

# Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

Vol. 19 No. 3

Summer, 2013

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. We were working in long underwear and raincoats and gloves, but then I could come in and take a warm shower and huddle under my afghan and read the paper. It wouldn't stop raining, but the basement never flooded, only sprouting geysers from the cracks in the floor. And when the basement dried up we knew the fields had dried out enough to take a tractor into the field, an odd field tester of sorts. And the cool weather provided a beautiful prolonged

and onions were decimated by thirsty insects and inundated with fast growing, heat loving weeds. The chard was stemmy and thin leaved. This year we are looking at rows of lush greens and fairly low insect pressure for this time of year.

Last year the greenhouses were filled to the top and producing beans, cucumbers and tomatoes by mid July. This year, the effects of the lack of sun is dramatic with the plants only a third as tall, even though they have the heat of the solar radiation inside the greenhouses.

And the most telling fact

upick. This year there will not be a upick. Strawberries are planted a full year before they bear fruit. Last year we were in the midst of drought with only a few inches of rain during the months of May and June so we prioritized keeping the growing crops alive instead of dedicating irrigation trying to establish a new strawberry patch. We did keep the previous year's patch, but that did not survive the winter. It was a hard winter for many overwintered crops because of the multiple thaw, rain, freeze cycles in February. Most of our farmer friends lost most of their garlic (we lost about 15%) and our neighbor just plowed under his alfalfa field. It was also hard on permanent landscape plants such as rose and butterfly bushes.

We did plant a pumpkin patch and we plan on having a pumpkin upick for the kids. We know, a pumpkin is not the same as a strawberry, but we hope that it is a way for kids and kids at heart to spend some time at the farm.

address and phone number. All of the locations and times remain the same as last year, except our Shorewood location has moved two blocks north to Shorewood Blvd. and we added a new location, La Merenda Restaurant on National Ave, just east of First Street. Please inform us ASAP if you would like to change locations.

## FIELD NOTES

We did not start planting until May 8th, three weeks behind schedule. And then the crops that were planted just sat there for weeks in the cold soil under cloudy skies being battered by cold lake breezes.

But things have finally started to turn around as it is suddenly summer. Four days ago, the morning of June 19th it was 48 degrees. As I write this it is 88 degrees.

Back when it looked like summer would never arrive we switched gears and planted some cool weather crops that we usually wait until fall to plant such as spinach, radishes, broccoli, tat soi and kale. We hope they hang in there during this hot spell.

And despite the cool weather we kept with our planting schedule and fortunately did not lose many seeds to rot except for a few potatoes and beans and a planting of carrots and beets. Our last big planting push has been the last two weeks as we felt that the nights would finally stay above 50 degrees. With the help of our worker share crew we transplanted our heat loving crops of peppers, canteloupes, watermelons, cucumbers, winter squash, paste tomatoes and tomatillos, all of them.



spring for the tulips, wood violets, lilacs, and fruit blossoms.

Without early crops to harvest since we are not at the South Shore Farmers Market this year, our lives are a little less stressfull and full of planting, cultivating, weeding and trellising in preparation for a wonderful, CSA harvest season.

## A TALE OF TWO SEASONS

Last year the cool-weather-loving crops never had a chance. The lettuce was beautiful one day and bolting towers of leaves the next. The peas turned white and bitter. The cabbage, pac choi

of all is growing degree days, with 933 in 2012 and 573 this year, well below the average of 725. Similar to heating degree days on your utility bill, growing degree days are calculated by subtracting the base temperature of 50 degrees from the mean temperature for the day. It is used both for plant growth rates and for predicting when insects will hatch or migrate north.

## STRAWBERRY UPICK

This time of year is usually strawberry season, and we open our farm to a CSA-only

## CSA START DATE

We are letting the peas decide when to start the CSA season. The peas are usually ready to pick weeks before the CSA season begins, so we have had pea upick days along with the strawberry upicks. This year the peas started blossoming last week and will be ready next week, just in time for the first CSA box on Wednesday, July 3rd, as planned. Obviously the first boxes might be a little light until things start to grow faster, but all members will get to enjoy peas this year.

You will be receiving an email next Monday detailing your dropsite host's name,