

Kick off your Holiday weekend with a stop at the Purple Tent! We've got great things for your picnicking and grilling pleasure: Tomatoes, Snap Peas, Spinach, Squash, Garlic Scapes and MORE! See the details below.



Happy Friday, Farm Friends!



The butterflies are fluttering and the coneflower is blooming -- it's beginning to look like summer!

We're starting to get those early summer vibes around the farm -- we're prepping for the most summer-y of our crops: sweet potatoes and okra. Next week our sweet potato slips arrive, and this field will be filled with little bareroot plants. We'll plant about 1,500 of the slips plus about 150 okra transplants.



But before the first plants go in the ground, there are several more critical steps that must happen: beds need to be shaped and most importantly, FENCING!

Long-time readers know of the battles we've had with deer over sweet potatoes (and blackberries and kale and lettuce and...) We're always trying new things to exclude the deer, but the electrified double fence seems to be most effective method.

The landscape fabric under the fence line will help eliminate weeds from touching the fence and shorting it out. It also saves labor in mowing and weed-eating around all the t-posts.

East LA in NC

We've added a new field this year beside our new high tunnel (Lil' Abner). The new field is named. "East LA" because it's east of Lil' Abner!

This new 10x90 space will help ease some of our challenges in finding places to put crops. Current plans are for hot peppers, Poblanos and some green chile. It's always exciting to get a new space to grow stuff!



Throwing Shade

Another sure sign that summer is on the way is that we put shade cloth on the greenhouse and Mama Meow. It was nice to get that task taken care of before July! We've still got at least 3 more tunnels to cover but we ordered the fabric a couple of weeks ago (gulp \$\$), so it's ready to go.



While we're shading the houses, some crops take even more shady conditions. Trying to get lettuce to emerge when the temps soar is a challenge. Right now, we are putting newly seeded trays under the benches in the greenhouse. That provides enough of a cooler environment for them to sprout. However, later in the summer, we'll have to put the seed trays in the Tobacco Barn or milk house (~60 degrees) to get them started. If it gets really

hot, we've had to put them in the walk-in! Lettuce really likes it chill!



Good Bugs vs Bad Bugs

Pests are always a challenge, but this year has been exceptionally bad for whiteflies and aphids. We have sprayed with biologicals, but we wanted to shift to using beneficial insects as the season progresses. While we've had some lady beetle larvae naturally present, there weren't enough of them to deal with the intense pest pressure.

[Green Lacewing](#) larvae are excellent predators of aphids, whiteflies, mites and more. We received our shipment of 5,000 live larvae on Wednesday and got them sprinkled out in Li' Abner on Thursday morning. We'll be getting eggs every two weeks that will continue to hatch and try to keep the bad bug populations in check.



Cobblestone Farmers Market Update

We're maintaining this Summer theme under the **Purple Tent** this Saturday at Cobblestone.

Tomatoes! Thanks to the sunnier skies this week, we'll have more slicers and fruits. They go quickly, so you'd better get to market early.



You'll also find **Sugar Snap Peas (last of the crop!)**, **Baby and Perfectly Sized Regular-Summer Squash**, **Spinach**, and **Radishes**. And don't forget the **Garlic Scapes!** They make a phenomenal white bean dip or pesto for your Holiday picnics, and grill up nicely for burgers or steaks at your barbeque!



In the Plant Department, you'll find our amazing **Strawberry Hanging Baskets** along with **Blackberry**, **Raspberry** and **Ginger Plants**.



We look forward to seeing you on Saturday at market! [Cobblestone Farmers Market](#) is open from **8:30-noon every Saturday**. It is located at 1007 Marshall Street SW (at the intersection of Salem Avenue). Plenty of parking surrounds

market but make sure not to block entrances or park on grass or other landscaping.

That's what we've got for this week, friends! But before we go, we need to end with a little Public Service Announcement. May is [Skin Cancer Awareness Month](#). As the most common form of cancer, skin cancer is diagnosed in around 9,500 people every day in the US. Unfortunately, I (Cheryl) became one of those numbers this week.



On Wednesday, I had a [Squamous Cell carcinoma](#) removed from the left side of my nose. The surgeon said that he got it all and that things looked good (my currently swollen face and eyes notwithstanding!). I am very fortunate.

These cancers are caused by sun exposure and the most common location is the face, especially the nose. While I try to protect my skin as much as possible, this probably arose from early exposure and from extensive exposure to sun while driving (driver's nose).

The lesson is to always wear sunscreen and to make sure that our kids and other little ones around us do too. Keep yourself informed about what to look for -- [this little quiz can help](#).

None of us is immune from this cancer -- it impacts all skin shades. Apply sunscreen generously and frequently, wear [protective clothing](#) and learn how to do a [skin self exam](#). Remember five important words: [Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide](#). And if you have any concerns, see a dermatologist. I had this little

spot on my nose that bled sometimes, and Ray urged me to get it checked out. I'm glad I did. He also had 4 non-cancerous lesions that were lasered. This was our Anniversary present to each other.

Thanks for reading this week -- we wish you a wonderful Memorial Day Weekend. [Let us all pause to remember those who have been lost in the service of our Country.](#)

Until next week,
Cheryl & Ray

