



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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Basil	No	Plastic	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	Bagged, no tops
Celery	Yes	Plastic	Last of it?
Cilantro	Yes	Plastic	Small bunch
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Eggplant	Yes	Plastic	First of it
Garlic	No	No	
Green Beans	Yes	Plastic	Petit
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell and hot jalapeño
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red norland
Sweet Corn	Yes	Plastic	
Tomatoes	No	No	High tunnel reds and a few from the field
Yellow Squash	Yes	Plastic	
Zucchini	Yes	Plastic	

Potatoes Galore

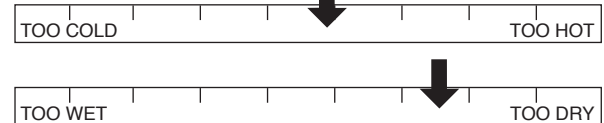
For a number of years now I've been considering getting out of potato production. Potatoes do not fit well with most of our other vegetable crops, having different space needs and water requirements, etc. There are some large organic potato growers here in Wisconsin and I've considered just buying them for the shares from them. Prior to taking that step though, I've been experimenting with improving my yield on potatoes.

This year I purchased some organic fertilizer that's derived from chicken manure, among other things. Potatoes are heavy feeders, that is they require a lot of soil fertility to produce a good crop. What I found is that most large potato producers fertilize a couple of times during the season, rather than just prior to planting, which is what we've done historically. So with a lot of compost prior to planting and a couple of passes with the fertilizer during the season, along with really nice spring rain every week we find that we're having a banner year for potatoes at the farm.

The other thing that I'll take credit for is one well-

Farm Report 8/6/15

Rainfall 0.00"
 High Temperature 84°
 Low Temperature 56°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



timed application of spinosad to control Colorado Potato Beetle. Spinosad is a naturally occurring fungal organism that attacks the potato beetles and is approved for organic production. The plants were already quite large by the time that we had enough beetles to consider applying it. Consequently I had to spray the entire half acre of sprawling plants by hand with a backpack sprayer. Necessary, but exhausting.

So how much of a difference did all this extra fussing make? Basically we have twice as many potatoes as we do most years. We haven't dug any varieties except the reds so far, so the jury is still out a bit, but I think we're going to have some eye-popping yields on some of them. It's interesting to note that the ones we dug two weeks ago yielded 2.2 lbs per foot of row, and when we dug the same variety again this week it yielded 3.8 lbs per foot of row, almost a 75% increase in yield in two weeks! Plants are amazing.

The bottom line for the shares will be that we'll have potatoes in the box almost every week for the rest of the season. Sometimes we run out of time to do everything we want, so there may be a week or two when we just can't make it happen, but for the most part plan to enjoy some tasty taters.

The green beans this week are of the small haricot vert-type. They are tender and best enjoyed whole, rather than cut up like the larger green beans. We enjoy them sauteed and dressed with a shallot-mustard dressing. They're also a nice addition to potato salad. There won't be a huge bagfull, since they are diminutive and time consuming to pick, but enjoy them as the treat they are.

We're starting to get a few ripe tomatoes in the field

this week, but for the third year in a row we're seeing a lot of disease problems in the field tomatoes. The last three years we've had a lot of June rains which really kick starts disease problems on the young tomato plants. I'm starting to get close to buying another high tunnel and abandoning field tomatoes altogether. Most of what's in the box will still be from the high tunnel this week.

We struggled to get enough eggplant for everybody this first week and some of them ended up being a bit small, but hopefully you can still make use of it. Those of you who love eggplant I hope will get one of the larger ones.

The first green bell pepper is in the box along with a hot jalapeño. These jalapeños look very nice, it's a new variety for us this year. They're quite large for a jalapeño.

The first cilantro of the year is in the box this week. It's a pretty small bunch so that it can get a little larger and be in the box next week as well. We had planted some earlier in the year, but it went to seed so quickly that we never harvested it.

The cucumbers in the field relented quite a bit this week now that we're stomping all over the vines while harvesting them. There will just be a paltry half dozen of them in the box.

We broke out the carrot harvester for the carrots this week, but it has gotten way too weedy in the early carrot field for it to work properly. Instead, we used it like a giant, tractor-pulled digging fork and went back and topped the carrots by hand. We have lost the war on weeds in some places this year.

More of Sam's tasty corn along with summer squashes, garlic, basil and celery round out a lovely box for the first week of August.

Farm News

As I mentioned above we have been losing some battles and winning others with weeds around the farm this year. Growing seasons that favor flourishing crops also favor flourishing weeds, no matter how much we prefer one over the other.

The weather has dried out in a big way. Irrigation is now becoming a priority around the farm on many things. It's been nice to get some field work done, but it's already a little too dry in most places. Hopefully we get some moisture out of the storms that are forecast for Thursday night.

Monday was weed war day on the farm and we cleaned up quite a few things which temporarily improved my early-August-burned-out mood. We focused on getting a hand weeding done in the fall brassicas, some of which were disappearing into forests of pigweed.

The reason my mood improvement was temporary was it also gave me more time to look at something I noticed in the kale last week that I didn't like the look of. It looks like we have a significant outbreak of Fusarium Yellows in both of our fall kale varieties. We haven't seen this disease on the farm before, and I'm not sure why we're seeing it now, but it could mean an early end to the kale season. There's some anecdotal evidence that Red Russian kale might be resistant to it, so I may get some planted in the next couple of days as a late season backup.

Coming next week: Tomatoes, corn, garlic, onions, potatoes, cilantro, peppers, cucumbers, summer squash, Italian parsley.

Corn Salad With Tomatoes, Feta and Mint

- 2 to 3 cups raw or cooked corn kernels (from 4 to 6 ears)
- 1 large or 2 medium ripe tomatoes, cut into fairly small pieces
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (about 1 cup)
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put the corn, tomatoes, and cheese in a medium salad bowl. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss. Add the mint leaves and toss again. Taste and add salt and pepper and serve.

Good Old French Bean Salad from Jamie's Dinners by Jamie Oliver

- 4 Handfuls beans, stalk ends removed
- 2 heaping teaspoons good French mustard
- 2 tablespoons good-quality white wine vinegar
- 7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium shallot, finely chopped
- 1/2 clove garlic, finely chopped

Bring a pan of water to a fast boil, add beans and cook with lid on at least 4 to 5 minutes. Meanwhile put the mustard and vinegar into a bowl and, while stirring, drizzle in the olive oil to make the dressing. Season the dressing with salt and pepper and then add the shallot and garlic.

Remove one of the beans to check if it's cooked. If it holds its shape but is also soft to the bite, it's perfect. Drain the beans and transfer them to a bowl. Dress them while still piping hot, toss them well to coat and serve immediately.