

Garden Committee Report

January 2023

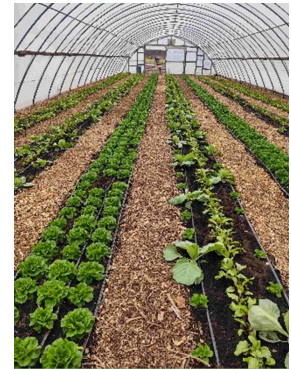
A quick comment on 2022. It ended up being our second-best year ever, by only 133 lbs. We also had our two most productive months, both being over 11,000 lbs. Really nice stuff considering how the year started. But, with 2022 in the rear view mirror (whew!), it's time to start preparing for 2023. This will be our fourteenth (14th) year. I got a feeling about this year - it's gonna be a good'en. Got a feeling this is going to be a 70,000 pound year. Yeah, that's the goal. There's some things lining up. Things are happening. God is at work in Shiloh Field. How, you ask? Let's have a look...

Projects

Tunnels: The last thing of last year, and the first thing of this year, is to seal up the high-tunnels. We got the northern ends all sealed up, we rolled down the sides, piled mulch all around the base so no cold air infiltration could spoil our fun. Patched up any holes in the plastic (Gorilla tape works wonders), and



went to planting. We planted quarter size heads of Salanova lettuce the week of Christmas. A few weeks later, we planted cut and come again lettuce. We tried broccoli, but the Christmas freeze got them. So, they got replaced with beets. We also sprinkled in some cabbage. What can happen in 30 days?



What started out as this...

...has now become this.

We're going to be harvesting lettuce soon. Real soon. "Well, that's not much lettuce. It's only two beds." Oh, Tunnel No. 2 is swarming with it.



Raised Beds: Its winter at Shiloh Field again. Time to top off all our beds with more compost. Time to haul in the Dyno, to shuck dirt. Saturday, January 21st, Greg and Little John and a few volunteers got to going on it. Got a whole bunch done. Wish I'd have thought to take a short video of Little John shoveling that dirt. He hit that dirt like a mad man.



Walking Paths: As you can imagine, when you put wood chips down on a path, over time they decompose. Winter is time to get on that project too. Check out the visitation report below for two crews who did a bang-up job.



First time Greg had seen the garden just after a good composting and mulching. Looks nice, really nice.

As the Garden Administrator, I'm all smiles.

Nursery Sifter: I walked into the nursery one day this month, Greg was there preparing and planting more lettuce seed in trays. I was wondering what was taking so long. When I walked in, it was plain to see. That's how he was sifting out the big chunks from the potting mix so it would be seeding mix. "There's got to be a better way." I said. So I put my mind to it. God brought to mind a friend who had built a sifter to get the rocks out of his flower beds at home. I called him, "Can I borrow that sifter to see if it will work for us?" When he brought it... "That's the ticket!" said I. So that became a John and Finn project, and boy did they come through. That's going to be a game changer in the nursery – at least a ten-fold increase in efficiency. TECC (Toyota) would be proud.



KinseyAg: I've been meaning to get this done for quite a while. Finally got it done. I sent three soil samples off to get analyzed. They are not only going to tell me what I have, but make recommendations on how to improve the soil physics and chemistry to make it the best it can be. I actually have mixed feelings on this. I look forward to seeing what they say, and dread having to do it. But, it will move the garden forward. It will be the better off in the long run. And we at Shiloh Field are in it for the long run.

Virtual Garden Tour

Not much to show here right now. It's winter. Other than the tunnels, there's not much variety growing outside right now.

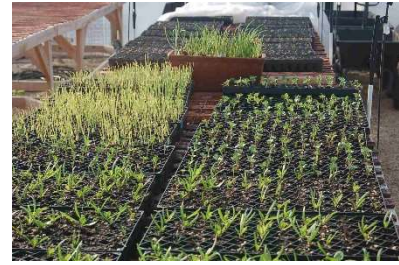
Carrots: Carrots are coming along nicely, though slowly. Some of them are sizing up and about ready to start harvesting – soon. We're keeping a close eye on them. Pulled one today, washed it and took a bite. Yummy!

