



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

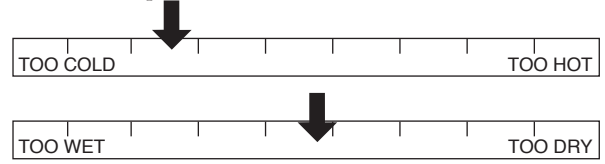
	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	Red
Cabbage	Yes	Plastic	Red
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Celeriac	Yes	Plastic	
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Thyme
Onions	No	No	Red and yellow
Parsnips	Yes	Plastic	
Peppers	No	No	Dried paprika and cayenne
Popcorn	No	No	Not quite ready for popping
Potatoes	No	Paper	Elba and chieftain
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Red meat
Rutabagas	Yes	Plastic	
Salad Mix	Yes	Plastic	
Shallots	No	No	
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Gold
Winter Squash	No	No	Buttercup and butternut

Popcorn

The second year of our ongoing popcorn experiment is in the boxes this week. This year we left the husks on and bundled them so they make a nicer addition to your kitchen decor. Last year the popcorn had dried very nicely on the stalks and it was ready for popping when we put it in the boxes. This year it is not dry enough for popping yet. Baker and I tested some out about two weeks ago and it was a failure. Popcorn needs just the right amount of moisture to pop. The popping comes from a very small amount of moisture left in the kernel which boils and converts the starch around the moisture into almost a liquid, the inside continues to heat until about 350° when the pressure inside gets to about 135 psi and it explodes. If there's too much moisture it pops, but it only just sort of splits open, rather than turning itself inside out when it really pops.

Farm Report 11/14/13

Rainfall0.82"
 High Temperature 48°
 Low Temperature 11°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Native Americans believed that there was a spirit inside of each kernel, and when heated, the spirit became so angry that it would explode out into the air as a puff of steam.

I'm guessing that it needs at least another month before it will be ready to pop. I would hang it in your kitchen or pantry where there is good air flow, or use it as a centerpiece on your table. A heated house in the winter is a pretty good space for drying it out further. I would try popping it when the kids are home on their holiday break. I'll keep an eye on it too and let you know when ours here at the farm pops well. We are keeping some popcorn at the farm to dry it further over the winter. It will make a nice addition to the first box of the 2014 season.

Let's start with what isn't in the box this week: Leeks. I admit that I didn't take the forecast completely seriously and thought that if we warmed back up enough on Wednesday that we'd have leeks for the box, but, alas, I underestimated how frozen things really were after our 48 hours of below freezing weather. Leeks are quite hardy, so we'll get them out for the next share, but they and the ground remained too frozen yesterday afternoon to make it into this week's box, sorry. This also means that you will have double leeks next time!

There's a wee little bag of salad mix in the box this week from the high tunnel. There was a fair amount of damage to the salad mix when it got down to 10° Sunday night. We had to really pick through it and harvest carefully. We also didn't wash it since it was so tender and fragile. We had very poor germination on our spinach in the high tunnel this year which is why there's none in the boxes this week. We'll wait and give

you everything we've got next time.

The arugula is also from the high tunnel this week, but it's hardier than the lettuce. It's quite large but also quite tender from growing under cover(s) it's whole life.

Parsnips are making their lone winter share appearance this week. They suffered from the same problems as the carrots this year. Most of them are scrawny and multi-legged, but there should be enough in there for one meal by the time you get done peeling and chopping.

I haven't been mentioning much about the squash lately so... We've got a large butternut and large-ish buttercup in the box this week. The buttercup is a much drier squash, but I think that it has the nicest flavor of all the squashes. It's a good candidate for steaming or roasting with some added moisture like butter. We freeze quite a bit of puréed squash in our household for the winter and this buttercup is so dry right now that I've had to either add water or a more moist squash, like butternut, to get it to purée well.

The spuds this week are the Elba and Chieftain. The white one is the Elba, be sure and keep it away from light or it will green up quickly. The Elba makes a pretty great baked potato, or even a better twice-baked potato.

The same root crops are in the box this week, with the exception of red beets instead of gold. There are also more carrots this week because as we get closer to the end of the season (next delivery) it looks like we'll have plenty.

The cabbage this week is our only red cabbage of the year. I enjoy it in sesame-based salads with lots of shredded carrots. Some of these are fairly small, we had to pick them before they got too large because they were splitting in the field while still small.

The peppers in the onion bag are the same as last time. Skinny, long and more red are hot cayenne. Shorter, larger, maroon are the sweet paprika.

Farm News

The big news around the farm the last two weeks is the cold, cruddy weather. Thankfully most of our outdoor work is done for the year, although it is nice to have some warmer days occasionally this time of year to get maintenance and other things done around the farm. I think the hardest thing is the lack of sun, when you're used to working outside the gloomy weather gets to you after a while.

Jesse and I did make a lot of progress on replacing all of the sliding doors on the machine shed. Most of the snow that had fallen early last week had melted by the time we got to it. Eventually though, we didn't have all the hardware we needed to finish the project. It's ridiculous how much hardware 70 linear feet of sliding doors takes.

With the cruddy weather outdoors it's also time for me to sit at my desk and get caught up on the books. Keeping on top of the business end of things is pretty critical for a farm like ours. When most of your revenue comes in the first half of the year it takes some pretty accurate budgeting to make sure things stay in the black the rest of the time. I try and reconcile the bank account every month, but during the heat of the summer it doesn't always happen. It's done now, though, and things look about as I expected. Expenses keep going up, especially with these drier summers, and the hardest thing to budget for are the utilities.

I did also take the time last week to wade through the dreaded healthcare.gov site. As a farm household we are one of the many people who have to buy our own health insurance. Our health insurance bill and our mortgage are almost exactly the same each month. And, yes, the website is a nightmare, but with some patience, perseverance and problem solving I did eventually manage to get our family signed up for new insurance which will save us \$300/month. Unfortunately we only have two plan providers to choose from in our very rural area, and still are paying more than average. However, I don't think any of these people complaining about it have ever had to buy their own health insurance, which is always a bureaucratic nightmare. But, I'll be honest, I'm single-payer all the way.

Rutabaga and Carrot Purée

- 2 rutabagas (2 1/2 pounds total), peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 5 carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Cook rutabagas and carrots in boiling salted water to cover by 1 inch in a large pot until tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer vegetables with a slotted spoon to a food processor and purée with butter, brown sugar, and salt until very smooth. If necessary, transfer purée back to pot and reheat.

You could easily substitute turnips for some of the rutabagas in this dish, or add a little celeriac for flavor.