

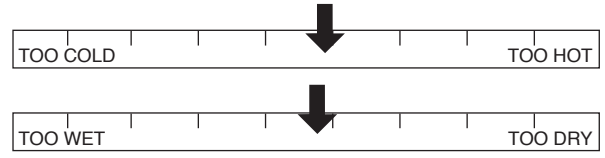


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	First of the year
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	Lots
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Fennel	Yes	Plastic	Nice
Garlic	No	No	First of the year
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	Ditto
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red leaf and green leaf
Scallions	Yes	Plastic	
Tomatoes	No	No	First one
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 7/24/14

Rainfall 0.00"!
 High Temperature 89°
 Low Temperature 56°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



Bulb fennel differs from the herb fennel in that it forms the nice bulb at the base of the plant. The fronds are edible as well and impart a nice anise flavor. Fennel is one to test your knife skills on, since it is wonderful very thinly shaved with just some good olive oil and coarse salt. It also sweetens up nicely on the grill or braised in the oven.

Hey, first tomato in the box this week, pretty good for Week 7. Some of these are a little firm and would benefit from a few days on the counter to ripen up. These are coming from the high tunnel, where things have been ripening slowly. But, wow, are there a lot of green tomatoes in there. I'm grateful we've got them, because the monsoon season really did a number on the outdoor tomatoes.

Lots of firsts this week, basil is the next. Nice to have with the first tomato, but, of course, we plan it that way. Not a huge bag, but really nice stuff to add to a pizza or sauce.

The first garlic is also making an appearance. The timing of this dry spell has been perfect for the garlic. They are maturing nicely, and it looks like next Monday will be garlic harvest day on the farm. These fresh bulbs don't peel easily, you almost have to peel them like an ear of corn, but you'll be rewarded with rich, moist garlic that is fresh and delicious.

Green beans are also a nice new treat this week. Our plantings of these look good, although some are a little sparse. This is a mix of two plantings that, unfortunately, are ready at the same time. The one variety is larger, but is still quite nice and tender.

Lots of broccoli this week, and it will be the last of

Fennel!

One thing that's been thriving this year is the lovely fennel. As a Mediterranean crop you would think that it would suffer through too much rain, but there really aren't many fungal diseases that plague the plants in this family, the same family that contains carrots and dill, at least not in our area of the country.

When the seed catalogs come out in the fall I'm usually pretty skeptical of new varieties. But I've always wished there was fennel that grew a fatter bulb here instead of being mostly flat. Well last fall there was a new variety of organic fennel available from Enza Zaden, a Dutch seed company that has an organic seed breeding division known as Vitalis Organic Seeds. This fennel variety, known as Preludio, is a new introduction from them and I have to say it is the nicest fennel that we've every grown.

As a grower, I try to support companies that are not just part of a monolithic conglomerate. After all, when Monsanto purchased Seminis in 2005 they instantly became the largest developer, producer and marketer of vegetable seed in the world. Enza Zaden is still an independent breeder in an industry that has been on a multi-year bender of consolidation. So let's toast a forkful of this tasty fennel to the folks at Enza Zaden.

the spring broccoli season. Broccoli doesn't love heat, so when we get some real summer-like weather it all matures simultaneously. Everyone should have at least 3 heads this week. Since it's fresh it will keep just fine in plastic into next week.

The first of the field cucumbers are starting to yield some fruit, so you may have representatives from both the high tunnel and the field in your box. The field ones won't be quite as perfect looking as the ones from the high tunnel.

We're getting down to the wire on lettuce for the year. We may eke out one more week next week but that will be the last of it. Some of you may get two red leaf instead of one red one green.

The summer squash and zucchini have been productive this week. They love the hot weather, but do require frequent picking, even twice a day, when it's warm.

Kale and scallions round out the box this week. This will be the last of the spring kale, but the fall stuff is coming up quickly behind it. I think we've got one more week of scallions before they go away for the year.

Farm News

It's been a week to catch up on the farm with the first dry spell we've had in 2014. Monday, July 21st, was the first day we've turned on irrigation this year. I am positive that's never happened before. Monday and Tuesday saw the drip irrigation getting hooked up and ran on all the onions, melons, cukes, zukes, tomatoes, peppers, celery and squash. Too bad, really, since the onions are only a couple of weeks from harvest, but a little extra water right now while the bulbs are sizing up can make a big difference in the size of the onions.

Harvesting becomes a daily activity this time of year too. Every day we're picking broccoli, cucumbers, zucchini and yellow squash. Now that the spring broccoli is done, we can at least turn up the temperature of the walk-in cooler and save a little energy. Cukes and Zukes are fine with 50°, but broccoli is really best kept at 33°.

Meanwhile, we're still planting. The second round of fall cauliflower went in last week along with the first planting of fall broccoli. More broccoli this week, and then we'll look forward to next week when we transplant the last of the 25,000 transplants that we grow on the farm each year.

We've turned the corner on all of our major weed infestations. Every day this week has been a good day to die if you're a weed. The fields are looking good. I'd say the only real concern at the moment is the level of disease this early in the tomato field. The plants were just too wet for too long and with each rain soil was splashed up on the plants kicking the disease cycle into gear. We should see a good high tunnel tomato season, but the field season may be truncated a bit.

It's also finally been time to catch up on our fallow fields, by getting them ready for cover crops. Last year's fields became a weedy mess over the course of the wet spring and should've been planted to a cover crop weeks ago, and next year's veggie fields have been lush with red clover that now needs to be worked in so that we can get it ready for a winter-killed cover of oats and peas.

Coming next week: Potatoes, dill, beets, lettuce, cucumber, green beans, zucchini, yellow squash, eggplant or green pepper, scallions, fennel.

Roasted Broccoli with Garlic and Red Pepper

- 1 1/4 pounds broccoli crowns, cut into florets (about 8 cups)
- 3 1/2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Large pinch of dried crushed red pepper

Preheat oven to 450°F. Toss broccoli and 3 tablespoons oil in large bowl to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Transfer to rimmed baking sheet. Roast 15 minutes. Stir remaining 1/2 tablespoon oil, garlic, and red pepper in small bowl. Drizzle garlic mixture over broccoli; toss to coat. Roast until broccoli is beginning to brown, about 8 minutes longer. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Couldn't Be Easier Broccoli Soup

from *Hog's Back Farm Member Tricia Cornell's new cookbook*,
Minnesota Farmers Market Cookbook

- 2 medium heads broccoli, stems and crowns
- 1-2 Parmesan rinds
- Water or mild-tasting chicken broth
- 1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan or 1/2 c. half and half

Separate broccoli florets from stems. Peel stems, removing all tough woody parts. Chop florets and stems roughly and place in a medium pot with rinds and just enough water or broth to cover. Put the lid on, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook for 20 minutes. Remove and discard rind.

Puree in batches in a standing blender or with a stick blender. Stir in Parmesan or half and half, or both if you're feeling decadent. If you don't use the Parmesan, taste and add salt as needed.