

Report from the Field

In general, this fall has been an outstanding time for growing vegetables, with even temperatures, sun, and recently rain. We are harvesting the nicest Hakurei salad turnips we've ever had; the largest cabbages; and a great spinach crop, all of which we are very thankful for.

The tomatoes in the greenhouse continue to produce (the outdoor plants have already been removed and the soil cover cropped), although their leaves look far from beautiful. In spite of the plants' appearances, the fruit, especially the large tomatoes, is just as tasty as it was in mid-summer. As soon as we have a hard frost, however, with temperatures in the 20's, all the plants will die. In past years this occurred in mid to late October.

As soon as the tomatoes die, we will move the greenhouse (our tomato greenhouse is on a track system, our other greenhouse is not). The purpose of the move is to establish a rotation, where tomatoes are not planted in the same ground year after year. This 30' X 96' tomato greenhouse can be rolled to another location. We have never done this before, since we just built it this spring. An extremely large boulder (4 X 4 X 7 feet, weighing ~20,000 lbs) was preventing the move from happening – the track needed to be where the boulder was – so one of our projects this past week was to get the boulder out of the way. Various methods of splitting it into movable pieces were explored, but in the end we decided to dig a massive hole right next to it and try to flop it in.

We were able to dig a 7 foot deep hole with our tractor, but we couldn't move the boulder with our tractor. Ed was digging under the boulder with a pick axe to make it easier to move, when thankfully our neighbor came along and offered to come by with his tractor and give it a tug. He was able to flop it into the new hole, and the boulder rested about 2 feet below the surface. This was perfect.

Our other greenhouse (stationary) is currently growing a number of crops. Spinach is being picked for the CSA and will continue to be picked throughout the winter and likely well into spring. Other crops, like carrots, are being harvested now and will continue be harvested up until a very hard freeze of ~10F.

Later this fall the movable greenhouse will be planted with other crops that we will start harvesting in late winter and through to late spring. The main purpose of the greenhouses is to grow tomatoes, but a significant side-benefit is being able to grow other vegetables in the fall, winter and spring.

