

Garden Committee Report

July 2022

Weather Report

One word. Hot. Our average number of 100 degree days is 20 per year. Today will be the 20th this year, with August and September to come. Thank you to Denton Bible Church for allowing us to get ice from their kitchen every day. It's literally lifesaving. We could not do what we do without the ice in the water coolers.

Projects



Tunnel Irrigation: In tunnels 1 and 2 we currently have a water hose hooked up to a water faucet in the ground. We turn the faucet on to irrigate the tunnels, and have to remember to turn them off when watering is complete. You can't tell by looking at the faucet whether it's on or off. Twice in the last month or so

I've come to the garden in the morning to find Field 1 flooded and the hose left running at one of the tunnels. That's coming to an end. I'm installing a frost proof faucet at each tunnel, and the watering will be by a timer and valve and programmed on/off to keep this from happening. You can tell if the water is on or off from a distance, by whether the handle is up or down. No future crop gets planted in a tunnel until this is completed. Tunnel 1, as you can see from the pic above, is almost complete. Next weekend we'll start on Tunnel 2.



Watering: Last month I reported "The heat has us paying very close attention to watering." We're very much in the "keep the plants alive" mode. This is a real challenge with a residential water meter and a 14 ½ acre farm." Things are no different this month, with the exception of maybe being worse.

Weed Control: Last month I reported "Houston, we have a problem". Going to be a problem the rest of the year. We're making headway with the weed removal. But looking at the ground covering of seeds... we're going to have a problem in the foreseeable future too.



Virtual Garden Tour

Onions: They are fully harvested and delivered. The beds are empty, as it's been too hot to get anything to come up this summer. Been a bad year for onions. Last year, and this year, we planted about 20,000 onions. Last year we harvested 10,392 lbs. This year, 2,715 lbs. Why? Too cold early, too hot later.



Potatoes: These too are fully harvested. We purchased 400 lbs. of seed potatoes, harvested 2.657 lbs. from that. That's a 6.64 times harvest. Not bad, about average for us. The goal is 10 times. We're trying to see if we can get a fall crop in. Hopes are up, expectations... well, not as high as the hopes.

Carrots: Carrots don't like 100 degree days – period. So, this was a surprise, I went to the garden to take some pics. I randomly grabbed two carrots to pull and take a pic to show you how little they've grown. I got a greater and a lesser. Take my word for it, the vast majority are like the lesser. But why are these two carrots vastly different in size, but growing less than an inch apart. Got an email out to Clyde on this. We'll see what he says.



Tomatoes: Not a good year for tomatoes this year either. Had high hopes, but that was before the heat set in. Tomatoes don't set much fruit, if any, when the temperature is over 90 degrees. Our first 90 degree day this year was March 27th. Last year May 3rd. That makes a difference. Last year, 3,166 lbs. by now. This year 614 lbs.



Peppers: Last month I said "The peppers like this heat, as long as we can keep them watered." We're trying. Every day I look at the peppers and they're wilting in the heat. Clyde and I looked at them more closely last Friday, and there's almost no flowers. They're really stressed. Again, we're trying to keep them alive until the heat breaks.

Green Beans: Last month I told you Clyde said "Green beans shed their blooms in high heat." and that "We'll see if he's right." Not surprisingly, Clyde was right. No harvest, and the beds are now empty.



Blackberries: Time to prune. Pic of before and after.

Yellow and Zucchini Squash: When the plants get stressed in the high heat, they attract squash bugs. It only takes a short time of inattention to lose the crop – and that we did. Now we're having a hard time getting another crop up as the squash bugs kill the seedlings as they come up. I've seen 5 squash bugs on a seedling, it's very frustrating. Yes, we're spraying. I'm not a fan of zombie movies, but this is a similar reality. They just keep coming.

Okra: The plants are big enough to be harvesting, and we are. We all agreed that we grew too much okra last year, we overcompensated this year. It's growing in the triangle of decreasing length beds in Field 2 North. It wilts heavily in the heat, but comes back overnight.



Cucumbers: The spring crop has died, it's time was up. Been trying to start another crop, having trouble with it. The heat immediately stresses the plants, lots of the seedlings die before they ever get a chance, but we're trying...

Eggplant: Last year we planted eggplant in raised beds. The wind blew quite a few over, blew others apart, and what was left was... moderately productive. This year we grew them in a tunnel, along the sides where it wasn't all enough for cucumbers. The plants are doing much better, as they are protected from the wind. They don't mind heat, as long as they get water. These, so far, like where they are.



