

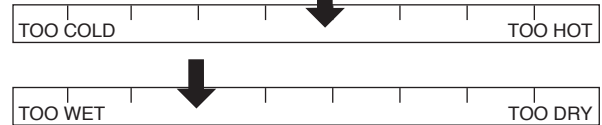


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Herb Plants	Yes	Plastic	Sage, Thyme and Oregano
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red Leaf and Butter
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Popcorn	No	No	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 6/12/14

Rainfall 1.25"
 High Temperature 79°
 Low Temperature 50°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



field is still quite small. Lettuce grown in the high tunnel is protected from wind and rain and grows well, but it is more fragile.

Welcome!

Welcome to the first share of the 2014 season! We're grateful that you've chosen Hog's Back Farm as your veggie purveyor for the summer of 2014.

One thing I like to do when I sit down to write the first newsletter of the year is to go back and read the first newsletter from last year. There are a lot of parallels between 2013 and 2014, both cool, wet, challenging spring seasons. The main difference has been this year has had quite a bit more sunshine and warmth, though similar amounts of precipitation.

Even though we've had plenty of sun for the last 3 weeks we're still a little behind our average box for this time of year. April was a very cool wet month and the first half of May didn't give us much hope to get back on track. The good news is that things in the field are finally kicking into gear in earnest and we'll rapidly have more variety in the box in the coming weeks.

Lettuce is always the star of the first few boxes. It's cultivation goes back over four millennia. The Greeks used it's wild relatives as a medicine since the white sap is actually a latex with a mildly calming effect. The Greek word for lettuce is tridax, which I'm surprised has not been used as a name by the pharmaceutical industry.

Last year we experimented with transplanting the first planting of lettuce into the high tunnel alongside the early tomato plants. When this year was so cool in April it seemed like it was a good year to continue that experiment. I'm glad we did since the lettuce in the

We did harvest this lettuce a little differently than we usually do. Because it was so large and tender we harvested and bagged it right in the high tunnel. If we would have done our usual dunk in the wash tanks, it would have fallen apart. Consequently this lettuce hasn't been washed in any way. It went straight into the bag, in fact it took two of us working together as a team to efficiently get these huge heads in a bag. If you split a share my recommendation would be to each take one bag, rather than trying to divvy up the two varieties. They're just too fragile for much handling.

Other than being fragile and unwashed, they are beautiful and tender. They really have very little dirt on them since they don't ever get rained on in the high tunnel. One variety is a red loose-leaf type and the other is a green butter. The butter leaves are nice and large and make great wraps for all kinds of fillings, or just spread one with humus and roll it up.

The arugula was planted early on in the spring between rains. It's not quite up to our exacting arugula standards, but is a welcome zip to the early salads. We can't get our 8-year-old, Baker, to eat lettuce, but he'll eat a big pile of arugula.

The radishes were planted on the same day as the arugula and sized up pretty well, although the germination was a bit spotty on them. Therefore the bunches aren't huge, but still a colorful tasty treat.

The pea shoots came up nicely and the bunches look very good. Cut the bunch off above the rubber band

to avoid the tougher stems. Use the tips raw in salads, use it all in our pea shoot pesto recipe on the website, or cook them in a quick stir fry.

A few things are missing from this week's box, due to the cool wet spring. Spinach has been almost impossible to get a decent planting of, more than one has gotten drowned out by heavy rains. And the lovely little white turnips should be large enough by next week.

Also in the box are a couple of items which require different preparations:

The bag of popcorn is from the fields last fall. Since we had success growing it in 2012, we put in a larger planting last year with the thought that maybe we could put some in the winter shares and have some for the first summer share. Well, it turned out fine and so everyone has a nice 1-pound bag of it in their box this week. We hadn't popped any in a while, so last week we were going to watch a family movie both to relax and test the popcorn. We used our whirly-pop, which I recommend—I always think air-popped popcorn tastes stale—and the results were outstanding. Every kernel would've popped if we hadn't completely maxed out the volume of the popper. Enjoy!

Lastly we have our annual grab bag of farm-raised herb plants. This year we have thyme, sage and oregano. The sage and thyme are quite large already. You'll see that the roots are already growing through the sides of the pots. These pots are not peat, they're just pressed compost material, so you can plant pot and all directly in the ground. A large pot on a patio works well too, you could put all three in one large pot, or do three smaller clay pots. If you can't get them planted right away they'll just need to be watered once a day until you get them in the ground.

Farm News

Getting the first share out the door is always a big hurdle around here. It seems like about April 15th we decide to undertake a dozen huge projects which must get all wrapped up by the time the first share goes out the door. Maybe a dozen is an exaggeration, but it feels like a dozen sometimes. It's quite a bit more challenging in a spring like this when we're scrambling just to get the plants and seeds in the ground between bouts of rain.

As most of you know, our big project this year is installing enough solar panels to supply all of the farm's electricity needs. The heavy lifting is done on this project but we still need to finish up the wiring

and wait for Xcel to give us a new utility pole. If the stars align I think we'll be able to flip the switch on it by the 4th of July. Independence Day from the utility company.

We've had over 13 inches of rain since April 1st, which has made it a challenge to stay on schedule with our plantings. It's meant being ready to get stuff in the ground whenever the conditions were right. This has also meant that we've had to plant things into some pretty less than ideal conditions. But, it's also a delight not to have to use the irrigation once yet! We're finally starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel and get these early plantings cleaned up and looking good.

Most of the crops for the year are in the ground by now. A few things will fill up the remaining spaces over the course of the next six weeks or so. The big plantings of major crops like onions, potatoes and tomatoes are all planted and growing well. And the garlic has been looking great this year, we're looking forward to scapes but they're still probably 4 weeks out.

Recipes are always limited with this first box, as I said the pea shoot pesto recipe is on the website. While you're there search for 'dressing' and it'll pull up several recipes that make their own dressing. Bottled dressing from the store is fine in a pinch, but we like to make our own, that way we know exactly what's in it.

Coming Next Week: Lettuce, arugula, radishes, pac choi, scallions, turnips.

Green Salad with Balsamic Vinaigrette for Two

Vinaigrette

- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon minced shallot
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon table salt
- Pinch ground black pepper
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Salad

- 4 cups mixed greens, washed and dried

Combine vinegar, shallot, mustard (if using), salt, and pepper in bowl with fork. Add oil, then whisk or mix with fork until smooth, about 30 seconds. The dressing will separate after 5 to 10 minutes, so use immediately or mix again before tossing with greens.

Place greens in large salad bowl. Drizzle with dressing and toss until greens are evenly coated. Serve immediately.