

Report from the Field



Despite some apprehension to the global implications, I am thoroughly enjoying the beautiful spring-like weather. The snow drops have just about come and gone, the daffodils are springing to life, and the children's planting of crocuses are in full bloom. The cows are already finding some

tufts of green grass here and there, and are anxious for spring to take hold so they can fully enjoy the delicacy of fresh grass once again.

Not only have the flowers been an inspiration over the past couple of weeks, but the youthful energy of our new employee, Jaron, has been as well. Jaron started two weeks ago, diving right in, making and seeding 3500 blocks of onions in his first two days. Inspired by the legendary writer/farmer/speaker Wendell Berry, he is passionate about permaculture practices, and farming in general, and we look forward to him helping move Shundahai in new directions.



By the end of next week the greenhouses will be fully planted with lettuces, spicy salad greens, spinach and carrots. In addition to this and all the onions Jaron seeded, we also have thousands of other plants started in soil blocks. We'll start planting them in the ground outside in the next few weeks.

The biggest concern for fruit and veggie production this year continues to be the fruits. The buds have swollen, and the blueberries in particular are looking like they are ready to burst open. Temperatures returning to the teens could seriously impact fruit production in CT. Saturday night is supposed to be 18F!

That is what is going on at Shundahai right now, and to end with, here is a little story, a snippet from our life as farmers:

A Blustery Middle of the Night Farm Walk (Feb. 25, 2016)

I am awoken by the sound of the howling winds and the wooden bones of our 150 year old house creaking. The ever so practical farm mind turn my thoughts immediately to what may be blowing around outside: the only concern I come up with are the chicken coops. I debate the severity of the wind (quite severe) and the likelihood that the worst has passed. My desire to stay in bed is overpowered by my fear of having to perform many hours of repairs to chicken coops that have blown across the farm.

Walking around the farm, I am struck with the thought that if I were on this middle of the night walk a millennia or two ago, I would have felt for certain the gods were demonstrating their power and anger with us. Hearing the greenhouse metal creak, the plastic flapping, and seeing the entire house swaying, I decide to check for any damage or other problems in need of fixing. The force of the wind is so strong that being inside the greenhouse I feel like I am in the belly of a massive ship during a severe storm. The metal creaks and moans; at this time, I can only hope the structure holds together. If the greenhouse starts to fail, collapse or get ripped out of the ground, there is nothing I can do but get out of the way and enjoy the demonstration of power.

Off to the southwest the sky alights with the most surreal florescent blue-green. There is no thunder, at least none that I can hear above the screaming wind.

The sky alights no more for me. I just see my cats huntering down out in the open. They apparently do not like being in the barns at this time, uncertain of the flimsy structures we have built.

I return to mine.