

# Garden Committee Report

## May 2022

### General Comments

So far, this year's been strange, really strange. And the harvest totals reflect it. Let's dive into it.

### Weather Report

We finally had a real winter. Months of cold fronts after cold fronts. Made me think we'd have a spring too. Not so much. Oh yeah, we had a couple weeks of "nice" weather, then rain, and the wind. Lots and lots of wind. The wind has just blown and blown. It's been blowing vegetables over, as is the case in onions, it's snapping stems on brassicas and our young peppers, and it's blowing our overhead irrigation into places it's not supposed to be going. It's also drying out the ground really fast. And it seems to me that this year's weather is several weeks behind last year's weather. In short, the weather has been a real struggle so far this year.

### Projects

Weed Control: This is a real concern for me this year. We did a great job in some areas, and a poor job in others last year. Yesterday I took a real good visual inventory of those areas. You can tell which beds got weeded well last year, and which did not. We also have new in-ground beds this year. They'll be weedy this year until we get a chance to deplete the weed seed bank some. Gonna have to be more diligent this year. Ugh! My back has kinks in it that I don't think are going away soon!

Timer Boxes: John, Christina and I (mostly John and Christina) put in the last timer riser. This project is finished! Yea!

Overhead Riser Replacement: Last spring we had an irrigation company install overhead in the southern half of Fields 1 and 2.



Time and experience tells me the risers that we put in weren't what they needed to be. The riser assembly, on both ends, are stab-lock fittings that are relatively easy to come apart. And if a hawk perches on a head to watch for prey, when they take off they usually pull the sprinkler head off the little green stand. In short, we're replacing the risers with ones like we used in Field 2 North. It'll take a while, but you can't finish a project before you start it. We've gotten this project started. This will be much better.



## Virtual Garden Tour



Onions: I had big hopes for onions this year. One hope was that by starting our own seeds, we'd have healthier plants. We grew starts, transplanted them, and... well, like everything else in life, it's just not that easy. I'd looked online for some onion growing tips, and couldn't really find much. Then, after we planted our onions (of course, *after*), how-to videos sprang up like there was no tomorrow. Turns out that you're supposed to trim the leaves on onion seedlings at least twice before transplanting. This forces more leaves to grow, giving a thicker stem. Then you don't have nearly as much of what we have going on. The wind blows the tops over, kinking the stem, the onion quits growing, and you end up with undersized bulbs. We'll have a lot of onions this year, but I don't believe they'll be as big as the ones we had last year. We also have some beds that hold more water than others, and the wetter ones have retarded growth – small onions.

Potatoes: The potatoes are beginning to show signs of senescence. Maybe harvest is in a few weeks.

Carrots: Carrots have been a success last year and this year, but I've been having a problem with their planting. My Neversink Farms videos say to plant them with a 4-Point Pinpoint seeder, with the "C" hole. So that's what I've been



doing. The result has been extremely thick stands of carrots – too thick. A couple weeks ago, I stepped out and did an experiment. I used the precision Jang seeder. Specifically, I used the Jang with a XY-24 roller with a 14 sprocket in front, and a 10 sprocket in the rear. I also spaced the rows just a bit further apart, 6 rows per bed instead of 7. Tried it in six beds. They've sprouted and have just begun putting on their first true leaves. I'm excited. I really like the spacing – they're much less crowded, and I think we'll get larger carrots as a result. I also used a fraction of the seed, so we're way ahead if this works out well. Time will tell, and we'll have to see at harvest time.



Tomatoes: Last month I told you we had 639 tomatoes to plant. We got most planted and they're doing as well as can be expected. Michael and I were discussing what's in the nursery and where we're going to plant it. Turns out we have about 230 more coming along. Now, where to plant those?



Pic 1 – Illustrates the weed problem. Pic 2 – Tomatoes further along. Pic 3 – Tunnel No. 2, this is nice.

Peppers: We have 24 beds of peppers currently planted. Twelve sweet peppers, twelve hot peppers. When Michael and I were talking, we asked “What are we going to plant in the onion beds when the onions are done?” More peppers. We've seeded hundreds more.



Nursery: Michael installed a quick sprinkler system in the nursery. It's been kind of nice, it waters on an automatic timer. We just need to check on it daily and take care of the



anomalies. Nice that the individual nozzles can be turned off, so we can isolate tables to keep them dry to cure onions on.

Green Beans: This year we're trying green beans, specifically Momentum Bush Beans. Five beds worth. Doing well so far, we'll see how this works.

Blackberries: White flowers turn into green lolly-pops, which, when they turn red you know sweetness is coming soon. Shiny black is not ripe yet, and you'll be making a funny face if you eat one. Gotta wait till it turns dull black. Yeah, that's the one to pick and pop it into your mouth. That's a benefit of volunteering on a harvest day. And next year's canes are coming up strong.





Yellow Squash:  
Oh boy. We planted 3 rows, waited three weeks to plant three more, and about to plant the third



succession. The first one's are about to pop. And boy are they loaded.



