



Happy Friday, Farm Friends! Welcome to July!

We know that summer has arrived when we start getting the plum granny patch around the sign and in the yard. The vines have exploded, and the flowers are starting to bloom. They always make me smile.



July definitely came in with some fireworks -- and it wasn't just the 4th! The heat has been intense, and the storms have brought a couple of inches of rain - - much needed, for sure. We've been dealing with the heat as best we can. Our team's work schedule has shifted to 6:30 a.m. to noon to help us cope a bit better with the heat and humidity. The afternoons can be unmerciful, and the frequent pop-up storms can be fierce. Earlier days -- plus lots of water can help us get through it! A bit of extra rest can help, too -- after the team leaves, Ray and Cheryl might siesta or do desk work through the worst of the heat and then go back to work in the evening.

---

## **Sweet Taters in the Ground!**

Last Friday before everyone headed off for the long weekend, we got the sweet potato slips planted -- finally! We struggled with finding the right field for them (that deer pressure thing, you know). After getting the snap pea vines out a couple of weeks ago, we were able to get the beds prepped and irrigated for the slips. Hooray!



We ended up planting a lot less than we had last year -- and actually even less than we had planned for this year. We were disappointed in the quality of the slips that we got -- we ordered the plants in quantities of 1,000 and each 1,000 came stuffed into a single box. We had to throw away a lot of the slips because of how they were shipped. Lesson learned.

But the little plants are tucked in the ground and are LOVING the heat, humidity and rain! Now our task is to keep the weeds and the deer from overtaking the crop!

## **Field of Dreams**

Oh, what fun we had in the Blackberry Field on July 4th! We had a phenomenal turnout of folks who were ready for some blackberries! And the blackberries were ready for them, too! Nearly 100 people came out on Monday to pick and sample the delicious berries. Thanks so much to all of you who came out for the morning!





It's always so great to see little ones in the field, with their berry-stained faces (Who me? I didn't eat any berries!) They are learning important lessons about where food comes from and how it's grown -- very important life lessons!

### **Garlic -- The Road Trip!**

We are just about done with the garlic harvest for this year -- German Red is the only variety left in the field and it will probably come out next week. Since this year's crop is so good -- and the bulbs are SO large, we ran out of room in our barn and had to find another place to store it. Thanks to our friends, Andy and Lisa, we are using their huge mule barn for that purpose. What a beautiful space! It has 2 lofts and great ventilation -- perfect for spreading out the garlic. This past weekend, with the help of our friend, Lois, we took all of the

garlic waiting at the Tobacco Barn on a little road trip -- just a couple of miles away! We got it spread out on the floor along with the Chesnok which was already there on a trailer. What a beautiful sight! The garlic will stay here to "cure" for at least 4-6 weeks. This curing process lets the garlic completely dry down and enables the development of greater complexity in its flavor. Yum-o!



### **Out With the Old...In With the New!**

It's the time of year at the farm when we are doing lots of flipping of crops. As pest pressure and disease intensify, yields decline -- so it makes sense to remove those plants and put in new ones. Cucurbits are especially in need of this treatment. You really can't plant once and expect that planting to last the entire season. Our squash planting in Raz House has been cranking out oodles of beautiful yellow squash for over a month but the squash bugs, vine borers and cucumber beetles moved in and began to kill off the plants one by one. It was time to get those plants out of there and start fresh. We hauled the old plants out -- being careful to not disturb the pests -- and piled them up. Then we covered the pile with recycled clear greenhouse plastic and will let it cook for a week or so to destroy the pests and eggs. We also added the plant debris from the cucumbers. A burial mound for pests!



After clearing, we are planting a succession crop -- the cucumbers are moving into a high tunnel to make room in the greenhouse for ginger and turmeric. All

planted and trellised -- now we'll just wait for the cukes!



That's all we've got for this week! We are now officially in the [Dog Days of Summer](#). A recent poll of Plum Granny Farm dogs (n=1), 100% of respondents felt that the "Dog Days" weren't very dog friendly.



Also, enjoy the July Full Moon on Wednesday -- the [Full Buck Moon](#) will be visible as it rises after sunset in the southeast sky.

Stay cool, Friends! And don't forget to drink lots of water!



---

**Be kind, love your neighbor, and pray for Peace and for an end to all of this senseless violence.**

**Until next week,  
*Cheryl & Ray***

