

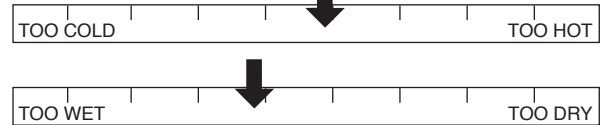


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Thyme, sage and oregano plants
Lettuce	Yes	Plastic	Red Leaf
Pac Choi	Yes	Plastic	
Pea Shoots	Yes	Plastic	
Popcorn	No	No	
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	
Rapini	Yes	Plastic	aka Broccoli Raab
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	

Farm Report 6/11/15

Rainfall so far in June 1.40"
 High Temperature 90°
 Low Temperature 54°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



in order to beat the rain. But all told, the fields are looking great. On to this week's box...

The arugula this week is full-size, and some of it was just beginning to send up a flower stalk. Having spent most of it's life under protective covers to deter pests, it remains tasty and tender.

The lettuce this week is from our high tunnel. It, too, led a sheltered life, so it is tender, fragile and yummy. Next week we'll move to the outdoor lettuce which has a little more resilience.

Pac choi is a frequent visitor to the first box of the year. It's the only time we give it out, and these heads are nice and dense. You can tell how nice the rains have been by feeling the heft of the water in these heads. It is tender and mild and delicious sautéed with a little sesame oil and garlic or use it in a stir-fry.

Pea shoots, pea tips or pea vines are all the same thing. Harvested young pea plants eaten as a spring green. The stems at the base of the bunches can be tough so trim them above the rubber band if not higher to get at the most tender part of the bunch. These, too, are tasty in a stir-fry, but our favorite use this time of year is a batch of pea shoot pesto. A recipe for this is on our website. Over the weekend I made a batch that was half arugula and half pea shoots and it was delicious. A couple other things about this week's pea shoots, there is some grass in the bunches. Actually they are oat plants. There was some oat seed mixed in with the peas and when I looked at it in the bag I thought, "oh, there's just a few in there, no biggie." But when it came up it was a different story. There was no real way for us to avoid all of the oats, but when you cut it apart to put it in the salad spinner they're easy to separate.

Hello and Welcome to the 2015 Season!

Welcome to the 2015 season with Hog's Back Farm. We are grateful that you've decided to spend this season on our farm. Many of you have been with us for years and some are brand new. If you're a newbie, feel free to contact me if you have questions. Sometimes it's easy to forget what I've taken the time to explain another year that may be confusing for our newest members.

Things are so hectic on the farm this time of year it's hard to know where to start. We're busy planting each week getting all of the year's crops in the ground and growing. Our short growing season in the upper Midwest makes every opportunity for planting an important one. April started out cool and dry, we were able to get into the fields earlier than we have in several years. Once we were in the field, however, the rain stopped and after a fairly dry winter we had a dry April. The only time that we've run the irrigation so far in 2015 was in April. Whatever happened to April showers?

May brought abundant gentle rains that were glorious. Strong, pounding thunderstorms have become very common in May lately so their complete absence did not go unnoticed. Crops germinated well under the gentle spring moisture and we had just enough dry days between showers that the planting stayed on schedule. June has been a little trickier, the rain seems to be heavier and more frequent, which has made some major planting projects turn into long-day marathons

Also, this will be the only bunch of pea shoots this year. The next planting of them was an experiment with a different variety and I've decided to save it and let it make peas instead of harvesting the plants.

The spinach this week got a little big for it's britches in all the warmer weather. We've had a couple of poor years of spinach in a row and I was determined not to threeppeat. So much so, that the first planting we actually transplanted in the field instead of seeding it directly. This allowed us to grow it in the greenhouse for a while, which is why it ended up getting so large. It turns out that we didn't really need that extra step this year, but it was cheap insurance for getting spinach in the first box. It also looks like we have several weeks of nice spinach on the horizon.

Speaking of big for it's britches is some lovely rapini this week. We often plant this for the first box or two of the year, but so many times it bolts and flowers before we have the chance to harvest it. With abundant moisture this year it hung in there to be perfect timing to bring a big bunch to this week's box. We enjoy this mustard-style cooking green with some good Italian sausage and a cream sauce on pasta.

The radishes got a little large too in the last week's heat and some have a little bug damage. Apart from that they are snappy and refreshing.

In our quest to bring some interest to the first box of the year we have our annual addition of a couple of items that weren't harvested yesterday: The popcorn is from our fields last fall. Our yields were down last year because of deer pressure so there was only enough for everyone to get a half-pound. We haven't popped any in a month or so, but it has been very tasty when we have.

The other outlier are our organic herb plants, grown here on our farm. This year we have one each of sage, thyme and greek oregano. The pots they're in are made of compost, so they can be planted, pot and all. They will do best where they get at least six hours of sun and don't get waterlogged. If you can't find a spot for them right away, just keep them outside and water them daily (if it doesn't rain on them).

Farm News

It's always busy around the farm getting the first shares out the door. Lots of cleanup to do. All the share boxes get power washed (thanks Andrew!). Floors, tables and harvest crates get washed and disinfected. We make sure the cooler is working well, sometimes

refrigeration equipment doesn't like to be turned off for extended periods of time. It's also time to bring our delivery truck in for it's annual DOT inspection and service. I also splurged and bought two new batteries for the truck, it still had the same two from when we bought it in 2007. The box of the truck also got a fresh coat of paint since it was looking a little ratty.

We finally got our new chickens out on pasture last weekend. Baker and Iris helped me move them after dark on Friday night into their new swanky rolling chicken coop. I would say we're about 5 weeks from seeing our first egg, and will keep you posted about how you can get some.

The vast majority of the crops are in the ground by this time of year. The only real hiccup we've had this spring was a one-day venture into the greenhouse by a thirteen-lined ground squirrel. I still don't even know how he got in there, other than to run in while the door was opened. Anyway, he ventured in there on a day when the winter squash and pumpkins were still germinating and proceeded to dig up and eat a couple hundred seeds. A tasty lunch for him, but thousands of pounds less squash to us. There was still enough time to re-seed most of it, if we had the seed on hand. We don't always have twice as much seed as we need, so some varieties will be in shorter supply at harvest time, but overall there will still be plenty of squash.

Coming next week: Arugula, radishes, lettuce, turnips, scallions, spinach, maybe kohlrabi.

Stir-Fried Mixed Greens

- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 teaspoon roasted peanut oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon chopped ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons chopped scallions
- 10 cups greens, sliced into ribbons about 3/4-inch thick
- 1/2 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- Salt
- 2 teaspoons dark sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon rice wine (mirin)
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch diluted with 3 tablespoons water

Heat a wok and add both peanut oils. When hot, add the garlic, ginger, red pepper flakes and scallions. Stir fry 30 seconds, then add the greens and stir-fry for 1 minute more. Add the stock, cover, and steam until tender, after 2 or 3 minutes. Season with salt, sesame oil and mirin.

Letting the juices fall back into the wok, lift the greens with tongs and set them on a platter. Add the cornstarch to the juices left in the wok and boil until thickened. Pour the sauce over the greens and serve.