

Garden Committee Report

February 2022

General Comments

As I begin to type this report, I perused last February's report. Not surprisingly, this report is going to look very similar – but worse – and better. Remember “snowmageddon” of last February. One two-week blast of arctic cold. This year has been worse. We've not had temps in the single digits, but weekly dips well down into the twenties, week after week after week. Last year we lost about half the garden. This year we lost everything, except about a third of our onions, but we were able to salvage the carrot and beet roots that didn't freeze – but the tops were frozen to the ground (and last month's news).

But, having virtually everything dead in the garden is also a good thing. We have a blank canvas to paint on. We can devote our total attention to starting over. So, what does starting over look like, you ask?

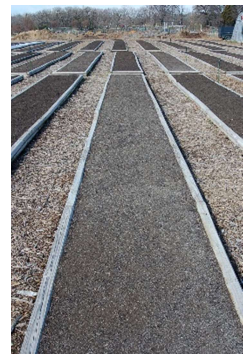
Projects

Lots of them. Some big, some little. Some necessary, and some quality-of-life improvements.

Raised Beds: Our raised beds were getting low on Dyno Dirt. It further decomposes, gets packed down,



and well, sometimes it comes out with the harvest – the beds look about half full. So we've been hauling in more Dyno. Four yards a trip, two to three trips a day, three times a week. A thousand pounds a yard, that can be 8, 12, or 16,000 pounds of shoveling into wheelbarrows, pushing to the bed, dumping, raking, etc. Hard work. That's why only three times a week, need a breather day in-between. All but one of the Field 1 beds are done. A third of Field 2 beds are done. Got the other 2/3s to do (mmm, purdy!).



Field 2 North In-Ground Beds: We've finally been able to start creating these again. Got four 100



footers built yesterday (Saturday). That makes 6 of 39 done. Why yesterday? Simple answer – Peeps. Lots of peeps. We expected 15 – 20. We got over 40. Can get lots of work done with 40. After the Peeps left, I was able to get more Dyno hauled in and staged for even more beds. We're also looking for someone who might own a trencher we can borrow, or they might come trench for us, so we can install the irrigation for this part of the field. We've got feelers out. If they don't feel anything, we'll have to rent

one. Can't wait to get this done. Need to get this done. It's a project from the CARES act funding. By the way, the wide gap between is where we need to trench for the above ground irrigation.

Tunnel No. 1: You will remember we had the two tunnels tarped, occultating, for quite a while now.



We uncovered Tunnel No. 1, got the beds rebuilt, and planted. Let's see, I see radish, mustard greens, and a couple varieties of cabbage. It's so nice to see green in the garden again.

Tunnel No. 2: One of the major projects for yesterday (Saturday) was to get this tunnel ready for



planting. The Peeps had to go before we got it finished, but it's mostly there. Sometimes 5 out of 7 is just fantastic.

Hose Hangers: I'd purchased some hose hangers to... hang our water hoses on. Apparently they aren't heavy enough, or our volunteers are too hard on them. So I found this one at the new Ace Hardware on University. Trying it out before ordering ten more. But you see all those poles down the right side of the road? What are they for?



Timer Boxes: With no electricity on the property, I have



battery operated timers down in these cans. At 6' tall and 60+ years old, that's too low. Frankly, it's just a long way back up. Going to mount a box on the poles at a reasonable height, with the wires inside conduit down into the valve boxes. The poles are recycled timbers from the blackberry patch. I'm excited about this QOL improvement, once complete.

Command Center: That's what I'm calling this for now. Two years ago, we had Toyota out teaching us their method of management. This is an outworking of that experience. Here's a pic of John and Finn (long time volunteers) getting it built. Been on my mind for a long time, stewing on how I wanted this built so



I wouldn't regret not having done it differently. Got it built now. Still needs the seams caulked, and a coat or two of paint, but it'll be nice. Got it right here next to the sign-in/out table. Now our to-do list can be right there for

volunteers to see. Can hang the map on the back side of one of the doors so it's visible when open and that frees up space on the dry erase board. This, hopefully, will become the communication center for Shiloh Field and the nerve center of the garden. And, maybe take some pressure off Dean and I.



Paper Pot Transplanter: Well, we got our first use of this nifty little tool. We planted some romaine



lettuce in a couple of raised beds. So, how'd it go? It's going to take some getting used to. It was a little bit of a pain to use in the raised beds. It's a tool designed for in-



ground beds, and probably longer runs. But with a little discussion, Michael was able to get the job done. Even

with its shortcomings in raised beds, the job got done in two labor hours instead of 8 or 10 – NICE!!!