Bitter Melon: Michael likes to plant these. He's Philippine, and it's something from his Asian culture. I ate it once. That was twice too often. It's called bitter melon for a reason. Worst thing I've put in my mouth since... I don't know when. I tease him by calling it the plant from hell. Nothing likes it. The bugs don't bother it, the rabbits or mice stay a mile away. Volunteers take Michael's side and take one home. When they come back, they are true converts to Doug's side. It's the only other thing I've ever encountered that's like coffee. Smells great, tastes horrible – you have to develop a taste for it. It loves our grow tunnels. It grows up the trellis, across the ground and up the next trellis – like kudzu. Anywho... since we found out that CCA Lewisville has no clientele to desire it (we'd been informed they had), we told Michael it was coming out of the garden unless he found a place to take it. He reached out to an Asian market in Ft. Worth. He took them a bin or two. Came back with a \$60.00 donation to the garden. Hmm. I guess it goes to show you there's someone who'll buy anything. If bitter melon becomes a cash crop for us, I might have to start calling it "better melon." *But don't tell Michael!*



Volunteer Report

January 01 to June 30, 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
JUNE 2021	1235.25	404
JULY 2021	1205.0	475
TOTALS:	7786.0	2690

January 01 to July 23, 2022		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2022	701.75	254
FEBRUARY 2022	756.75	295
MARCH 2022	1583.75	594
APRIL 2022	1448.50	564
MAY 2022	884.25	383
JUNE 2022	1096.75	460
JULY 2022	991.25	419
TOTALS:	7463.00	2969

96%

110%

The number of volunteers we get any given week continue to be strong. However, they aren't staying as long as they did last year, as evidenced by the total hours decline. I attribute a lot of that to the heat. When it gets to be about 11:30 or 12:00, we're rounding up folks and sending them home. For everyone's safety, we're spending the heat of the day at home. So part of this "wound" is deliberately self-inflicted.

Harvest Report

January 01 to June 30, 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
JUNE 2021	9220.0	234
JULY 2021	10650	202
TOTALS:	34932.25	1328

January 01 to July 23, 2022		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
JANUARY 2022	831.0	*****
FEBRUARY 2022	0	*****
MARCH 2022	1231.00	295
APRIL 2022	2043.75	*****
MAY 2022	3022.25	*****
JUNE 2022	8877.3	*****
JULY 2022	2769.25	*****
TOTALS:	18774.50	1200

54%

90%

Not surprising, another disappointing month. It is what it is. My how times change. Three years ago we'd have looked at 18,774 lbs. in July as a major accomplishment. Today it's disappointing.

Veg. by Veg.

January 01 to July 23, 2022		
PRODUCE	YTD 2021	YTD 2022
Asparagus	9.00	0.00
Beets	1,195.25	603.25
Bitter Melon	0.00	763.25
Blackberries	1,365.00	310.25
Bok Choy	6.00	173.25
Broccoli	211.25	0.00
Broccoli, Romanesco	21.50	0.00
Brussel Sprouts	16.00	0.00
Cabbage	642.50	392.50
Cabbage, Asian	1,882.50	424.50
Cabbage, Napa	0.00	572.50
Carrots	2,476.75	1,677.00
Cauliflower	105.25	25.75
Cantaloupe	457.00	0.00
Chard	183.50	182.00
Collard Greens	451.25	0.00
Cucumbers	0.00	921.50
Cucumbers, Green Dragon	1,171.50	0.00
Cucumber, Manny	0.00	8.00
Cucumbers, MiniMe	495.00	543.75
Egg Plant	541.00	206.00
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
Long Green Beans	26.50	0.00

Mustard	577.50	0.00
Mustard, Asian	0.00	301.50
Mustard, Florida Broadleaf	0.00	890.50
Mustard, Mizuna	0.00	105.25
Okra	229.00	49.75
Onions, Bunching	231.50	0.00
Onions, 1015	5,415.50	746.50
Onions, Texas Legend	4,976.50	2,075.50
Pears	188.00	290.50
Peas, Sugar Snap	2.00	126.75
Peppers, Anaheim	0.00	64.00
Peppers, Banana	555.00	167.00
Pepper, Bell	243.00	123.00
Pepper, Cayenne	0.00	7.00
Pepper, Chili	220.00	43.00
Pepper, Cubanelle	14.00	41.50
Pepper, Long Asian	288.50	0.00
Pepper, Jalapeno	163.50	42.50
Pepper, Pepperoncini	38.50	0.00
Pepper, Poblano	593.50	20.00
Pepper, Serrano	77.00	31.00
Pepper, Shishito	12.00	0.00
Pok Choy	0.00	97.75
Potatoes, Kennebec	1,695.00	1,752.25
Potatoes, Red	1,504.50	904.75
Radish, Daikon	0.00	140.25
Radish, French Breakfast	665.50	713.25
Radish, White Icicle	0.00	195.25
Spinach	15.50	60.25
Squash, Butternut	82.50	58.50
Squash, Pumpkin	0.00	4.25
Squash, Yellow	767.00	666.25
Squash, Zucchini	467.50	411.00
Tomatoes	3,166.50	953.50
Turnips, Purple Top	10.50	0.00
Harvest Totals:	34,932.25	18,774.50

There's not really anything positive to be said here. Then I'll honor my Lord and my mom by not saying anything other than 'please see comments above.'

Visitation Report

This has been a surprisingly busy month for visits. Been both embarrassing, and nice at the same time. Embarrassing in the number of empty/dead beds, and the areas of weediness. Nice for the visits, and

they all seem to love the place. Maybe I'm just too hard on myself and I learned perfectionist too well from my Dad (he tested 98th percentile perfectionist).

