

Pinehold Gardens *Field Notes*

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

The holidays are over. Winter settles in. This kind of weather takes a toll on folks even those wedded to winter sports. Cabin fever sets in even among the sanest of us and especially our cats.

What's the cure? Eat well, drink plenty of fluids and get outside if only for a little while. Luckily, we don't mind shoveling some snow. We've tried every manner of snowblowers but none give us the ability work up a sweat nor provide the mood to think. There is something Zen-like in the repetition of shovel full after shovel full, repeating over and over again the same motion, which is not unlike repeating a mantra, a stiff back notwithstanding.

Being forced to stay indoors gives us no choice but to attend to the many hours of tax preparation and seed ordering. And since we will be back outdoors by spring cleaning time, we do winter cleaning.

FIELD NOTES

People often ask us if it is better to have snow or no snow and cold or no cold. And of course, we answer, depends.

We personally really like the idea of no snow. It's just so much easier to do things outside. And we tend to like the more varied colors of winter without snow. And I think the animals, especially the birds, prefer it.

The snow cover right now is a good thing because although our strawberries and garlic fields are mulched, the snow adds another layer of insulation from frequent cold as well as thaw cycles. These cycles cause the soil to heave and plant roots to loose contact with the soil, weakening and maybe even killing them.

As far as cold goes, there is preference for below freezing cold — that is below 32 F. The ground stays firm

and if at that temperature long enough, the frost in the ground can go deep enough hurt some of the detrimental insect populations. Temperatures below zero are another matter altogether.

One good thing about the cold, snowy weather is the sparrows, juncos and chickadees are having a feast eating the weed seeds in the field. By the way, we buy bird seed from Caledonia Feed on 5 1/2 Mile road just west of Hwy. H, a few miles from our farm.

The Deluxe brand is really clean so you're not wasting money on seed the birds don't eat. If you go, tell Butch we say hey.

NEW DROPSITE

Our good friends and long-time Pinehold members, Melissa and Kevin, have bought a house near Lafayette and Bartlett Ave. and have offered their home as a dropsite. They are within striking distance of the East side as well as downtown. We've added their home to our sign up form.

COMING UP

The PBS show, Around the Corner with John McGivern, is featuring Oak Creek on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. Assuming we make the final edit, Pinehold Gardens will make a bit appearance although Sandy and I won't. We weren't here when John was here. There may be some shots of David on a tractor that were taken later.

Also on Saturday, March 9, the Urban Ecology Center is hosting the 17th Annual CSA open house event from 11 am

to 3 pm. Please spread the word as we are falling behind on new member recruitment and word of mouth is by far our best marketing tool.

Finally, you will hear from us two more times before the season starts. The second pre-season newsletter will give you more details about the new season.



Oh, to be able to walk backwards in time just for a day this cold and snowy January, when t-shirts were all that were required to work in the potato field and monarch butterflies spent leisurely moments on the zinnias. What we need these days is not photos we can look at but photos we can feel.