That's what we got it for. Apparently, Michael liked it so much he took a bunch of paper pots home to seed there (he has a small heated greenhouse there – seeds germinate better). We'll be using this little tool a lot more this year. Google the video if you haven't, this is slick.

Weather Report

Really needs no reporting after the General Comments. Cold, then warm, then cold, then warm. I don't keep records on this, but my gut tells me I've already closed the garden as many days this year as all last year. Looking forward to a ten-day forecast with no mornings below freezing. I got beds ready and carrot seeds. Lots of carrot seeds need seeding.

Volunteer Report

January 01 to February 28, 2021		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2021	1101.25	392
FEBRUARY 2021	682.0	239
TOTALS:	1783.25	631

January 01 to February 17, 2022		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2022	701.75	254
FEBRUARY 2022	416.0	165
TOTALS:	1117.75	260

63% 41%

The numbers are... well... the fact is we have numbers to report this month is the good news. Closures, temps in the low 20s with wind chills in the single digits... I'd like to think we have intelligent volunteers, and they've been smart enough to stay home (smarter than Dean and I some days). But as yesterday told me, they still are willing to come out when a nice day lands on a Saturday.



Harvest Report

January 01 to February 28, 2021		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
JANUARY 2021	725.0	63
FEBRUARY 2021	513.5	76
TOTALS:	1238.5	139

January 01 to February 17, 2022		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
JANUARY 2022	831.0	*****
FEBRUARY 2022	0.0	*****
TOTALS:	831.0	0

67% 0%

Well, there's the number for February. It's a first for me, since 2018. Bound to happen someday. Today's the day. A big fat zero. Month end will be the same.

Here's the breakdown by veg. year-to-date.

PRODUCE	YEAR to DATE 2021	YEAR to DATE 2022
Beets	12.50	116.00
Bok Choy	6.00	0.00
Broccoli	73.75	0.00
Broccoli, Romanesco	21.50	0.00
Cabbage	119.50	0.00

Cabbage, Asian	314.00	0.00
Cabbage, Napa	0.00	64.00
Carrots	0.00	651.00
Cauliflower	59.25	0.00
Chard	50.50	0.00
Collard Greens	166.25	0.00
Lettuce Mix	69.00	0.00
Lettuce Romaine	20.00	0.00
Mustard	315.75	0.00
Turnips, Purple Top	10.50	0.00
Harvest Totals:	1,238.50	831.00

So normally I'd comment here on 'the big takeaway' from these numbers. There's nothing to take away from zero. Well, maybe one. The need for heated tunnels.

Final Comments

In the beginning of December, I had Joe and Dave plant three beds of carrots. They needed planting.



Just so happens that Joe and Dave needed to learn how. They did, and they were, three beds worth. Then came all these freezes. We covered them, those tiny little plants that barely had their first true leaves, with frost cloth. They've survived. So, once we can take the frost cloth off them, the garden will be a bit greener.



Tomato seeds have been planted. Time will tell, we'll see.

Some other things have been planted too. Broccoli, cauliflower, swiss chard, cabbages, collards and lettuce.



We've spent a little time getting ready for the new raised beds planned for the south end of Fields 1 and 2. Bruce did a mighty fine job of plowing a new drainage ditch along the bottom of Fields 1 and 2. Nice and straight. This allowed us to put wood chips on the south side and walla! Parking spaces! But we also added a new addition!

Drainage culverts. Bought a 24' long one, cut ten feet off one end. Installed the 14 footer here. And the 10 footer



here. Nice. No bone jarring jolt plodding through the ditch in the road that we had



before. Now why they put in a 12" diameter culvert and covered up the top half of the pipe? That's a headscratcher. I'm still trying to figure that one out.

A few pics of the things being prepped and stored for the Field 2 North irrigation install. One inch pipe



for the main line, half inch pipe for the stand pipes, some of the stand pipes built with wobblers installed, fittings galore, and 4 foot rebar to support the stand pipes. Got most of this done on a cold winter day in the nursery tunnel.

What do you do when you want to work on beds in the Tunnel with Dyno Dirt, but the Beneficial Reuse Department is closed on Monday? Stage a trailer load, now it's ready for use!



So, the weather has been generally bad. January and February (so far) have dealt us some real lemons weather wise. So, what do we do?



Make lemonade!

Cheers,

Doug