



Happy Friday, Farm Friends!

Whew! That was close!



After all the angst and worry about the potential of a big freeze, we ended up with just a frost. Hooray!

But preparing is the thing that you want to do, right? If you are not prepared for the possibilities of bad things, what will you do if they happen? Ray and I both grew up in Scouting where the motto was "Be Prepared!" We took that one to heart. You don't want to be injured in the backcountry and not have a first aid kit around, do you? Farming is a lot like that.

So we scurried around covering things that needed to be covered, doing potentially final harvests of cold sensitive crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant,

okra), repairing high tunnel doors, draining water lines, etc. Yes, we were prepared -- and thankfully we didn't have to bear the worst possible outcomes.



Task: Sweet Potatoes Status: Done!

After we ran around getting ready for the freeze, it was time to tackle the sweet potato harvest. Jonny and Elise cut all of the vines on Tuesday (the critters

were pretty happy about that!) and then we harvested on Wednesday. Last week's rain along with the cold weather made the conditions pretty mucky -- we'll have a lot of washing to do before these taters go out the door!



While we weren't turning cartwheels over the harvest volume, it was respectable.



So now, the sweet potatoes are tucked in the greenhouse to cure. Curing is an important step in growing sweet potatoes because it helps them become sweeter plus it improves storage by toughening the skins. This process takes about a week to 10 days. They like to be in a very warm environment with high humidity -- so a greenhouse is a good place for this!



After they are cured, then it will be time to dig in! Can't wait!



Sigh...Strawberries

Next up on the task list was strawberries. As we told you last week, we were sorely disappointed in the quality of the plants from Cottle Farms. As we worked with them more, it got worse. Nearly every plant was planted too deeply so we had to tear off the top 3/4 inch of potting mix to expose the crown. Strawberries are very picky about how they are planted -- the crown cannot be buried.



So, after Ray took care of that task, the plants were dipped in a mix of fish emulsion, compost tea and beneficial bacteria to reduce root rot. Finally, it was time to plant.



We are trying to stay optimistic about this crop but we are pretty discouraged. We'll do everything in our power to help them grow and prosper but when you start with poor quality plants that are being planted too late, you can't expect a bumper crop. Hopefully we'll be proven wrong! Miracles can happen!

Seed Garlic Now Available Online!

Thanks so much to those of you who visited our tent at Cobblestone Farmers Market last weekend and bought seed garlic (and chile and more!). We really appreciate your support! Since we aren't always at market, we wanted to give

you a convenient option for getting garlic for planting.



Order now  



Welcome to our Store!

We have updated our [Online Store](#) and you can purchase our big, beautiful **Organic Seed Garlic** (Music, Chesnok Red and Elephant)! You can pick up your purchases at the farm on Wednesdays or at Cobblestone Farmers Market on Saturdays.

Don't delay -- NOW is the time for planting and since this is local, it is acclimated to our area and is ready to grow!



That's all we've got for this week! Did you know that today is [National Apple Day](#)? We've got a terrific source of apples very close by -- just up the road in

Ararat, Virginia. [Levering Orchard](#) is celebrating its 114th year and offers a wonderful variety of fresh delicious apples that you pick yourself or buy pre-picked. We purchase apples from Frank Levering for our subscription program, [PlumFresh](#). A great thing about Frank is his commitment to use a low spray approach to growing fruit. Orchards are notoriously high in their use of pesticides and fungicides – typically the fruit is sprayed 12-15 times. Frank, although not Organic, sprayed this year's crop of apples only TWICE during the growing season. He says that his fellow growers look at him with disdain! Fewer chemicals -- plus they're delicious!



Get em' while you can!

Until next week,
Cheryl & Ray