Radish: Just after seeding a bed of turnips with the Jang, we seeded two beds of radish a couple weeks ago. The turnips came up, but the radish didn't. So, we re-seeded a week ago, and again, none came up. Greg was frustrated, couldn't figure out why it wasn't coming up. "The turnips came up, but why not the radish?" said Greg. We started looking real hard. "I don't think you dropped any seed. Show me how you set up the Jang." Turns out, turnip seed is much smaller than radish seed. He was using the wrong roller for the radish. Easy mistake to make, and an easy one to fix. A little re-training and with the right roller, he went to town. This will be much better.





Nursery: We've got succession plantings in the nursery of lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach and cabbage. We're going to start even more lettuce soon. Right now though, we've got everything wrapped up in freeze cloth as we weather this cold front for the next few days.



Onions: I got an email from Dee with Ace Hardware. She's the garden center manager over six or seven garden centers.

She had onions delivered from Dixondale. Some were moldy. She had them replaced from Dixondale, and they asked her to give them to a local community garden. Thanks for thinking of Shiloh Field, Dee! Free is a right price, so I rushed over to pick them up.



Already planted, they are. Here's a pic of Greg teaching Christina how to do a bed flip ahead of planting those onions.



Christina helps us out on Saturdays by running the wash and pack part of the operation – a VIP for sure.

So, want to know what 6,750 onions looks like? That's it. I figure we're about 1/3 of the way there. 20K, here we come!

Volunteer, Harvest and Delivery Report

January 01 to January 31, 2022		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2022	701.75	254
TOTALS	701.75	254

January 01 to January 23, 2023		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
JANUARY 2023	587.25	275
TOTALS	587.25	275

We don't have any harvest at this point for January. We're just gearing up for this year. A little increase in volunteers, a little decrease in hours.

Visitation Report

Bruce Mead Visit: Mr. Bruce Mead contacted me via the website requesting a tour of the garden. Turns out he's on the McKinney Parks Board. The City of McKinney has some open spaces and are looking into opening some community gardens in these areas located within food deserts. I have a feeling he was looking for a 15-30 minute tour. He got what we affectionally call the Gilligan Tour – the three-hour tour. We talked, we showed, we demonstrated, he asked, I answered, but most importantly I told him why. He took pictures, he took notes, he was a sponge. By the time he'd left, he'd chugged gallons of

the Shiloh Field Community Garden Kool-Aid. In short, he's hooked. He's already went and bought new tools. Now he has to come back so I can teach him how to use them.

He'd asked an interesting question. What's next? So I walked him through my Field of Dreams story. When I mentioned greenhouses, he had something to say, and fortunately, I listened. Turns out there's a tree farm near Melissa. It's gone out of business, and its assets are being sold off. Something that remains is three greenhouse structures. Bruce has a friend that is helping dispose of those assets, and we have a chance to purchase them at a "highly reduced price." Greg and I went to have a look, and they have ventilation fans, air circulation fans, inflation fans, shade cloth and relatively new propane heaters. If we get them, we'll need to buy new plastic and longer support legs. Right now, Bruce and his friend are pushing for a tax write-off receipt (donation). For us, that would be the right price.



AmeriCorp: Seven folks from AmeriCorp came for a volunteer day.

UNT – Alpha Omega: A group from UNT came out for a volunteer day. I asked what group they were with. AlphaOmega was the answer. An on-campus Christian organization. How 'bout that!



Denton ROTC: Colonel West, with the Denton ISD, contacted me recently to bring his ROTC students out to volunteer. They've been out before, but not since COVID. It was good to see them. They worked on mulching pathways between the beds. They brought many hands, and make light work of the task. They got a lot done.

Final Remarks

Clyde came for several visits this month. On one, he asked for the bee keeper's contact information. He knows someone who has some hives as a hobby, and his hobby is becoming more than a hobby. He's looking to divest himself of some of his hives. Maybe we'll get some more. That would be a good thing.

Then I got an email via the website. Someone had sold their property, which of course had some hives on it. The purchaser doesn't want the bees. So she was asking if we wanted them. So I sent her the same keeper's information. Here's to beeing hopeful!

Well, it's raining today. Looks like a good day to work indoors. Time to do some seeding in the nursery. Never caught up, always something to do.