

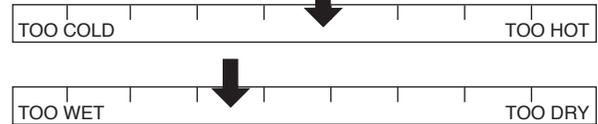


What's in the box and where does it go?

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Broccoli	Yes	Plastic	
Cantaloupe	Yes	No	
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Cauliflower	Yes	Plastic	or Eggplant
Cucumbers	Yes	Plastic	
Garlic	No	No	
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Curly
Onions	No	No	Yellows and a red
Peppers	Yes	Plastic	Green bell, sweet red Carmens and a few serranos
Potatoes	No	Paper	Red Norland
Tomatoes	No	No	Last of 'em
Winter Squash	No	No	Acorn

Farm Report 9/10/15

Rainfall 1.9"
 High Temperature 87°
 Low Temperature 55°
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



element this year as kind of an experiment. So I was surprised to see clear symptoms of a B deficiency in the broccoli this last week. I could see it the week before and was chalking it up to the heat, but by Monday I knew we had a systemic problem that was not going to be resolved when the weather broke. After harvesting broccoli on Monday I decided the best thing to do would be to mow the rest of it down. The rot that comes with B deficiency is sulfury and stinky, and mowing it down will allow it to be incorporated into the soil instead of rotting above ground.

The mystery then is why did we have a B deficiency at all when we've been spreading it? This is where I get back to the complexity of natural systems. I think we had a humidity induced B deficiency, since B is not easily moved through the plant when transpiration is slowed due to high humidity conditions. And it is quite rare for us to get the humid conditions we've had for the last couple of weeks this time of year. That's my working theory, and it could be completely wrong. If all I grew was broccoli, I would feel a little more confidence in my assessment, but when you have fifty other crops it does make it a challenge.

It also makes me think about how weather conditions can dramatically affect the ability of plants to absorb the right nutrients for growing our food. And how quickly people dismiss climate change because we'll be able to grow peaches in the upper Midwest and the extra carbon dioxide will make everything grow rapidly. Natural systems are so incredibly complex that predicting that outcome is folly, but the talking heads thrive on our detachment from the natural world. This also gets me thinking about how this also affects the health of us humans, but that will have to wait.

Natural Systems

When you grow as many different crops as we do it gives you ample opportunities to marvel at the complexity of natural systems. As a society we have become so detached from the natural world that it is easiest to not challenge the orthodoxy when it comes to the chemicals in our food, air and water. Or the changing climate on our planet. If we don't feel confident to speak up for what's best for our planet, we often stay silent.

The broccoli is what got me thinking about natural systems this week. Broccoli and other crops in the brassica family, kale, cabbage, etc. require a lot of fertility. But it's not so simple as just putting down some fertilizer. This week I mowed down probably three or four hundred heads of unharvested broccoli due to a Boron deficiency. Boron (B) is a critical element in plants (and animals) but is required in such minute amounts that it's application can be difficult.

Most of our soils have less than one-half of one part per million (ppm) of B. Ideally we would like to have between 1 and 2 ppm of B available in our soils. 10 ppm of B is toxic to most plants, so it is a delicate balance. We actually have been spreading B as a separate

But there is one head of broccoli in the box, hopefully. There may not be enough if we've had any issues while it was in the cooler.

This is also the case with the cauliflower this year, and why we have a slow uneven maturity for it. Some will get cauliflower this week, and if not you'll get an eggplant or an extra pepper.

We did finally manage enough cantaloupe for everyone this week. Kind of strange to have it this late, but we'll take what we can get.

This will be all on the tomatoes for the year. Not a great run, but not a total failure either. Some farms north of us had almost no tomatoes at all.

When we cleaned out the high tunnel this week we had enough cukes to put one last one in the box. The skins will be tough so you'll definitely want to peel it.

The Carmen peppers are starting to ripen in earnest so there should be a few of them for everyone this week. The serranos are starting to turn red too, so if you have a small red pepper it's hot!

We decided to get started on the winter squash this week with just a sample acorn. They look nice, but I haven't tried one yet. Acorn can be quite hard, so take care when cutting it in half.

Potatoes, onions, carrots, kale and garlic round out the last of the transitional boxes to autumn.

Farm News

The weather finally broke. That was the worst heat wave we've had all year. I think the dew point stayed above 70° for ten days. With the end of the heat and humidity came quite a bit of rain. We had almost two inches, but folks twenty miles from us had double that. Too much moisture this time of year can be troublesome, especially coming out of such a warm, humid period. Disease in vegetable crops thrives on these conditions. Hopefully we start to dry out now.

We've certainly cooled down, and that has been a treat. By Wednesday morning we were down to 55° and harvesting with long sleeves and hats on. The forecast for Friday night is calling for 41°, frost will start to lurk around the corner of every cold front that comes through now.

It was good to have some rainy weather this week so that we could focus on some other projects at the farm. Getting the high tunnel cleared out and reset for fall greens for the winter share is a big project, but

by the end of the day on Monday it was done. Yes, we work on Labor Day at the farm, the farm season is too short to take off the summer holidays.

We also got the flour corn for the winter share corn meal harvested. It really should've happened a week ago or so, but things have been so humid and moist we had to put it off. It looks like a decent harvest now that it's spread out to dry further in the greenhouse.

Coming next week: Arugula, spinach, carrots, squash, potatoes, onions, peppers, cilantro, maybe the return of broccoli.

Sesame Kale

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tablespoons chicken stock or water
- 2 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sherry
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 teaspoons black or white sesame seeds, toasted
- freshly ground black pepper to taste

Wash the kale. Cut off and discard the tough stems. Slice the leaves once down the middle, then cut them crosswise into 1 inch wide strips. In a bowl combine the soy, sherry, vinegar and sesame oil. In a wok, heat the olive oil. Add the garlic. Sauté for 10 seconds. Add the kale and the stock. Cover and steam for 3 minutes until the kale wilts, longer if you like your kale well cooked. If you're cooking it longer you'll need more stock or water. Add the soy/vinegar mixture to taste. Top the kale with sesame seeds and fresh ground pepper. Serve.

Braised Kale with Bacon and Onions

- 1 bunch kale, thick stems and ribs removed, leaves chopped
- 6 bacon slices, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar

Cook kale stems and ribs in large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain. Set aside.

Cook bacon pieces in heavy large pot over medium heat until brown and crisp, about 4 minutes. Transfer bacon to a paper towel to drain. Add chopped onions and sauté until tender, about 8 minutes. Add kale leaves, ribs and stems and sauté until leaves are crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. Cover and cook until kale is very tender, stirring often, about 15 minutes. Stir in vinegar and bacon. Cook mixture 2 minutes to blend flavors. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl and serve.