Carrollton Master Gardner(s): Sherri came from Carrollton. She is starting a small volunteer garden down there at some spare property on county office land. Commissioner Marchant told her about Shiloh Field and "recommended" she come for a visit. And visit she did. Gave her the dollar tour, as apposed the dime. For three hours we shared stories, asked/answered questions. Not just what we did, but why we did it the way we did it. She asked a really good question "If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?" Made me think. Stay home (hehe)? Loved the time, the ability to share, the ability to influence another garden in "doing it right" whatever that might look like for them.

Lee's Garden: As you all might remember, Lee, our fellow director, has a small fledgling farm he's trying to get started. He brought his garden manager up for an impromptu tour/visit/Q&A. That lasted a couple hours also if I remember right. That apparently has inspired him/them and given them some ideas of what their farm might look like some day. Dream big guys, dream big. Just don't bite off anything more than you can chew at one time.

Potential Board Member Visit: Dusty came by for an introduction/chat/Q&A about Shiloh Field. I think she too was impressed. So much so that she's agreed to put her name in the hat for a director position for us to consider.

Paint You a Picture

I've been doing some thinking. Dangerous thing, that is. It's a dream, sort of. Pie in the sky, if you will. Have my cake and eat it too type of stuff. This dream is multifaceted, so please let me walk you through it as I currently envision it. I warn you now, it's big. I've talked to "lots" of people about this, but don't think I've put it together for you in its entirety.

Nursery Replacement: I'm pretty sure I addressed this verbally in the board meeting last month, but here it goes again... We have a problem brewing behind the nursery. Erosion is encroaching upon our property, and we'd better do something about it sooner than later. What is it that I'd like to do?



Well, I'd like to pour a slab on the back side (other side) of the barn from where the nursery currently sits. Then I'd like to purchase a same size tunnel from Rimol, kitted out with polycarbonate end walls, fully enclosed to keep birds, bugs and weed seeds out, yet have roll up sides for ventilation, exhaust fans for cooling, overhead watering system,



with a controller to be programmed to operate this stuff automatically, we'd move the seeding table inside, and potentially acquire a germination chamber.



Someday we'd have steel tables, flat and level. Steel to keep mice from climbing and eating the seeds and seedlings. Heated tables to help seeds grow. This is where the garden begins, and its important to do it right. Grow healthy plants



to put in the garden. Healthy plants equals stronger plants that resist disease and insect pressure. Pics here are what we have vs. what I'd like to have.

Repair Tunnel 2 / Extend Both 1 and 2: We could use the parts from the current nursery to extend both tunnels to be the same size and a bit longer. We lost part of tunnel 2 in a storm some years ago. We could get that growing space back.



Greenhouses: I'd like to start with one. Then add to them, maybe four in total. Like the nursery, enclosed, ventilated, irrigated, controlled automatically. Two east of the new nursery, two west of the current nursery. Thirty feet wide, maybe 96 to 120 feet long.



Cat's meow type things. Maybe start with one, learn how to use it. Then maybe add the other three.

Refrigeration: We're getting electricity this year, so I'm told. That would be a game changer. We've already talked about and received partial funding for a second barn. We'd put it where the current nursery is. A mirror image, almost, of the current barn. In it would be two refrigerators, each able to store 96 bins of produce. So, we can harvest when we need to, keep it until delivery day. So, we can dole out a large potato or onion harvest as the need arises instead of flooding our partners with an amount of something they can't use.

Shade: Between the two barn decks, we could have a permanent shade structure. Something to take refuge under in the rain, and from the scorching sun. Something that we don't have to bow down under. Something that's not in the way of our working.



Rainwater Harvesting: This would give us some rooftops to collect rain from. Seven of them in relatively close proximity. We could direct the water into storage tanks, to be used as needed all over the garden. This would help reduce the largest direct cost of the garden, the water bill.

Water Well: I'd like to revisit this subject. Even if a well couldn't provide us with enough water to do the whole garden, it would help offset the cost of the water meter spinning so much. And even if the water quality isn't what we'd want it to be, it could be diluted with the city water in the tank, and even further with rainwater harvesting.

2" Water Meter: This summer has made it painfully obvious that a 5/8" residential water meter isn't enough. Not near enough. If we must rely solely on city water, we need more of it. I cannot effectively water the garden that is installed right now.

In general, we'd end up with some large water storage tanks. I'm thinking above ground. We could use city water to fill the tanks partially, then well water and rainwater to top off the tanks. We could have the best of all worlds here at Shiloh Field. Yes, it's a big dream, would be a big project. It would be a project worthy of the largest community garden in the United States.

Final Comments

I watched a video the other day. One from No-Till Growers. It was talking about growing in summer. In particular, he was talking about being hot, tired, and being sick and tired of being hot and tired. The last thing you want to do is plant more stuff. Trust me, I fully understand the concept. You've just got to knuckle down, tighten the belt, push through and get to planting.

"You can't harvest what you don't plant." Sounds biblical. Almost is.

Cheers,

Doug