



# Hog's Back Almanac

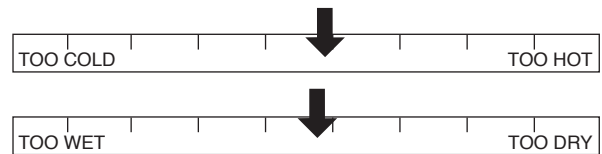
Winter 4 November 24, 2015

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

	Fridge?	Bag?	Notes & Varieties
Arugula	Yes	Plastic	
Beets	Yes	Plastic	
Brussels Sprouts	Yes	Plastic	
Cabbage	Yes	Plastic	Green
Carrots	Yes	Plastic	
Celeriac	Yes	Plastic	
Corn Meal	No	Plastic	Mandan Bride
Garlic	No	No	
Herbs	Yes	Plastic	Thyme
Kale	Yes	Plastic	Lacinato
Leeks	Yes	Plastic	
Onions	No	No	Yellows
Peppers	No	No	Dried hot cayenne
Potatoes	No	Paper	Yukon gold
Radishes	Yes	Plastic	Watermelon
Rutabagas	Yes	Plastic	
Spinach	Yes	Plastic	
Winter Squash	No	No	Butternut and Buttercup

## Farm Report 11/24/15

Rainfall . . . . . 2.35"  
 High Temperature . . . . . 56°  
 Low Temperature . . . . . 21°  
 Farmer Complaint Indicators™:



But that break will have to wait until we're done with this week's shares!

The box is quite bountiful this week. In fact, I know that it won't all fit, so we'll be leaving the squash out and having it on the side at your pickup site since the weather is being so cooperative this year.

This has got to be the largest bag of Brussels sprouts that we've ever had in the last share. Jesse and I brought in all the sprouts on the stalks last week before the weather got so nasty on Thursday. Then we had to pick them all off the stalks, but it worked quite well to do that in the packing shed. I'm really glad we did it that way, if we hadn't we'd have been out in the field picking for 12 hours. There's eight Brussels recipes on the website, and a couple more in 2014's last newsletter. Halving and roasting with a little olive oil, salt and pepper is always nice.

The other annual exclusive to the Thanksgiving box is our homegrown homeground cornmeal. We had a pretty good crop of it this year, although we lost quite a bit to the rainy weather in early September. You don't get much fresher ground cornmeal than this, we ground it yesterday. We normally would've done it last week, but the weather was so yucky that there really wasn't a chance. We use an old stone mill and grind it fairly coarse. It's a wonderful grind for polenta and cornmeal, but if you'd like it finer it can easily be buzzed up in a coffee grinder or spice mill. We do not sift it, so it's a mix of particle sizes, and occasionally a whole corn kernel gets through the mill, variety is the spice of life. There will be one bag in each box containing about a pound and a half. Check the recipe page on the website for our favorite cornbread recipe.

## Last Share of 2015!

This is it, folks, the last share of the 2015 season. It's always a combination of relief and letdown when we get the last boxes on the truck. Relief that we've managed to make it through another successful season on the farm. And letdown as we recall the veggies we didn't manage to eat enough of during the year. I think I only had one meal of fennel, and I wish I had eaten more green beans.

The 2015 season was generally a very good one. We had some trouble with the fall brassicas and the tomatoes, but had an abundant harvest of almost everything else. It was the best year for potatoes that we've ever had, I never added it up but I bet we got pretty close to 10,000 pounds. The abundance of some things was a blessing, but I have to admit that physically it has been a challenging year. I think I speak for the entire crew when I say that our bodies are in need of a break.

The arugula and spinach are coming from the high tunnel this week. They're both quite tender, and may have a few holes from grasshoppers. The arugula is fairly large, but tender. The spinach was not washed at the farm, so it will need to be washed at home. Washing becomes a bit of a challenge for us this time of year, so some things may not get as much attention because our packing shed is unheated.

Speaking of dirty, the garlic in the bag with the onions and peppers is not very clean either. We just simply ran out of time yesterday.

Jesse and I got the kale and leeks harvested last week ahead of the cold snap. They can both shrug off a frost and a freeze, but when you start getting below 20° the quality goes down rapidly. This is one of the nicest looking bunches of kale we've ever had from outside this late.

So much more in the box, but the space of the newsletter is as limited as the space in the box. Most of it you know well by now.

### Farm News

The seed catalogs have begun showing up in the mailbox, along with an astounding amount of junkmail catalogs for the holidays. I'm always afraid that if I try and get rid of all the junk catalogs that I'll inadvertently end up discontinuing all my seed catalogs. At this point in my farming career I think I look at seed catalogs more to see what's been discontinued than what's new. The seed trade has a bad habit of consolidation and dropping time-tested varieties. It can take years to find decent replacements to things we've gotten used to growing. Case in point: That's why we didn't have any shallots this year. They discontinued the variety I liked called Saffron. I thought I had found some, only to find out that they were a variety of yellow onion with the same name. That's why we've had extra onions this fall, they were supposed to be shallots.

I do a lot of our planning for the next season in the next few weeks. This means it's the best time of the year to shoot me an email with requests, suggestions or pleas for less or more of a particular vegetable. The funny thing is that there's almost always a perfect balance of people who are adamantly opposed to vegetable X, and who are wildly enthusiastic about it. That said, don't email me your request for more peas, there are never enough, and after doing this for 13 years I have made my peas with the fact that there will never be enough peas.

We did finally bid farewell to the laying hens about ten days ago. It's nice to not have them freezing their tails off in the cold weather. I don't think we'll be offering our own eggs next year, but may try and find some from another farm to offer. Having enough hired help to do all that needs to be done with the vegetables is becoming more of a challenge, and the egg enterprise exacerbates the labor shortage. Thanks to everyone for their enthusiastic support for the eggs, though. They were pretty awesome.

Thanks also to everyone for your support for this, our 13th farming season. Unlike the elevators in the high-rise, we faced season number 13 head-on, and came through relatively unscathed. Have a healthy and happy holiday season from all of us at the farm.

### Simple Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Garlic

- 1 pound brussels sprouts
- 4 to 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, to coat bottom of pan
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Trim bottom of brussels sprouts, and slice each in half top to bottom. Heat oil in cast-iron pan over medium-high heat until it shimmers; put sprouts cut side down in one layer in pan. Put in garlic, and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Cook, undisturbed, until sprouts begin to brown on bottom, and transfer to oven. Roast, shaking pan every 5 minutes, until sprouts are quite brown and tender, about 10 to 20 minutes.

Taste, and add more salt and pepper if necessary. Stir in balsamic vinegar, and serve hot or warm.

### Potato and Celery Root Mash

- 2 1/2 pounds mixed russet, Yukon Gold, and white-skinned potatoes, peeled, cut into 2" cubes
- 1 1-pound celeriac, peeled, cut into 3/4" cubes
- 1 6" piece of horseradish, peeled, coarsely grated
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) unsalted butter
- Kosher salt

Place potatoes, celery root, and horseradish in a large pot. Add water to cover by 1". Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-high, and simmer until vegetables are tender, 25-30 minutes.

Drain, reserving 1 cup cooking liquid. Return vegetables to pot; add sour cream, Dijon mustard, and butter. Using a potato masher, coarsely mash vegetables. Add reserved cooking liquid by tablespoonfuls if mash is too stiff. Season to taste with salt.