





(Burlington) Picking broccoli on December 1st reminds me that a hail-Mary late cover crop seeding is a good idea. Though it doesn't work every year, our early November planting now looks pretty good. Crops are indoors and storing well; I wish I could order a modestly dry autumn every year. Tunnels are growing quickly with the mild temperatures, hoping we don't run through them all too quickly and therefore lack green things later for our winter CSA.

Thinking ahead to 2021 I have to remind myself that we need to warm up the soil in our cucumber house prior to planting, as we had much better stand establishment May of 2020 when we closed up the tunnel to bake for 7-10 days prior to transplanting. Likewise, I need to get on the *Pediobius* (beneficial insects) train, as bean beetles have decimated our snap beans the past two years.

The Greenhouse Tomato Trellis overhead hooks from Nolt's were so much quicker and easier to manage than wooden stakes for our indoor determinate tomatoes, and we plan to convert our indoor peppers to the same system next summer. Looking forward to better hot-weather salad with a shift from row covers to insect netting for our summer plantings, and also to growing more of the really excellent DM resistant basil bred by Rutgers, which will pair nicely with many of the new hyloom tomatoes now available for purchase. 2020 was an awful year in so many ways, but I still get excited about next growing season, and I am happy for that.



On the other side of the biblical drought, this was the best retail year in our 40-year history. PPP was great too, but don't like the threat of having to give it back next year! Jury out on that one. Hope everyone took advantage of the C~19 Schedule F refund. That will cover my retail tax bill.

Not knowing where we would be with Covid, we planted our winter houses early and plan on removing the top covers to let the rain drive down the excess salts; etc. We have tried achieving the same ends with sprinklers but nothing cleanses the earth like mother nature.

We're taking a large chunk of retail gains and investing in surrounding another eight acres of prime vegetable land with a woven wire deer fence. At ten dollars a foot, we will expense this for years but I have to have another eight acres of deer free land to grow beans, romaine, cabbage, radicchio, etc. that deer just kill us on each year. And the list keeps growing! This year the salad bar expanded into leeks and field tomatoes.

We are also striving to be compliant with FSMA requirements and protocol. The last thing we need is for one of us to be the poster child for selling E-coli tainted romaine or what have you. The other big issue for many farmers around here is the new Whole Foods Market 5 million insurance policy required to cover fresh greens. For the small grower, this will kick us out of the Whole Foods Market "wet aisle."