



# The Beanstalk

*Easy Bean Farm's Weekly Newsletter*

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## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

### **Red Russian Kale:**

*When I first started 22 years ago many people would groan when we put kale in their boxes. It was one of those crops that farmers and hard-core veg enthusiasts loved but, among the masses, few knew what to do with it. Kale has benefitted from some great P.R. over the last 5-6 years, however, and now we get LOTS of requests for it. It is great in massaged kale salads,*



*it is great sautéed with other veggies, is it great cooked into eggs and it is surprisingly good in smoothies. Red Russian is among my favorite Kales. It has a frilly leaf and is very tender. Keep it, loosely wrapped, in your crisper drawer.*

**Nevada and/or Panisse Head Lettuces:** *These heads are nice and large and, despite the crazy ups and downs of the weather, which lettuce hates, the heads are really nice and mild.*

**Collard Greens:** *Of all of the cooking greens I think that collards are my favorite. They are a staple of Southern Cooking but are a great substitute for cabbage or Kale in most dishes. I eat both the leaf and the stem but there are those who prefer just the leaf. One of my favorite dishes is just collards sautéed with garlic and olive oil with a little salt and pepper served over rice. This is made even better with the addition of some red beans or black eyed peas. These should be stored loosely wrapped in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.*

**Black Summer Pac Choi:** *Some say Bok some say Pac but it all brings me great*





*Choi. The Pac Choi is the vegetable with the nearly white stems and green leaves and it is also known, locally, as a form of Chinese Cabbage. It is a mainstay of a variety of Asian cuisines and both the stalks and the leaves are edible.... Though the stalk is the “choice” part. The Stem of the choi is often chopped like celery and used in stir-frys. You should be careful not to overcook Choi because the crisp texture is what makes it great. Last week I ate nearly a whole head myself sautéed with some thinly sliced marinated chicken, Szechuan peppercorn, ginger, garlic, mirin, tamari, toasted sesame oil, toasted sesame seeds and a massive amount of chopped scallion. I served it over sticky rice and made myself VERY happy. This first round is a little small but, due to the heat it was starting to bolt so we decided to harvest it while it was still good. Bigger heads are coming.*



**Scallion:** Scallions are one of the foods that embody the flavor of spring-time for me. They are oniony, yes, but they also taste very “green” to me, as well. There are few things that are not made better with ample amounts of fresh chopped scallion

**Bloomsdale Spinach:** Much like the lettuces, this first round of spinach has been through a lot. Spinach is a cool weather crop and it has taken some real babying to get it to today. Spinach HATES hot weather and we had to irrigate it daily, to cool the soil, to keep it all from bolting. While there ARE a few tears, here an there, the leaves are spectacularly delicious and have a nice turgid texture. While we have



*washed this spinach for you it does seem to hold onto grit and would likely benefit from another washing. Refrigerate this stuff ASAP. The Spinach is just starting to come in so there should be larger bags next week.*

**Winner Kohlrabi:** *Kohlrabi is one of my favorite crops that, before I grew it myself, I had never tried. These are the guys with the round light green bulbs and leaves. Both leaf and bulb are edible. The bulbs can*



*be separated from the leaves and lightly peeled. The center of the "rabi" is crisp and a little like sweet broccoli stem. It is good either raw or in stir fries. Another great thing to do is peel and grate them to make a delicious slaw. There are just two (or three) this week but more are coming*

**Slik Pik Summer Squash:** *The Yellow Zucchini and Summer Squash are one of the crops that has really liked the heat. Unlike our earliest crops, which went in late, this made it in early and is just starting to trickle in. There will be larger quantities in the coming weeks as well as some different types of squash. The yellow squash can be used just as you would zucchini.*

## **From the Fields**

Folks,

The last few weeks have been a wild ride, here at the farm. This time of year, as we prepare to make the transition from field work to harvest and delivery are always a little chaotic. We always have way more to do than there is possible time to do it and that, combined with the need to train-in new crew members, and the CRAZY weather that seem to now be the norm, always leaves me feeling a little frantic. Each year I think that I will be better prepared and each year I find myself in nearly the same position despite my best efforts. This year I was fairly on-track until I took most of a week off (last week) to attend my niece's Bat mitzvah in NJ. It was good to see all of my family in one place (something that now only seems to happen at funer-





als) but it was maddening to wake up each morning knowing how much work I was missing on the farm. I am fortunate that Malena is as good as she is at managing things! I came back to find the farm in great shape... though I was still behind on LOTS of little details. While I was gone we also popped out of the long hot and dry spell that seems to have settled in since the 18" of snow that fell, uncharacteristically, in late April.

The spring weather has been, for the second year in a row, a serious challenge to manage... though I think we have done a good job of it. WE got into the field two weeks late and, for the first two weeks the soil was MUCH cooler than normal. Then we swung from Early March weather to late July weather on a dime. I can't think of a spring with so MANY days in the 90's and with so little rain! As I wrote in an earlier note, the late start, while somewhat annoying for our earliest boxes (which are smaller than normal), quickly gave way to 3-4 weeks of perfect planting weather which allowed us to get our warm-weather crops in early. Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplant, Basil, Beans, Etc..., all are twice as large as last summer and I would not be surprised in many of these crops begin to ripen in just 3-4 weeks! The fields are all in great shape and it looks as though we should be running at full speed either next week or the following week. WE will make sure you get some heavy boxes to make up for this lighter one!

This first box of the summer features LOTS of greens but, over the next few weeks, the number of crops, and weight of the boxes should increase rather quickly. Broccoli, radishes, peas, cauliflower, beets, cabbage, Napa and Zucchini are just around the corner. Some of you have been members of our farm for decades and are old-hands at figuring out how to use all of the leafy stuff and some of you might find this to be a new eating experience. I always start the year by asking all of you to, once again, try and clear your heads of the notion that there are vegetables that you just don't like or just don't like to cook. For many years I swore, to anyone who would listen, that I HATED beets! Then someone made me a cold grated beet salad that blew my mind and now I love them. I encourage you to try everything. Sample it raw. Don't fret about having the "best" recipe. Most vegetables are good lightly cooked with a little salt, some garlic and a little olive oil. There is no need to get overly fancy... though it certainly can be fun to find great recipes. A great exercise is to just Google two vegetables in your box and the word recipe. You will be blown away what you find. Sometimes you can pick two seem-

ingly disparate vegetables and STILL find an amazing recipe! Also, from time to time you will find that some of our crops (like this week's pac choi) have a small amount of damage to their foliage. We do our best, using Organic methods, to limit this, but it is not always possible, without the use of synthetic chemicals, to keep all the bugs at bay. We will not harvest a crop that is not still edible... but please do not worry about the odd little hole in a leaf here and there.

Each week your box will arrive and we ask that you do your best to take care of the waxed boxes and return them so that we can reuse them. If you flip the box over you can gently slide the tabs out of their slots and collapse the box. When you come to get next weeks share please try to remember to bring them back. Also please do NOT use them to store anything else.

The next few weeks remain busy for us. Tomatoes need trellising, there is never –ending weeding to do, we are planting further rounds of our mid-summer crops and, of course, we will get busier and busier just bringing in the harvest. We post photos, regularly, on our Facebook Page and we encourage you to post any great recipes you make there as well.

More Soon,

Farmer Mike

P.S. Unfortunately the 4th of July falls on a Wednesday this year. That means that, since we already have a local delivery on Monday, our only options are to deliver on the 5th or 6th. WE have chosen to deliver on the 5th, our regular Thursday delivery date. If you will be out of town you can either have a friend pick up OR you can have us skip your delivery.