

# Hillside Prairie Gardens



On a recommendation from one of our CSA members (thanks, Beth!), I checked out the recent book **Tomatoland** written by Barry Estabrook (who I then later heard interviewed on npr) from the library and read it through over this last week. The book focuses on the Florida tomato industry – this is why the average American consumer can buy tomatoes in January – and describes how the fruit is doused with chemicals, picked green and hard, shipped to warehouses across the country, and gassed with ethylene (what a tomato releases naturally if let ripen) to artificially force ripening. Flavor is the very last consideration, after high yield, perfectly round shape, and the ability to be shipped over long distances and stored for long periods. But the book also sheds light on what Estabrook refers to as “modern-day slavery” in this realm of modern industrial agriculture. So if not just for the sheer appreciation of flavor, here’s yet one more reason to get your tomatoes – in season – from farmers you know.

The GARLIC is finished curing now, so we’ve been cleaning it a little at a time in between harvesting, planting, weeding, markets...and eating and sleeping.

We’ve harvested the majority of the Walla Walla, Prince, and Red Bull ONIONS, so now they, too, will spend some time drying in the barn in preparation for their long storage life.

EGGPLANT, SWEET + HOT PEPPERS, & TOMATOES continue to give us outstanding yields; BEANS should also last us at least another week or so.

CUCUMBERS and ZUCCHINI have started to slow down, but new plantings of each await us to get us through to the end of the season.

KALE and SWISS CHARD remain healthy, hearty, and abundant. Remember to check out our **RECIPE INDEX** if you need some help in using them up!

Our MELONS were hit with some pretty intense insect damage out there because of the extreme drought conditions, and suffered lower yields this year despite the attempts at irrigation and (organic) pest control; but the ones we did taste were some of the best, with incredible flavor (also perhaps on account of the heat and dryness)! The Crenshaws and Galias, and the Orange glo, Dakota Rose, Gold Flower, and Black Tail Mountain watermelon varieties have been some of our favorites this season. I can’t think of a better way to end the day – who needs dessert?

In the next couple of weeks: **LEEKS, BASIL, & MINT**  
and another round of **COOL SEASON CROPS**

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