

**December 18, 2014**

Winter solstice is nearly upon us, and although the coldest of weather still lies ahead, we know our winter huddle will be brief. The greenhouses continue to sustain lettuces as well as the amazingly winter hearty spinach and claytonia. The unheated greenhouses allow various greens to thrive, and by the end of January the longer days will encourage vigorous growth. In the past week we have been seeding soil blocks with more spinach, lettuces, and hardy Asian greens. The seedlings will be transplanted in January so that we can continue the harvest throughout the late winter and early spring.

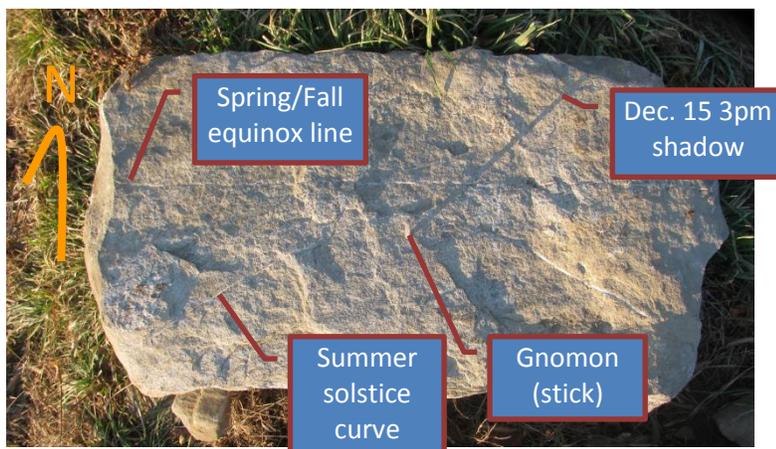


Lettuces planted in Oct and ready for harvest



Spinach planted in Sept, continuing to harvest

So that our children have a better grasp how the axial tilt of our planet affects the local climate, we built a crude sundial this year. The final scribing of the stone will take place sometime around the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, between the hours of 9am to 3pm. If you'd like to stop by on Saturday, Sunday or Monday, if it is sunny, please feel free. The sundial is straight up the driveway, hang a left and walk past the shed, it is at the beginning of the stonewall. Unfortunately we will be crazy with child activities on Saturday and part of Sunday.



As for the winter huddle, the cats are trying to teach us how one should rest after a long summer of catching rodents.



### **Attacked!**

One of our roosters has pushed Ed's vegetarianism to its limits over the last year. This summer the rooster was in the prime of his youth, virtually fearless, ridiculously aggressive, and insanely foolish. He charged at Ed four times in one day, flinging himself at him, with spurs outstretched. But starting at the end of summer a subtle shift took place. He would still fling himself at Ed, but would often wait till Ed closed the coop door. It slowly became a mere show for the ladies (hens), instead of an actual attempt to do harm. And then, slowly, even that became less frequent, and finally it was all but forgotten the last time it happened.



The relative peace of the rooster, and more importantly the lack of crops in the fields that chickens like to eat, has led us to have them free-ranging during the day, something they thoroughly enjoy. They have their favorite activities: dust baths, bug searches under hay we covered beds with, finding something scrumptious in the compost pile, etcetera. All was well until Raluca crossed the rooster's path, maybe getting too close to his lady friends. Ed heard a scream and came running outside, but stopped at the end of the front porch. Raluca had been charged repeatedly, but the rooster stopped short of launching himself at her. She demanded Ed to get him, but Ed said, "I don't have shoes on, I'll get my socks wet."

Raluca said, "Oh great, thanks for helping."

Ed proceeded to throw a log at him but Raluca was not satisfied. "Get me a stick!" she demanded, but he only offered some 'supportive' comments.

She slowly inched toward a stick and she was able to defend herself to a safe location, unscathed, but slightly less confident in her supposed male protector.

Later, when Ed was closing the chicken coop, he received the full wrath of the rooster like the good old summer days, attacking repeatedly until a sharp kick discouraged the onslaught. Apparently the testosterone was surging once again.

Happily, this appears to be only an isolated occurrence - there have been no further attacks since then.

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