Zucchini: We did the same thing with zukes. And they look the same. Purdy!



Okra: Can't leave it out of the report. It's planted in the top of Field 2. We're building some east/west beds up there in the odd triangle. That's where you'll find 'em.

Cucumbers: They're planted in Tunnel No. 1, Field 1 and Field 2. MiniMe and

Manny cukes are in Tunnel 1. They're those smaller ones. Cute, easy to harvest, prolific. MiniMe was planted first. The Manny were planted in a



succession as the beds became available. These are parthenocarpic and gynoecious. Just look at all 'em flowers!

## Show and Tell

Should have told you about this last month, but that report was long enough already. The Women of Flower Mound have started coming out to Shiloh Field fairly regularly. They really enjoy our little slice of heaven. On April 13, they brought goodies! They had hand clippers, gloves, cups galore, a check for \$150.00 for two new water coolers, and a note!



*"Please accept this donation from Women of Flower Mound on behalf of our members. Thank you for all you do for our community! Nitu."*

First, thank you, Nitu and the ladies for coming out! Second, you're welcome. Third, thanks for the new water coolers! Put 'em to good use last week, it was hot!

## Volunteer Report

January 01 to May 31, 2021		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2021	1101.25	392
FEBRUARY 2021	682.0	239
MARCH 2021	1359.5	462
APRIL 2021	1154.5	409
MAY 2021	1048.5	309
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>5345.75</b>	<b>1811</b>

January 01 to May 19, 2022		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2022	701.75	254
FEBRUARY 2022	756.75	295
MARCH 2022	1583.75	594
APRIL 2022	1448.5	564
MAY 2022	833.5	328
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>5324.25</b>	<b>2035</b>

100%      112%

It's getting that time of year... when the heat sets in, the college semester is over and the kids go home... and volunteerism drops off. But there's a bright spot. The Mormon missionaries just love coming out. We're one of their favorite places to come to. Dean and I encourage that thought, a lot.

And there's another bright spot here. Remember in 2019 we (Pat, Cindy and I) studied under Anthony with TSSC and took the Toyota management course (forgot the name of it). Afterward, they (Toyota) were going to come out and volunteer with us. Then COVID hit and they weren't doing any projects. Well, they came out the last two Saturdays. This is a pic of Joe, one of our tractor drivers, lining out the Toyota folks before beginning. As I introduced them to Shiloh Field, and gave them instructions, then watched them work, and looked at the results, these people have a culture. They don't just talk the talk, they walk the walk. Wow! Talk about raising eyebrows. Can't wait until the fall when they come back again. Joe and Dean can't stop talking about them... and it was easy to see why.



## Harvest Report

January 01 to May 31, 2021		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
JANUARY 2021	725.0	63
FEBRUARY 2021	513.5	66
MARCH 2021	1318.25	223
APRIL 2021	3264.75	259
MAY 2021	9240.75	281
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>15062.25</b>	<b>892</b>

January 01 to May 19, 2022		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
JANUARY 2022	831.00	*****
FEBRUARY 2022	0.00	*****
MARCH 2022	1231.00	295
APRIL 2022	2043.75	*****
MAY 2022	1667.50	*****
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>5773.25</b>	<b>727</b>

38%

82%

There's only one way to describe the harvest report. I can't find one word, but if I could find one, it would convey dismal, depressing, disappointing, discouraging, and a whole bunch of other dis... words. Let's dive into it below...

### Veg. by Veg.

January 01 to May 19, 2022		
PRODUCE:	YTD 2021	YTD 2022
Asparagus	9.00	0.00
Beets	753.25	305.75
Bok Choy	6.00	173.25
Broccoli	111.75	0.00
Broccoli, Romanesco	21.50	0.00
Cabbage	284.00	0.00
Cabbage, Asian	1,708.50	424.50
Cabbage, Napa	0.00	142.50
Carrots	1,867.75	1,008.00
Cauliflower	69.25	0.00
Chard	151.50	17.50
Collard greens	451.25	0.00
Cucumbers, Green Dragon	1.00	0.00
Cucumbers, MiniMe	307.00	0.00
Leeks	24.00	0.00
Lettuce, Black Seeded Simpson	0.00	35.25
Lettuce, Butterhead	195.00	194.75
Lettuce, Mix	501.00	0.00
Lettuce, Romaine	756.00	658.50
Mustard	577.50	0.00
Mustard, Asian	0.00	301.50
Mustard, Florida Broadleaf	0.00	890.50
Mustard, Mizuna	0.00	105.25
Onions, Bunching	231.50	0.00
Onions, 1015	1,398.50	456.00
Onions, Texas Legend	4,515.00	4.00

<b>Pok Choy</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>97.75</b>
<b>Peas. Sugar Snap</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>126.75</b>
<b>Potatoes, Kennebec</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Potatoes, Red LaSota</b>	<b>43.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Radish, French Breakfast</b>	<b>665.50</b>	<b>713.25</b>
<b>Radish, Daikon</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>58.00</b>
<b>Spinach</b>	<b>15.50</b>	<b>60.25</b>
<b>Squash, Yellow</b>	<b>144.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Squash, Zucchini</b>	<b>241.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Turnips, Purple Top</b>	<b>10.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Harvest Totals:</b>	<b>15,062.25</b>	<b>5,773.25</b>

So, what do I read between the lines?

