

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

We are still well, just pretty well pooped. Age, stress and the extra effort expended because of the weather, a flooding basement? All of the above?

Fortunately, but unfortunately, we have experience with Mother Nature's fury and we are resilient so we are moving forward at a fast clip now that it has stopped raining buckets, at least for a while.

Also helping is that we have simplified our lives by simplifying our sales efforts. We have decided not to attend the Oak Creek Farmers Market at Drexel Town Square and instead we will concentrate on our Saturday morning on farm stand and, of course, you, our members and the CSA program. Restaurant sales will also be minimized unfortunately not by the restaurant owners' choice.

CSA UPDATE

Both our 18 week CSA and our Market Share CSA sold out on May 3, the earliest in probably a decade. The CSA concept that had been dying a slow death nationally due to the change in people's eating habits, came back to life as all of the CSAs in the area sold out. Here's hoping that with everyone learning how to cook more at home that the CSA

Photos (left): Who needs a park playground when one has an 8-foot willow stump to climb. Petunia (the dog) wanted desperately to climb up so she got a little help and encouragement from her owner, Becky, and expert climber, Piper, aka Rainbow Princess; a couple weeks ago our canopy of trees and shrubs was maybe 20 percent filled in and now were more than 90 percent. Left to its own we would soon be entirely enveloped.





Photos (Clockwise from upper left): Every business including farms needs a rainbow princess fairy to ensure success — in this case of our raised beds with the early crops; our largest greenhouse is packed stem to stern with tomatoes that are now large enough to begin trellising; “The Hill” is hosting our July harvested garlic and perhaps some early potatoes; our newest addition, a so-called caterpillar hoophouse (named for the cords that hold the plastic down giving the house a segmented look) contains more tomatoes, especially our cherry tomatoes, plus basil and celery.

movement is here to stay. It has helped countless farmers stay on the land. We all thank you.

Although we just started planting the majority of our crops last week due to the multiple weather issues, we are still hoping to start the CSA deliveries and open the Farm Stand for Market Share sales the first week of July.

You will receive a final preseason newsletter the last week of June confirming the start date and for those 18 week CSA members, the location and contact information for your pick up site.

FLOUR SHARE UPDATE

Anarchy Acre’s flour share is sold out. The first flour delivery will be when this year’s harvest is in, either the last week of July or the first week of August

FIELD NOTES

Good riddance to May. More than 10 inches of rain. Four nights below freezing with a low of 25 degrees one night.

We were off to a pretty good start by planting our onions on time on April 27. We even planted some of our early potatoes. Then 3.5 inches of rain fell during the next two days. The onions survived but the cold saturated soil caused the potatoes to rot.

By May 13 it had dried out enough and we were confident that we were past the below freezing nights so we started planting again.....beans, beets, transplanted chard plants. Then five inches of rain fell the following week.



Even the raised beds that we had planted into could not prevent the bean seed from rotting or the beet seed from washing away. The level of standing water in our Southeast Milwaukee County corner rivaled that of the floods of June 8, 2008.

After waiting again for the fields to dry out, we were replanting the potatoes, beans and beets and transplanting zucchini, lettuce and other greens by May 24. We are so fortunate that last Thursday's heavy rain stayed north of us, as that would have been the third strike. Would we have been out? If you know us, you know the answer would have been no.

The tomatoes in the hoop houses survived the freeze because we covered them with two layers of row cover and all the plants look great.

We have a transplant house and outdoor racks full of plants waiting their turn to be planted out in the field which have finally dried out and are being prepped for planting, a full two weeks ahead of last year's dismal spring, thanks to this wacko record setting heat wave.

HERB PLANTS

Rosemary, oregano, Italian flat leaf parsley, thyme and basil plants will be included in the first CSA delivery for the 18 week members. So save a place in your garden or round up some good size pots to grow the herbs in.

WHY WE DO IT

Often you hear from us about the doom and gloom facing small farms like ours. In fact we do what we do despite the challenges because we work and live our values. We think folks, all folks, should have access to good food at a reasonable price and we hope we are offering that. And the land we use (no owner truly owns their land) we try hard to make it better — not by our standards but by nature's. Our farm is open to everyone. We try to make it place of respite and peace. It ain't always easy, but it's a life worth living.

