

Report from the Field

Happy summer solstice! Even though you may have forgotten that Friday, June 21st was the longest day of the year, the plants certainly didn't. For example, the onions focus on vegetative growth until the solstice, after which they switch to growing the bulb. For this reason, it is important to get onions started as early as possible. Another example of plants paying attention to day length is carrots: plant them in November (in a greenhouse), they'll grow a bit in the fall, and will go to seed when growth resumes in the spring – and never get a large root. Plant them closer to winter solstice (December 21st), and they won't go to seed for another year.

The cherry tomatoes are growing well and we'll possibly have a pint per person next week. The tallest tomato plants are 6 feet; feel free to take a look at them in the greenhouse (top of the hill on the left).

The peas are finally here. We planted sugar snap, but the seed company apparently mixed the seeds with snow peas. They are both eaten the same way, the entire pod, except for a string that runs along the inside arc. Snap off an end, and peel the string away. Take a look at the pea plants (half way up the driveway on the left), they are in excess of 9 feet now!

The peppers have been patiently waiting for warm weather. Hopefully they will start to grow vigorously, something they haven't done since we took them out of the greenhouse and planted them in late May.

I've included pictures of a couple pests we are encountering. These are on our eggplant, the Colorado Potato Beetle and Flea Beetle. We have had no problem controlling the potato beetle by hand squishing in the past, while the flea beetles take more time and were devastating last year (you can see the little holes they made in the leaf on the right; if we let this go, and the plants can't ward them off, they'll lose their leaves and die). We are hand squishing both beetles now, and hoping the weather stays hot, and drier, allowing the plants to be healthy and ward them off themselves. Insecticides, such as a pyrethrin spray, are commonly used in organic agriculture. Pyrethrin kills pests like the flea beetles, but it also kills honeybees, bumble bees, and a host of other beneficial insects. We choose to hand squish, and keep our fields and environment pesticide free, and let the bees live.