Overarching Idea No. 1 - Planning: When I did the planning for this summer's crops, I failed to fully plan for the 100' Field Block in Field 2 North. It was under construction at the time, and I planned to plant cukes, squash and the like up there, but what I failed to do is consider they weren't going to be planted in the raised beds. In other words, take peppers for example, we planned for the same number of raised beds of peppers as we did last year. But we have extra raised beds this year because squash is planted in the field block. Just an oversight on my part, but a significant one.

Overarching Idea No. 2 - Distractions: This can be attributed to almost everyone, including myself.

- Lewisville Grant: We grew extra stuff last fall. We couldn't deliver it as the Board didn't have MOUs in place for several months, as I recall. Then, when finally all set up, freezes killed practically everything. Delivery has also been a problem. Getting our crates back has been a problem. CCA Lewisville only wanting deliveries on Mondays seems to be a problem. This whole program has been a problem, and that in and of itself has been a major distraction. Unless this gets fixed, I'm not inclined to participate in anything like this again.
- Fields 3 and 4: I made it clear that I didn't want to grow anything out there this year. But I had to give in when it was clear we were going to have to grow potatoes out there. The reason I didn't want to grow out there is that 1) its too much garden and we don't have the volunteers to take care of that much garden space, 2) because we can't take care of it, it becomes a weed fest and the potential harvest is lost, and 3) it's our best gardeners potentially wasting their time trying to garden in what predictably will be a weed fest. Every once in a while, we get a significant harvest out of here, but more times than not, we don't. Every hour spent out there isn't an hour spent in Fields 1 and 2.

Asparagus: We've talked about it before. If we want asparagus, we're going to have to plant a new area with it. Potentially Field 1 North field block.

Beets: This is a veg. that is coming in late. We've barely harvested out of the three beds we have. I think this will be a bright spot this spring.

Greens: Bok and Pok Choy, Cabbage, Collards, Lettuce, Mustard. See last month's report. No point in crying over what could have been.



Brassicas: Bad year. Didn't germinate well in the nursery in the cold, not much of a spring, got too hot too early. Not going to get much here this spring. Here's a pic of one of the few cabbages we're going to get to harvest.

Carrots: We're teed up for a good year as per comments above. Got the six beds planted and considering planting more.

Cucumbers: This could be a real bright spot this year. Last year was a disappointment. If we can keep bugs and disease at bay, this could be tons of harvest.

Onions: Discussed earlier. Me thinks this is not going to be a bad year, but not a good year either. But they're definitely later this year than last.

Potatoes: Probably going to be a little later this year than last year.

Squash: Hopes for a good crop this year. We have them planted in Field 2 North watered by drip. Should be/could be a bumper crop.

Tomatoes: I'm hesitant to say here. We have a bunch planted. Not sure we got a long enough spring to 1) get the plants up and 2) able to have enough cool nights to get a good fruit set. We'll just have to wait and see.

Hopes: I'm not hanging my hat on this peg in the least. But, if Fields 3 and 4 have good a good year and we get harvests... watermelons, cantelopes, honeydews, corn, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peppers, and a whole bunch of other stuff.

## Grant Report

Two things.

- 1) The finalists for the Kubota Hometown Proud 2022 grants are supposed to be announced by July 13<sup>th</sup>. Prayers, crossed fingers and toes, etc.
- 2) The ARP Grant check is here!



## Visitation Report

The Denton Rotary came for a short visit on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. The purpose was to see their grant in action. Mr. Paul Meltzer came to see. I told him the drip/overhead watering system we installed, the benefits and detriments of each. He immediately saw the opportunities and benefits of having both. He was very complimentary of our little operation, and said time and time again, "Thank you for what you all do." It was a nice visit.

Thursday, May 12, 2022: Had another "visit" to the garden. Well, not exactly. Got an email from Laura LeRoy from The Epoch Times. She was writing an article and reached out to me for some information. So, I whipped up something and sent it to her. She was grateful. I invited her for a visit if she was ever in the area. Promised to talk her ear off, that she'd have material for several articles if she could stand listening to me tell my stories about the garden. She promised to send me a link to the article when published. *The Epoch Times...*

## Final Comments

Was out at the garden Saturday, a nice hot, humid and very still day. Where'd that wind go I'd been complaining about? People were sayin that it was going to cool off for Sunday morning. Right – I'll believe it when I see it... don't see how that could happen. That is, until early afternoon... then there was this cool refreshing breeze out of the north...

*"Where's that been for the last few weeks?"*

May it linger a long while...

Cheers,

Doug