



# The Beanstalk

*Easy Bean Farm's Weekly Newsletter*

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## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

**Fennel:** *These are the frilly white bulbs. Both the bulb and the fronds are edible.*

**Amazing Cauliflower:** *Cauliflower is a somewhat difficult crop to grow, here in Minnesota, in mid-summer. These heads are beautiful and quite large. If you quickly parboil the head you can slice it in half, coat it in olive oil and whatever spices you like, and grill it over low heat. It is delicious served this way.*



**Arcadia Broccoli:** *Some of you will get main heads this week and some of you will get bags of florets. Once the plant has made its main head, if the plant is healthy, it will continue to make side shoots. We will have these until the next round of broccoli is ready in a few weeks. If you have bagged florets, open the bag before you refrigerate them.*

**Japanese Eggplant (Full):** *These are the long pinkish/purple guys. They are very tender and can be used as you would any other eggplant.*

**Red Russian Kale:** *This kale still has a little dirt on it from the last storms; The curly Kale really holds onto dirt despite our having washed it.*

**Nadia Eggplant:** *The simplest delicious thing you can do with eggplant is to slice it thinly, coat the slices with olive oil and a little salt, and fry them gently in a pan until they just start to brown.*

**Zukes, Straightneck of Patty pan Summer Squash:** *This year we have four types of squash: Raven Zucchini, SlikPik Crookneck, Zephyr Straight Neck Squash, and Sunburst Patty pans. The patty pans are the flying saucers. Once we get into the season we pick these 3 days a week to keep them picked at the right size. Squash and Zukes are really interchangeable as far as cooking goes. I highly recommend*



summer squash fajitas!

**Cucumber :** *The cucumbers could really benefit from some sun and heat!*

**Green Bell Peppers:** *This week there are more peppers than last week. Next week there should be even more!*

**Biscayne Cubanelle Peppers:** *These are the longer light green/yellow peppers. They are NOT spicy and can be used as you would a green pepper. I like them stuffed and grilled! More next week!*

**Ailsa Craig Sweet Onions:** *The onion crop did VERY well this year and many of these onions are JUMBO and VERY sweet. This variety is best used raw, in my opinion! We will now have onions every week until the end of our harvest season!*

**Red Knight Red Bell Pepper (Full):** *These are just beginning to reach maturity. If we would get some sun and heat we would have them for everyone!*



**Buttercrisp Lettuces:** *The Lettuces are nice and crunchy from the abundant rain. More next week.*

**Tomatoes:** *The tomato crop is really vexing me. The crop looks huge but they will not ripen and, this week, the heavy rains split nearly every tomato that was ready to be picked. This is very frustrating.*

**Green Beans:** *The green bean crop is in a low spot and is sitting in some super-saturated ground. I hope they dry out soon!*





## **From the Fields**

Folks,

The last seven days, since I wrote the last newsletter, have been frustrating and filled with anxiety. As all of you know, the rain has continued, unabated, and we have now had several large rainfall events. I think we had nearly 7" of rain in the last 10-12 days, including a single 4" event last Wednesday. Yesterday I was gladdened to see that a mostly sunny week was predicted... but we got another 1/2" of rain this morning. The combination of too much rain and nearly no sunny and warm days has been keeping me up at night. While the rain creates LOTS of problems for us (not the least of which is that I no longer own a single pair of dry shoes), I think the lack of sun and heat that has marked this August is, in reality, more problematic. It has now been around 16 days since our fields were dry enough to do any real work in. We have been unable to plant or cultivate and, aside from a LOT of hand weeding and harvest, things have been at a stand-still. Most of the crops that are already in the field, aside from a few newly planted successions that washed away in last Wednesday's deluge, look good... but we are running out of time to get anything planted for this harvest season. Cabbages that were ready for harvest swelled with rain and burst open last Thursday. We salvaged what we could. Additionally, I am beginning to worry about fungal problems which can spread rapidly when the plants have no chance to dry out. Finally, without sun and heat the fruiting crops have a VERY difficult time reaching maturity. As I wrote above, the tomato crop has me biting my fingernails. The plants are as heavy with fruit as any year we have ever had... but they just are not ripening. As an illustration, last year we were harvesting 2500#s of tomatoes this week. This year more than half of the red tomatoes had split this week (due to the soggy ground) and I would guess that we will not harvest more than 300#s. We really need some sunny days and temperatures in the high 70's or low 80's! We are doing our best to keep the plants happy and I will continue to hold out hope that a massive tomato harvest is still out there in the weeks that are left before the fall frost. Hopefully by next week I will have better things to report!



Farmer Mike