

Winter Greens Production

Building a Context for being a
Winter Grower.

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Wishing Stone Farm

Outline:

- ~ Building a context for being a winter grower**
- ~how we use outdoor production to extend & enhance out total greens production.**
- ~Review our favorite varieties.**
- ~Tips and ideas that make all the difference.**



Wishing Stone Farm is a split designation farm. We farm about 35 acres Cert. Organic and also farm another 12 acres conventionally, which are Peaches & Figs etc...



We are considered Zone 7B and come to rely on our close proximity to the ocean to help extend our growing season. One of our biggest problems is that the winter growing season is too warm!



Haygrove November 15th



Winter Growing requires an apprenticeship period.



**Learn the vicissitudes of temperature
above and below the ground.**



Be prepared for a trip or two around the Learning curve before you start getting it right



**After seven years of winter growing,
We feel we are making progresss!**



**Eskimos have 23 words for the word “Snow”
Similarly you need to develop a new vocabulary
that represents each week of the winter growing
period.**



One can be successful at Winter Farmers Markets with lots of summer storage crops.



But Add some winter greens and you will see your sales double.



We replentished this display eight times last Saturday.



What is needed is a “Seamless” Production of greens from early October til the end of April.



Our winter growing begins with fall greens production out in the fields. With hoops and remay; we try and maintain production outside as long as possible.



The height of our greens production is in the fall. We plant over 35 different greens to keep up to demand. “But”, not all greens that do well in the fall will make for good cultivars for the deep winter.



**Our “Hail Mary” Broccoli Crop.
December 28. Cutting 48 bushels.**



Here are special fall seeded crops, which are planted solely for harvest in the spring. They will be hooped and covered with covertan to protect our investment for spring greens



The same area last Sunday our special fall seeded hardy greens awaiting to be uncovered and harvested in March.



This is our black plastic production field. Here we plant plugs of hardy winter kales. They are planted mid November and are not touched or harvested at all. We want healthy strong mature plants ready to go by March. Inevitably, they will go to seed but not before giving us 3~4 pickings.



Another shot of our black plastic production. Notice the over wintering onions and Redbor Kale to the left. The left photo is “Blue Vates Kale”, which we grown for salad mix.



The most challenging phases of winter greens production is getting ready for and managing the “deep winter” or what has been labeled by many growers the “Persephone Period”. It is the time slot



Between Dec 10th and February 28th; a period when, due to the lack of the sun's energy, low Temperatures and high incidence of disease; most greens Production slows to a crawl. "Lettuce" growing becomes very problematic.



When Persephone is forced to return to Hades for her winter stint, everything in nature seems to either die or go into a state of suspended animation.



The way through this phase of the sun is to use your greenhouse as a ‘Savings Bank’ from which you weekly withdraw your carefully grow greens, which you have been planting as successions since



Late September through the middle of October. If you have worked out the numbers and gotten your successions just right, by the time you are withdrawing your last greens, your first greens should be able to start cutting once more.



And by the middle of March, you will be amazed at the rapid re~growth that is ushered in by the increase in the suns energy and commiserated increase in air and soil temperatures



Now that we have built a context. Lets take a look at some production ideas and finish up with some varieties.



**A typical winter greens
house during the
summer**



After solarization, we add Compost & a dress fertilizer needs. Rototill & mark beds with our onion marker. Up & Back makes 8 rows.



**Nov 21st; 39 days from
seeding.**



December 2nd



Same Greenhouse January 26, 2013.
Two layers of Covertan P19 are good
to 18 degrees. Below that, we set heat
to come on at 15 degrees. Our reasoning is
that it only cost \$12.50 a
night to keep us safe 5 nights a season.



Special Graingers Thermostat
Controls temperature from 0~110
It has a copper remote temp sensor.
Dayton mod# 2NNR6 about \$52.00



**Our second Tomato house 30X96'.
We have been in this house for over 25
years! Growing greens is a great way to
utilize leftover nutrients from the Tomato
crop. But the reason why we need these
houses back my mid March.**



First House planted with transplants.
September 21st.



Same House January 26, 2013.
We are using the same logic of just using two covers and a 15 degree backup heat for extremely cold nights.



Swiss Chard is hot. Planted 6"X6" We keep it short and sell .44# for \$5.75 a Bag. It is harvested a 6" tall. This avoids Septorial Leaf Spot..



**Second Tomato house in May.
Again the winter greens take advantage of the
left over nutrients and seem to prepare the
soils tilth for the incoming Tomato crop in the
spring.**



Second Tomato House; transplanted
October 25. Photo taken Dec 2nd.



**Some of our favorite winter greens:
Ruby Streaks, Green Komatasu, Baby dwarf
Bok choy, Russian Red Kale**



**Dwarf Bok Choi, Johnny's "Wild Fire Mix",
Red Komamatsuna, Blue Vates Kale, Siberian
Kale,**



Green Komatsuna, Tyee Spinach



Miners Lettuce, Bright Lights Swiss Chard



One of our newest varieties for deep winter production is two types of Yukina. On the right you have “Yukina Savoy” from Johnnys and on the left you have “Yo~kattana” from Fedco Seeds.

Deep winter Lettuces:

**Reds: Breen, Red Cash, Reugio, Blade,
Spock,**

**Green: Bolsachica, Sulu, Winter
Density, Gaviota.**

**We have heard good things about the
new Salanova varieties from Johnnys
Select Seed.**



Thank you!