

Jimmy Acres: A Tommerdahl Family Farm

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Hello Friends and Neighbors!

Summer is here!! And it's finally starting to taste like it around the farm stand with the appearance of tomatoes this week. I lost count of how many kinds I planted this year, but somewhere in the 70+ range...no guarantees that there will be that many varieties each week, but you can count on deliciousness in all shapes, sizes, and colors that we do have.



Other highlights from the month include:

- ♣ We finally got around to installing irrigation in the garden and around the blueberries when faced with a short hot/dry spell—apparently buying lots of irrigation supplies is better than any rain dance since we got ~6" of rain within the next 48 hours!
- ♣ We've pretty much transitioned out of spring veggie season, and in general, we're happy with how things went. There are always things to learn and change for next year. We like to experiment with different methods and plants to find what works best, and sometimes things work, and sometimes they don't. This year we learned that beets get lost when intercropped with brassicas, but snow peas do great as a companion to cherry tomatoes!
- ♣ Moving on to summer, again, we're learning as we go. Bug pressure so far has been better than last year (knock on wood). While we still definitely have more Japanese beetles, Mexican



bean beetles, squash bugs, and squash vine borers than we'd like, our plants seem more resilient (except to those blasted squash vine borers!!). We are encouraged that as our soil and general ecosystem health

continue to improve, we'll see even more resilience of our plants and drops in pest populations as they get balanced out with our beneficial insects.

- ♣ Fruit trees and blueberries are coming along nicely, and we've had our best blueberry season so far! Unfortunately, not enough to bring to the farm stand, but if they keep up their rate of progress, they may make an appearance next year.



Generation Skippers

There's a new cucumber on our produce table this summer! The small, white cucumbers have been getting some confused looks from people the past few weeks, so we wanted to share with y'all where they came from:

Our grandmother (aka Hilda, Mrs. Patterson, Grandma, or Gwhoa) grows this variety every year, carefully saving her seeds and storing them away in a safe location for the next year. Every summer, these cucumbers are a cherished staple in her garden, and you know when you visit Grandma's house you can't leave without a bag full of them (plus a serving or two with your meal)!

What is it that makes them so special, you may ask? It's not just the convenient size, the thin skin, the resistance to turning bitter, the productiveness, the crisp crunch, or the unique color that gets Grandma so excited about these cucumbers. They remain special to her because they are the same as the kind grown and shared with her by her grandmother in Forsyth County, NC in the 1930's. While their main cash crops were tobacco, corn, and grains, Grandma's grandparents also had a garden to feed themselves (plus an iris garden that sounds like it would put all others to shame!). The cucumbers skipped a generation because her parents (also farmers) sold their vegetables, and the small white cucumbers were not profitable with customers looking for "normal" vegetables.

Skipping ahead a few decades, Grandma was reintroduced to her beloved white cucumbers by a friend who was growing them. Grandma excitedly saved her seeds and has continued to grow them every year since. While none of her four kids have been the lucky recipient of any seeds (although they have all eaten boocos of them, as Grandma would say), she has given them to us to grow and share with y'all this summer! We hope that unlike her parents, we can make them a profitable crop by convincing you, our customers, that they really are worth all the hype!



Mrs. Gertrude Estelle Willard Hine in her iris garden circa 1940 (left); Anna, Hilda and white cucumbers in Hilda's garden, 2018 (right).

If you have any suggestions for things you'd like to see in future newsletters, or have any ideas for how we can improve our customer service or your produce-buying and -consuming experience, please let us know! And as always, please feel free to pass this along to all of your produce-loving friends and neighbors!

"Heaven is a homegrown cucumber."

~Alys Fowler~

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