

**We'll be POPPING-UP at Cobblestone  
Farmers Market tomorrow! Can you say  
Sweet Potatoes?! See below for a full list.**

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Happy Friday, Farm Friends!

Starting in October, we are frequently asked if things are slowing down here at the farm. "Hey, it's Fall so there must not be much to do, right?" I'm sure the look that we give folks is that classic deer in the headlights expression -- wide (wild?)-eyed panic!

No, things aren't really slowing down. Fall is a very busy season because it means planting cool season crops as well as two of our biggest plantings of the year: strawberries and garlic. We have a bit of breathing room on the garlic -- we need to plant it by mid-November. However, the strawberries are saying "plant me now!" For the best crop, strawberries should be planted in late September. If you miss that mark, the yields start to slowly decline. Unfortunately, that's the hand we have been dealt for this year but the

good news is that they will be covered by a high tunnel to provide additional protection over the winter.



The beds are all prepared and the next step is to cover the field in landscape fabric. The landscape fabric is key because it keeps weeds down but is also helps provide better quality fruit by keeping the berries out of the soil. Cleaner berries = Better berries! We also love landscape fabric because it is reusable for many years and it allows water penetration. Most strawberry growers use plastic mulch which doesn't breather and is not reusable. We did use plastic our first year of growing strawberries. An important lesson we learned was that since water cannot go through the plastic, puddles form -- so you have berries sitting in a puddle of water which leads to mold and rot. Not good!

We've got about 2,000 strawberry plants that we will be getting in the ground

over the next 2 weeks. It takes some time to burn 2000 holes in the fabric!



### **Monarch Miracle**

You may remember a couple of weeks ago, we found a monarch caterpillar munching on milkweed in the hay fields. We took the caterpillar to our friend, Maggie so it could dine on her milkweed plants. In a few days, the caterpillar had formed a "J" and then developed its chrysalis. Maggie brought the chrysalis to us on September 23 and we've been documenting its development. Take a look at the amazing process.



Day #2



Day #3

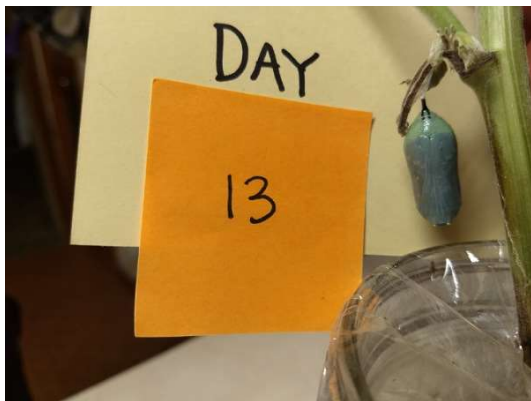




Day #5 -- not much change- just a bit more prominent gold "beads"



If you look really closely, you can start to see the wings through the back side of the chrysalis.



Now the wings are really prominent - - you can see the black and orange becoming more visible,



The gold "beads" have become even more pronounced and the chrysalis is getting darker overall.





Isn't this most amazing thing you've ever seen? We knew that it was getting close to time for emergence on Tuesday morning when you could really see the wings. The chrysalis was getting darker -- actually it becomes transparent and the color is that of the wings and body. We put some flowers in the jar so that the butterfly would have some nectar when it emerged and carried it with us to a meeting! During our meeting, Ray noticed that it was starting to emerge. So

everything stopped while we watched in awe. Cameras clicking, all of us were gathered around this moment -- a moment of amazement and of pure beauty.

We let her settle in and climb up to the flowers. We know it was a female because the the black veins in the wings are thicker and there are no dots on the lower portion of the wings (males have those). Finally we took her back to the front yard of the house and placed the jar among the zinnias. About 3 hours later, she was gone. But while I was standing there, a monarch flew over me and I felt sure it was her. According to [The Journey North](#), monarchs born in the late summer can live up to 8 months and are the ones that [migrate to Mexico](#) for the winter. Here's wishing you a wonderful trip to the Monarch Mecca! Bon Voyage!

### **Come See Us at Cobblestone!**

We are looking forward to seeing all of our friends at Cobblestone Farmers Market TOMORROW at their NEW location (1007 S. Marshall Street - at the intersection of Salem Avenue and Old Salem Road). This will be your chance to snag some fresh ORGANIC produce at the market! We'll have our **Scrumptious Sweet Potatoes** and the **Bountiful Potato Bar** (German Butterball, Bintje, Nicola, and Plum Gold along with boxes of Creamers and Teeny Tiny Taters).





We'll also have our **Famous Hatch Style Green Chile** (Mild, Medium and Hot). Both roasted and fresh will be available! You'll also find other Hot Peppers, Basil (time for making pesto to freeze for winter!), Shishito Peppers, Okra, and MORE! Stop by and say "Hello!" -- we would love to see you! Look for the Purple Tent near the Information Booth. Market hours are from 8:30 to noon and free parking is available in lots along Marshall Street.



### **Arrivederci Dan!**

We bid farewell to Dan Mickey this week. He's heading back to Maine (I know, we guess he likes winter!) Dan has been a great addition to our team this season. His Can-Do spirit (most famous quote: "Heck Yeah!") and willingness to tackle any task made him an essential part of Team Plum Granny. We even have him to blame for starting our biweekly potlucks! We'll miss you, Dan and if you tire of B-52 size mosquitos and sub-zero weather for days on end, come

on back!



That's a wrap for this week's edition. Did you know that Tuesday is [Farmer's Day](#)? We didn't either, but we'll take it! Does that mean we get a day off? Didn't think so.

**Remember to please get your COVID shot, wear a mask in indoor public places, and be kind. By working together we can get past this new COVID surge!**

**Until next Friday,  
*Cheryl & Ray***

