

Garden Committee Report

March 2023

March, so far, has been a really good month at the garden. Cool, but not too cold. The garden has responded. Folks who come out week to week can really tell how much the garden has grown.

Let's have a look...

Projects

Some of the projects we're doing right now are mostly in preparation for the greenhouse installation.

Wood Chip Composting: Traditionally we've been doing this where I now plan on installing the greenhouses. So we have to find a new place. I've decided on the west side of the Kiowa blackberry patch. It's a little less convenient, but about as close a place as I could find, yet still be accessible. We're having to relocate what we've been composting to the new place. Going to take some tractor and trailer time.



Disassembly Cleanup: The goal of the disassembly process is, well, disassembly. Get it down, get it on a trailer, get it to Shiloh Field and unloaded. Now we need to clean things up. Finish taking off all the brackets, screws, rusted bolts, grind smooth any welds, etc. so everything is ready once assembly starts. Don't want any ancillary screws poking out to cut someone, no rough spots from a previous weld to catch clothes or skin.

Nursery: Now's the time to start plants in the nursery.

- Been making great use of the sifter we constructed last month. Lots of potting mix and compost been sifted to make a 50/50 seed starting mix to use.
- Succession plantings of spring crops that we want another round of, such as lettuce. It's a relatively quick crop to get another round of before the summer crops are ready to transplant.
- Summer crops such as peppers, tomatoes, squash, cucumber have been seeded and are growing in the somewhat protected environment of the nursery so when it warms enough to plant in the fields, we're weeks ahead of the direct seeding game.



Okra



Sweet Peppers



Squash



Hot Peppers



Tomatoes



Eggplant

Direct Seeding: Not everything is started in the nursery. Some things like radish, turnip, and carrots have succession plantings that are direct seeded. Been showing some of our volunteers how to use the Jang seeder. It still amazes me how much can be seeded in such a short time with the Jang. It's a must have tool for large gardens.

KinseyAg: Told you last month that we got test results back. We've begun the implementation process. Been fertilizing with 20.5-0-0 from Lowes. All nitrogen, like the results recommended, and at the first of the month. Going to have to talk with the Lowes garden center manager about keeping it in stock.



Mulching: Lot of mulch being spread at Shiloh Field. Keeps the weeds down, keeps the volunteers feet clean, easily distinguishes the walking paths from the beds, and it just overall looks great. All great reasons to do it at a community garden.

Virtual Garden Tour

Here's a bunch of pics from last month and this month.

Shade Cloth: Late last year I took advantage of a sale, and bought a 40% shade cloth for the nursery. It came in after the weather had cooled, so it got put in storage. As this March rolled in, we got some warm sunny days, and decided to install the shade cloth. I wasn't surprised that it cooled the nursery, but I was surprised how much it cooled the nursery. It took an easy 15-20 degrees off the thermometer.



Cabbage: Last month I mentioned we had two plantings, one in the tunnels, and one in the fields. This is one nice picture of the interplanted cabbage and beets in the tunnels.

And here's the beets.



Broccoli and Cauliflower: In last month's report I gave this some token attention, as you couldn't really see the plants in the picture. That's changed now. We have lots of brassicas planted this year. Gonna be a good year for brassicas.



Snow (Early) Peas: The left pic is of last month. The right is of this month. Before we know it, we'll have harvested them and moved on to pole beans.



Romaine: Last month I told you Michael planted this romaine lettuce with the paper pot transplanter. The jury was out on it last month as it had just been transplanted, and I couldn't tell what percentage of germination he got. Nor could I tell what was going to survive the transplanting. Looking pretty good!



Spinach: This Giant Noble Spinach that Michael is trying, we have beds and beds of it. Initially I was a little disgruntled about how much got planted, I mean, its for a trial. But I was advised today to pull a leaf and try it. I'm not much for spinach, but I'll be trying it again and again. Taste's great!



Lettuce: I'm really liking this lettuce. Salanova comes in both heads and cut and come again. Left is a pic of the cut and come again. You'd think this was the original growth. Nope. This is the come again. Looks nice, and about to harvest the second time. I think we have time for a third if the weather holds. Right is a pic of the succession planting of the head varieties. We'll be harvesting it soon too.



Carrots: We've harvested out all our mature carrots. This is a pic of our newly seeded beds. Lots of beds, 16 beds of carrots.



Radish: These are short 30-45 day crops. That which was seeded last month is being harvested now and reseeded for harvest next month. Tasted one of these tiny red orbs (Sora radishes) today. Talk about mild! We'll see how the rest of



the spring season goes, but we're already talking about these being our exclusive radish.

Onions: I keep looking at the onions, and I keep dreaming of the harvest. They're really responding to all nitrogen fertilizer. They're growing like crazy. More leaves equals bigger bulbs. Greg is pushing them as hard as we dare.



Last month



This month



Turnips: We had just seeded this around the time of the last garden committee report. Wasn't anything to take a pic of then. That's one full bed, coming along nicely, I'd say.

