxes. I'd encourage you to eat it the day you get it, why let it take up space in your fridge? We'll have it for the next several weeks.

Fennel is also new to the box this week. It's another flavor of summer. These are small, tender bulbs which aren't in the ground long enough to get tough and woody. We enjoy most of it raw, thinly sliced in salads. It is such a nice crunchy treat. It also lends itself to cooking, slow braising in some liquid gives it an almost celery-like flavor. It also shines cooked quickly on the grill. A handful of the tops in two cups of boiling water plus a little honey makes a great digestive tea. Prometheus stole fire from the gods by hiding it in a hollow fennel stalk, but I'm not sure I would try that in your kitchen.

Speaking of celery, we continue to harvest our rather large celery planting. We had some cooked with a roasted chicken the other night and left it in big chunks and it was great. It might be really nice to combine with the fennel. I still think my favorite use for it is tuna or chicken salad.

Summer boxes

It's taken until August 1st, but the boxes are starting to finally feel more like summer. What could be more summer-like than tomatoes and corn. O.k., it's only one tomato, and it may be a little unripe and small, but, hey, it's a tomato. To illustrate the difference between this year and last year, by this time last year we'd already had 20 tomatoes in the boxes. Of course, last year was a record tomato year. I think this will be a below-average tomato year, as are most years where you get 12" of snow in May.

The tomatoes this week are the first picking out of the high tunnel. There's a lot of fruit in there, but it's been slow to ripen, and the cool weather we've had the last week or so hasn't done much to speed them up. I don't see a deluge of tomatoes anywhere on the horizon. The field tomatoes continue to look like it's about the first week of July. There's some fruit on them, and even a bit ripening. I talked a little about degree days as a measure of how much cumulative heat we've had, and when I looked at it last week I noticed that we're almost 500 degree days behind last year, and about 200 behind normal for this time of year. 200 degree days is

The cooler weather is also keeping some other heat loving crops at bay. The eggplant look great this year, but the fruits are slow to size up, so we only had about 50 of them large enough this week, the rest of the boxes will have the first green bell pepper of the year.

Cukes and zukes slowed down a bit too on the cold cloudy weekend, but there's still plenty to enjoy in the box.

The carrots continue to soldier on, they're not our wonderful fall carrots, but the good news is that the fall carrot plantings are looking very nice and will be here before you know it.

The first of the later season brassica crops is in the box with the Lacinato kale. This is great weather for growing these crops which don't like it particularly hot.

Oh, I almost forgot about the onions! The first real onions are in the box this week. These are a sweet walla-walla-type onion, although more pungent than a true walla walla would be. The onions are just getting sized up, and are a few weeks behind schedule like so many things. We had some problems with our onion transplants this spring and the cold weather. Consequently we're going to be a little lean on onions this year and the size of them will be down. You only have so many days to grow an onion, and if it stays cool too long in the spring it's almost impossible to get them to size up nicely. They are sensitive to daylength, so they don't just take however many days they need to mature, they take the length of the day into account, and mature whether or not they've reached a large size.

Another small bag of green beans, more scallions and a last parting shot of lettuce round out this week's harvest from the fields.

Farm News

The odd combination of dry cool weather for July is the biggest topic of the news around the farm this week. It has continued to be quite dry around the farm and irrigation is a priority, but it is at least a little easier to keep up with the watering when the high on Saturday tops out at 64° in July. The sunny days in the upper 70s are more welcome because they keep things growing not slowing. It would be nice to have ripe melons before September, so I'm looking forward to a return to 80°, but I don't see a single 80 in the seven-day forecast right now. We've got some family coming to the farm for the weekend this week so the weather couldn't be more perfect for that.

The big milestone we passed at the farm this week was

getting the last of the 30,000 or so odd transplants in the ground. A late planting of fall broccoli always takes the honors. There are some years it gets too cold to ever harvest it, but lately it's been nice to have. Usually it doesn't get harvested until late in October. The later you plant something this late in the year the exponentially later it will mature as the days get short and cool. The same variety of broccoli transplanted last week will be ready 3 weeks earlier than the one planted this week.

As we wrap up transplanting it's time to get the three-row Stanhay seeder back out and start seeding spinach and lettuce for the fall. We like to have spinach for most of September and it needs about a month to mature, so the first of the plantings went in on Tuesday.

The crew has also continued to stay on top of the weeds at the farm. We had a few plantings of things which were in pretty rough shape, but now we've gotten on top of pretty much all of them. Jesse and Jake also 'crawled' all of the fall beets, which basically means that they crawl down the rows and hand weed and thin the plantings so that the beets can grow up nice and large. There's over half a mile of beet row out there so that's a nice project to have out of the way. I followed them up with the tractor and cultivated all the carrots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage. The one great thing about it not raining much ever is that you can really get the fields cleaned up and looking nice.

Coming next week: Fennel, basil, tomatoes, cukes, zukes, scallions, dill, potatoes, carrots, corn, celery and fresh garlic!

Lazy Cucumber and Onion Pickle

from *Vegetable Literacy* by Deborah Madison

- 3/4 pound firm cucumbers, unpeeled
- 1 sweet onion
- Sea salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 1 tablespoon sugar or 1 teaspoon agave syrup
- 1 cup rice wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/4 teaspoon turmeric

Slice the cucumbers thinly crosswise, or at an angle if they are very slender. Slice the onion into thin rounds.

Put 1/2 teaspoon salt, a few twists from the peppermill, and the sugar in a bowl large enough to hold the vegetables. Add the vinegar and 1 cup water and stir to dissolve the sugar and salt. Add the cucumbers, onion, mustard seeds, celery seeds, and turmeric. Press on the vegetables to immerse them in the liquid. (A plate set over the vegetables can help.) Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.