

Jimmy Acres: A Tommerdahl Family Farm

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Hello friends and neighbors!

Wow, where did the last month go? Time sure flies when tomato plants take over your life! Besides babysitting plants, some other accomplishments of the month included:

- ♣ We had our first farm stand weekend in Semora and weekday evenings in Chapel Hill for the year! Thanks to those who stopped by to say hello and check out our supply of plants and vegetables.
- ♣ For the second year, we were happy to be able to donate to Learning Outside's fundraiser event, Meadow Lark. Leftover tomato and basil plants were donated to their silent auction to raise money for their scholarship fund. Our plants definitely went to a good cause!
- ♣ Many of our summer crops are in the ground, including 54 varieties of tomatoes, 14 types of peppers, and way more types of squash and zucchini than we'd like to admit. We also planted multiple varieties of beans, okra, cucumbers, eggplants, cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew, sweet potatoes...diversity is not missing from our garden!
- ♣ The fruit trees are looking good! We were concerned about blossoms freezing in the late frost and though we did lose most of the peaches, plums and pears, luckily the apples bloomed late enough to escape unharmed. Our oldest trees are just entering their third growing season, so while we're still a few years from full production, we're beginning to see our first apples this year!

FAQ

Why do Jimmy Acres greens last so much longer than what I buy in the grocery store?

We hear this question a lot. We've even had our own supply of lettuce, spinach, and kale last up to 3 weeks without going bad or getting slimy! Our greens are delivered within a few days of picking, while grocery store greens probably took over a week to get shipped across the country before sitting on the shelf. Also, we don't wash our greens, which helps to keep them fresh longer. Since we don't spray any sort of pesticide or herbicide in our garden, we feel safe eating our own vegetables straight out of the garden with no washing. You may find some soil or pollen on your greens that you can easily rinse off- we feel that washing your own greens is a small price to pay to significantly increase the shelf life!

"It's always so hard to get through all my store bought greens before they quit on me and rot. But with Jimmy Acres Ever-Green Greens (not TM) all my problems have gone away!"

-Jake Tommerdahl (totally non-biased)
Greensboro, NC

Gardening TommerTips and Tricks: The Tommerdahl Tomato Trench

Sometimes tomatoes can get a little leggy. They get excited about growing before their roots are even in the ground and then you're left with a tall plant with a stem that's not quite big enough to support it. While you could go ahead and just trellis the leggy little guy to keep it from toppling over with the flap of a butterfly wing, you also want the plant's roots to have a chance to bulk up to provide a good foundation going forward. Allowing for the stem to thicken up in proportion to the plant's height is the ideal option. So what do you do?? You take advantage of biology!

Tomatoes are overachievers at rooting and, given sufficient water, they will form roots from their stems. When we plant tomatoes, we take advantage of this feature to help our plants get grounded and build a solid base for the summer. With a really leggy plant (A), we may put half of the plant (or more!) underground. But digging holes that deep can be time consuming, so we dig a horizontal trench and lay the plant in it (B). Then we fill the hole with water, replace the soil while gently bending the stem up out of the ground, mulch, and within minutes, you have a tomato plant with a stem the right size for its height (C). The two plants pictured below started out about the same height, giving you some reference as to how much was buried. We've had good success with this method, and hope you do, too! Do you have your own method? We'd love to hear it!



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!

"You learn when you're barefoot. The first thing is every step you take is different." -Michael Franti