



Happy New Year, Farm Friends! Happy Friday!



*Thanks to Chatham County Cooperative Extension Office for use of this image*

We hope your Holidays were as much fun as the critters seem to be having in this illustration! Ours was a bit more like the farmer in the wheelbarrow -- we didn't quite make it to midnight on 1/1/2023 but we did come pretty close!

We really have enjoyed the past couple of weeks of relaxation. Lots of movies, music, and puttering around. We did have one major project: clear out the massive accumulation of paper in the office. We've made much progress. Oodles of boxes and bags of paper have gone to recycling -- feels so good!



And who says that we don't know how to have fun?!

Despite our more leisurely schedule, we were hustling around trying to keep pipes from freezing, animals from freezing, and just about everything else from freezing! That was a VERY cold snap over Christmas!



I don't recall a December with such low temperatures. And the wind! This photo of our weather station was captured when the wind was calm. Mostly we were having sustained winds around 20 MPH and gusts of 40+. We were so glad that no trees fell and that everyone had shelter.

With heaters running under the houses, we were able to make it with no frozen pipes. Unfortunately, the remaining field crops did not fare well. They were not covered -- but we're not sure if even that would have saved them.



But of course, now we are back to unseasonably warm temperatures -- we were in the mid- to upper 60s this week! Go figure!

### **Garlic? Done!**

Our last planned task before the Christmas break was to get the garlic planted. And we made good on that plan. The last bulbs went into the ground on the Solstice, and it was indeed a cause for celebration. The completion was especially sweet since we had so many setbacks in getting it done.

The final count was 6,798. Much smaller than what we have had in the past, but it was what we could get done given the conditions. As it stands, garlic is planted in 3 different fields!



### **Team Ginger Rocks!**

Also before the flip of the calendar, we were doing some work on our ginger crop. Our partnership with [Dr. Gouchen Yang at NC A&T](#) is such a blessing. We learn so much from his team's research, and this year they are evaluating a test plot of ginger that we grew for them in our greenhouse. Two of Dr. Yang's graduate students, William and Daniel, harvested our test bags and collected data on the crop -- weight, size and other characteristics. The rhizomes will also be analyzed to determine their gingerol content and other properties.

The harvest was pretty good - despite it being planted on the late side. We are looking forward to learning more about the results of their research!



Another benefit of our work with Dr. Yang is being able to visit his laboratory and greenhouse to learn more about what he is doing to support small farmers in NC and elsewhere. Ray recently stopped by for a visit to get some tips from Dr. Yang so that we would be ready for his grad students.



## Seed Time!

When the calendar flips, we getting into seeding mode! This week, the first seed went into trays in the greenhouse. It was quickly followed by 6,768 of its closest friends! Boy, these numbers add up quickly!

Any guesses about what we are seeding first?



Onions! I'm not sure why the first crop we seed each year has tiny black seeds which are placed on dark seed starting mix! I always start getting a bit cross-eyed by the end of the first day.



And with all these seed trays and plants, WE NEED MORE ROOM!



And it is beginning! Our long-delayed greenhouse expansion is finally taking (more) shape -- the first bow went up yesterday! Ray has figured out a better (and safer) way to connect the bows to the posts so setting them will be easier and faster. We hope to get several more bows and purlins installed today and then we will begin on the hipboards and other parts of the structure. The magic will be when we take the cover off the existing part of the greenhouse so that we can cover the old and the new as one 96' building! So exciting!

That's the news for now. We've got LOTS more news to share with you in the coming weeks. Many projects are underway (including volunteer opportunities), events are planned, and so much more. So stay tuned!

We are SO very grateful that you take the time to read about our little slice of the world each week. Wishing you a Healthy and Abundant 2023!

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

p.s. Don't miss the first Full Moon of 2023 -- the [Full Wolf Moon](#) will shine brightly tonight!

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