



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	Not all boxes
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	Yipee!
Garlic Scapes	Yes	Plastic	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato or Collards
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red Leaf and Green Leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Peas	Yes	Plastic	Sugar Snaps
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Strawberries	Yes	No	
Turnips	Yes	Plastic	Hakurei

## Cucumbers

I think our family looks forward to the first cucumber in the summer more than any other veggie. I would say it's the most universally loved veggie in our home. It's because of this that I started experimenting with trellised cukes in our high tunnel a few years ago. The experimenting has paid off and we usually have the first cukes to go along with some of the June salad boxes. A fresh salad is great, but a fresh salad with a cucumber is awesome.

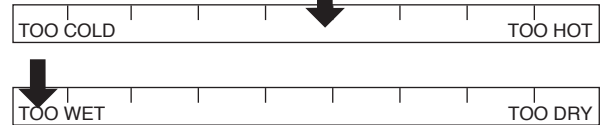
We typically grow what is known in the trade as slicing cukes, rather than pickling cukes, which are shorter, fatter and have more spines on them. I have a few pickling cukes in the high tunnel as a trial this year to see how they fare in there, so if you get a shorter, lighter colored cuke, it's a pickler. They don't seem to be doing nearly as well in there, though.

The slicers are doing great in there, although at transplanting time back in May we lost quite a few to some damping off on the stem of the transplants, so the numbers are down slightly.

These early cukes are pretty tender, you can peel them or not. If you prefer thick slices you may want to peel

## Farm Report 6/26/14

Rainfall . . . . . 1.89"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 84°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 58°  
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



them. We like them just sliced and sprinkled with a little coarse salt. Our family has a bit of a fancy salt problem, when you eat a lot of vegetables good salt is so important.

The first garlic scapes of the year are in the box this week. We started picking them on Tuesday and these are some nice large ones this week. Next week some of the boxes will have scapes from a smaller variety of garlic. The scape is the flower stalk of the garlic plant. Some people believe that the garlic bulb gets larger if you remove the scape, but I don't think there's been any really quantitative research done on that. We pick them off because we like to eat them! Trim off the flower bud portion and discard it, use the rest like you would a scallion or even a green bean. Scape pesto is also always a popular use, garlicky but great.

There is the beginning of the spring broccoli season in some of the boxes this week. Probably not even enough for half the shares. If you miss out, you're not missing much, these heads are kind of tiny. Single serving size. More will be on the way next week.

The first kale of the season is nice to have around. We ran a bit short of it in the field, so some boxes will have more collards instead. We couldn't use all of the kale because some of it had some bug damage.

Let me just take a moment to talk about quality issues when we're having weather like this. It is very hard to maintain our quality standards when it's raining every day. Not only is it hard on the plants, but it stunts their growth because of too much water. At any given time about 1/4 of the volume of soil is comprised of air between pore spaces. When those pore spaces are completely full of water, roots can stunt and die. The

nitrogen cycle gets off-track and even though the minerals are there in the soil, the plant can't access them because the bacteria responsible for converting the nitrogen into a plant-available form are drowning. That's maybe a bit of an oversimplification, but I'm not a soil scientist. The long and short of it is that we need to dry things out soon so that these plants can continue growing.

Some of the items in the box this week reflect what's going on in the field. These lettuces should be quite a bit larger, and we struggled to get enough turnips, radishes and arugula for everyone this week. Consequently bunches are smaller, and you may see some yellowing leaves. I appreciate your patience as we are doing everything we can to keep the quality up.

I'm especially not proud of the spinach in the box. The only reason we even harvested it is because it's the only spinach we're going to have this spring. Hammering rains every two days in our heavier soils make it impossible to grow spinach.

We were going to have chard this week, but it also doesn't do too well in the hard rains. The kale was looking better so we went that direction instead.

The scallions look great!

And there's a small bag of peas. The peas are really not looking very good either. It took hours and hours of picking just to get these small bags to you.

### Farm News

Well, obviously, these very wet conditions are everything at the farm right now. Keeping up with weeds and planting schedules has been very difficult the last two weeks, and there doesn't seem to be any break in site. The next couple of weeks is when all the fall cabbage and broccoli plantings go in the ground as well as the fall carrots and beets. We really need things to dry out for that to happen on time. If it gets too late we will run the risk of things not reaching maturity before the snow flies!

The other big concern I have right now is preparing for any outbreaks of disease caused by the wet conditions. The last time we had these kind of conditions, in 2010, we had outbreaks of fungal disease that I'd never seen before. I don't see any sign of that yet, but I'm not waiting around for it either.

My main line of defense this year is a new project for us, brewing and spraying our own compost tea. During the dark days of April we built our own compost tea

brewer and finally broke it in last weekend. Compost tea is really just that, it's water that has compost added to it and is aerated for 24-36 hours. What we're trying to do with it is to help good microbial life to reproduce rapidly and then spray them onto the fields so that the aerobic bacteria and fungi can colonize things so that when the pathogenic fungi show up they don't have a place to call home. Having diverse biological life in the soil and on the plants is what makes for a healthy ecosystem.

My first batch went pretty well, but I have some modifications to make for batch two this week. The main thing was that the tips on my sprayer were too fine and kept clogging up with little bits of stuff, even though I had filtered it first. I've got some new spray tips on order and we'll see if that fixes the problem.

There's quite a bit of research and anecdotal evidence that this kind of a program can greatly reduce the incidence and severity of fungal disease outbreaks. It's really about the only thing to try, so we're doing it.

**Coming next week:** Arugula, turnips, lettuce, cukes, scapes, peas, escarole, scallions, broccoli.

### Kale and Garlic Scape Pesto

- 1 bunch kale, washed and torn from the tough stem
- 1 bunch garlic scapes, woody ends removed and roughly chopped (or 2 garlic cloves)
- 1/2 cup raw pecans
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan, more for serving
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- sea salt to taste
- 1 pound rigatoni pasta (use gf pasta if you like)

Prepare a large bowl with cold water and ice. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the kale (that has been washed and removed from the tough stems) and using tongs, plunge kale into the boiling water for about 30 seconds and quickly transfer to the ice bath. Squeeze kale to remove most of the water and place in a food processor.

If making pesto pasta, bring water back to a boil and cook the rigatoni pasta according to the directions on the box.

To the kale in the food processor, add roughly chopped garlic scapes (or garlic cloves), pecans, Parmesan and a generous pinch of salt. Process until finely chopped. With the processor running, slowly stream in the extra-virgin olive oil until the pesto comes together. Taste and add more sea salt to taste. Scrape down the sides of the processor and process again to completely blend. Drain pasta and mix with the batch of pesto. Stir gently until the pasta is coated. Serve.