

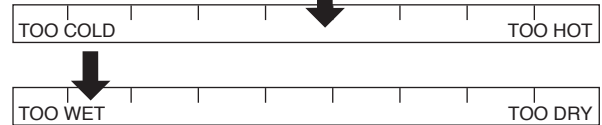


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	Nice.
Collards	Yes	Plastic	
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Green leaf and red leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pac Choi	Yes	Plastic	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Nice.
Strawberries	Yes	No	Not all pickup sites
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Hakurei

Farm Report 6/7/12

Rainfall 3.8"
 High Temperature 84°
 Low Temperature 51°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



On to the rest of the box...

We move to the field for the lettuce this week. As a result it is smaller and dirtier, but quite a bit less fragile. The green leaf is the larger of the two, while the red leaf has trailed behind in terms of size. We've resumed our usual washing program for lettuce at the farm, but be forewarned, with the abundance of heavy rains this lettuce will be dirtier than we like.

The arugula this week is quite a bit nicer than last week, more what we like to see this time of year. The crew did a great job of weeding it last week so that it wouldn't slow down our harvest on Wednesday. It also stays cleaner than just about anything else out there, dirt doesn't tend to lodge around it's base since it grows a bit up above the ground.

The pac choi is looking very nice this week. Use this tasty green-stemmed choi for a quick stir-fry along with the fresh scallions.

Speaking of scallions, this week is the first of them. They're a little on the small side but they have such a great fresh flavor that a little goes a long way. This is a standard item in our boxes for the first half of the season, so we'll be seeing them on a weekly basis now.

The radishes are also looking much nicer this week. Everyone should get a nice, large bunch.

This is also the first week for the yummy Hakurei turnips. These were part of our first very early planting and they never quite sized up, so they are tasty little babies. The tops are not awesome, but if you're cooking the collards anyway I wouldn't hesitate to throw them in too.

Collards

These first 'spring' collards are always a treat. They're very tender and versatile in the kitchen. We like to use them in a quick sauté, sliced in thin ribbons and dressed with sesame oil and sesame seeds. They also make great wraps when they're young and fresh like this, very much like the butter lettuce from last week, or even in cooked recipes that call for cabbage leaves, like cabbage rolls.

Collards are a type of non-heading cabbage, much the same way kale is. It will just keep producing new leaves up the stalk until it runs out of fertility or warm weather. Left outside to overwinter it will produce a flower stalk the following year. In New Zealand it's known as Dalmatian Cabbage because of it's historic popularity among immigrants to New Zealand from Dalmatia, which is now part of Croatia.

Historically there is very little differentiation between collards and kale. In a way they're much easier to use than kale, but I think their association with bacon drippings and the South has somehow kept them from getting as popular in the North, the way that kale has. You don't see bags of collard chips for sale at the co-op, even though I bet they would work better than kale for that purpose.

Most of the time we remove the tougher stem from the leaf before use, although some of these leaves are tender enough that they could be left in if you're cooking your collards. When in doubt, try crunching the stem raw and see how tough and bitter it is.

Lastly we have the lovely strawberries. It has been a scramble to get these going this year, non-stop wetness is the mortal enemy of all berries. We're bringing in some this week even though they may be slightly under ripe. If we waited until next week's deliveries, these same berries will have long-since rotted in the wet conditions. So you may need a sprinkle of sugar on some of them. There also will only be enough for a couple pickup sites, so those of you who miss out this week will get them next week or the week after depending on how they are ripening.

Farm News

Keeping busy in between rounds of thunderstorms has been the challenge at the farm this week. There are only so many indoor projects to do this time of year. The crew put in some valiant time after shares went out last week getting a lot of weeding done before the rains began again. We also managed to get caught up with seeding and transplanting.

Apart from the abundant moisture things are looking pretty great in the fields. In order for them to stay that way we need to string together about half a dozen dry sunny days. If this rain continues on into next week I will start to get very nervous about disease and fungal pathogens which can explode in continued wet conditions. I have very vivid memories of that happening in 2010 when we were in the same fields as we are this year. We've had almost 17 inches of rain since April 1st, which is well over half of our annual rainfall.

We did manage to get in the fields and get quite a bit done on Monday before that night's rains. Some things in the field simply can't be left alone for a whole week, no matter how much it rains. One thing like that is hilling potatoes. The potatoes grow rapidly this time of year and if not hilled when they need to be we can end up with a mess. Throwing dirt onto the growing plants not only helps to smother any weeds that may be between the plants, but it also helps to provide the place for the potatoes to size up in the dark. Most of the potatoes are looking very good this year, although we planted a late maturing variety of red potato that is taking forever to emerge, which really makes it difficult to keep weed free.

We did a little more work on the solar project on Friday afternoon last week and finally got all the panels wired together, it's surprising how slow and fussy that part of it went. We're kind of in limbo with it now until Xcel gives us a new utility pole that we can put the new meter on. Which is a little frustrating when you

have everything in place for the longest days of the year and can't actually utilize any of the energy from the panels yet. I would just like it to be wrapped up so that it's no longer occupying my mental space.

We also put the finishing touches on our updated walk-in cooler expansion project by adding an interior strip door and putting insulation around the edges of the sliding door. It also turns out that I need to add a bypass switch for our fan motor controller that I installed last fall. The motor controller is a great energy saver so that the fans aren't running at full speed all the time, wasting electricity and generating heat. But, as it turns out, that works great in the fall when things are already cooled down, in the heat and humidity of a summer harvest day we need the fan running at full speed all day to keep the evaporator coils from freezing up. A vegetable farm is an amazing array of moving parts to keep operational.

Coming next week: Arugula, lettuce, radishes, scallions, chard, turnips, pea shoots, spinach, maybe a cucumber and garlic scapes.

Tangled Collard Greens with Sesame

From *Vegetable Literacy* by Deborah Madison

- 1 large bunch collards
- 1 tablespoon light sesame oil
- 1/3 cup finely minced onion or shallot
- Sea salt
- 1-2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons sesame seeds, toasted in a dry skillet until golden
- Tamari or soy sauce
- Rice vinegar

Tear or slice the collard leaves off their stems and discard the stems. Plunge them into a bowl of cold water, agitate them with your fingers to dislodge any fine dirt, then lift them into a bowl to drain. Working in batches, stack the leaves, roll them up, and then thinly slice them crosswise, keeping them less than 1/4-inch wide.

Heat the light sesame oil in a 10- or 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté for 1 minute, followed by the collard greens. Season with a scant 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook, occasionally turning the greens in the pan, until they are wilted and tender, about 5 minutes. By then the water will have evaporated.

Toss the greens with 1 teaspoon of the toasted sesame oil and the sesame seeds. Taste for salt, then drizzle over a few drops of tamari and a little more toasted sesame oil, if you like. Finally, add a few drops of vinegar and serve.