Volunteer Report

January 01 to March 31, 2022		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
January 2022	701.75	254
February 2022	756.75	295
March 2022	1,583.75	594
TOTALS	3,042.25	1,143.00

January 01 to March 16, 2023		
MONTH	HOURS	# Vol.
January 2023	799.75	371
February 2023	994.00	345
March 2023	803.25	299
TOTALS	2,597.00	1,015.00

85%

89%

Volunteerism at Shiloh Field is down a bit this month. Not too worried about it at this point. Weather has been a little droopy. As the weather is nice, we have lots of I'd be worried if the garden wasn't have been working hard to keep observe, diagnose, and treat any Ya'll really ought to drop by some morning, it really looks great out there.



evidence, I submit this photo. When people out, especially on a Saturday. in the shape it's in. Dean and Greg on top of the plantings, taking care to problems that arise, including weeds.

Harvest Report

January 01 to March 31, 2022		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
January 2022	831.00	206
February 2022	0.00	222
March 2022	1,231.00	295
TOTALS	2,062.00	723

January 01 to March 16, 2023		
MONTH	HARVEST TOTALS	EGGS
January 2023	40.25	247
February 2023	1,254.00	329
March 2023	936.50	*****
TOTALS	2,230.75	576

108%

80%

January 01 to March 16, 2023		
PRODUCE	YTD 2022	YTD 2023
Beets	116.00	358.00
Bok Choy	130.50	0.00
Cabbage	0.00	196.75
Cabbage, Asian	424.50	0.00
Cabbage, Napa	64.00	0.00
Carrots	651.00	809.00
Collard Greens	0.00	31.00
Lettuce Mix	0.00	142.75
Lettuce, Salanova	0.00	672.75
Mustard	299.00	0.00
Radish, French Breakfast	377.00	20.50
Harvest Totals	2,062.00	2,230.75

This is a good report. I like this report. Yes, we're 8% over last year, that's always a good thing. But we're also 360 lbs. over 2021, our best year ever. And I can tell you that, as far as planting goes, we're way ahead of 2021. I'm excited about the possibilities.

Eggs are a good report also. The 80% comparison to last year is a bit misleading. Actually, apples to apples, Jerry is 134% of last year when you factor only January and February.

Visitation Report

Denton Classical Academy: Remember last month I told you about the group of kids that came out to help with cleanup and



carrot harvesting? They came back this month. Dean had them come out on potato planting day. And boy did they help! Good time had by all.

Texas Healthcare – Bridgeport: Had a tour with Justin Parker and his staff. They're starting a community garden in Bridgeport, and they came out to see how it's done. Had lots of discussion, lots of great questions, got to show them some of Doug the Tool Man's cool tools. Justin promised he'd be back – it's a lot to take in in one visit.

Denton HS AFJROTC: Colonel West's kids came out again. They spent a Saturday morning putting out a



much needed new layer of mulch on the Kiowa blackberry patch. That'll help keep the weeds down and help keep the Kiowas from sending up so many new shoots from exposed roots. Big job, and they dug in (literally) and got 'er done, looks good!



Leadership Denton: Kirstin Hudson of Leadership Denton asked if they could come out and kick off their Nonprofit Day 2023 at Shiloh Field. There were about thirty folks, future leaders in our community, came out and learned about what we do, and how we do it. The time was short, but sweet. It was good to have them out! Spread the good word, gang!

Education Begins



The first seminar given to the master gardeners took place this month. How to Build Raised Beds. About 15 master gardeners came out to learn how Shiloh Field does it. Was a good time. They all not only got to see how it's done but got to do it. They build a

raised bed in which we'll plant pollinators to attract bees across the garden.

The next class on the schedule is the Blackberry Master Class.



It's Begun

"It?" you ask. Greenhouses:

You will recall that the Denton Lake Cities Rotary Club gave us a grant to take advantage of an opportunity we had to purchase a 30'x96' greenhouse. That transaction took place, the owner cleared it out to make way for disassembly.

On Friday, March 10th, we began that process. Four of my permateers (Michael, Dave, Bruce and Joe)



and I drove to Celina to begin the process of disassembly of the first greenhouse and hauling it back to Shiloh Field. Took us about six hours, but we got both ends disassembled, the electronics fans and doors down, wire pulled and conduits down, cut and all put on a



trailer. We essentially got it down to the metal frame. That's

the Monday job. Pat kindly let us borrow some space at Serve Denton to store all the electronics out of the weather.

Monday, March 13th, got the first greenhouse completely disassembled and hauled. One down, two to go.

Got two more grants to purchase the other two greenhouses, one from the Denton Rotary, the other from Denton Community Food Center. So, on Wednesday, March 15th, we went and got another half a greenhouse disassembled. That puts us about halfway there!

Rainwater Harvesting: God provides, and something else has begun. Meet Clyde, you've heard me talk



of him many times, here he is. Clyde's son recently bought property in Argyle. On the property are five water tanks, two black tanks, and three white tanks. He has no use for them, so he's donating them to Shiloh Field. Now that's the right price! I was planning on at least a couple of underground tanks as water collection centers that pump into above ground storage. That's the plan on the two black tanks. Don't know yet what we'll do with the white tanks, but I've got them when the time comes.



Final Remarks

With the first master gardener seminar complete, the proud papa takes a rest with his new raised bed.

Best part was he didn't have to build it.

