

## **SUMMER 2020**

Campus was on pause from mid-March through August, when classes resumed. The fruit trees and blueberry bushes were watered regularly through the summer. Weeds were periodically strategically removed, but given limited work hours we struggled to keep up with the prolific weeds. The most prominent plants were clover, grass, chamomile, and thistle (luckily found only in the front of the garden). We tried a few methods to keep the weeds at bay. The first attempt was to pull weeds and mulch thickly with straw. Weeds overtook the straw in a month, albeit the weeds were easily pulled from the soil. The most successful long-term solution was to pull weeds and promptly cover the beds with black bioplastic. Within a couple months, the soil securing the edges of the bioplastic was flush with weeds, but at least the beds themselves were completely clear of weeds and easy to transplant into.

The garlic stock was plucked by people walking through campus throughout the summer, so  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the crop was poached in the summer, long before it was ready for an August harvest. The garlic was picked and hung for drying in August. The garlic bulbs were planted and a few extras given away.

To prepare for the start of the semester, we sowed purple velour and provider bush beans, peas, beets, radishes, kale, and coordinated weekly trays of lettuce, spinach, and bok choy.



*June 26, straw mulching method used on the east side of the garden.*



*August 5, row cover protecting the young bean and pea plants from rabbits. Notice the bioplastic used in the center of the garden to secure those beds from weeds.*

## **FALL 2020**

### **Arugula:**

The arugula was planted in September, it grew very nicely for the most part, we got harvests into November and in the first batch, the leaves got pretty large before they became too bitter. The arugula was covered with row cover when the nights started getting colder, along with most of the other crops in the garden.

Total Yield: 4.97lbs

### **Beets:**

Since the season got cut short, the beets did not have much time to bulb and be harvested for their roots. However, we still got a couple nice harvests of the greens (note that the beet greens are priced differently than the root). The beets were planted over the summer in order to give them as much time as possible to grow.

Total Yield (greens): 4.12lbs  
(root): 1.67lbs

### **Beans:**

The beans did so well! They were planted over the summer, at the end of July/beginning of August. We had a massive yield from them, particularly in October. By mid-November, they were pretty much dead and browning and not suitable for harvesting anymore. Another thing to note for future garden managers is that it takes forever to harvest the beans, particularly if there are a lot of them, so plan accordingly during the work parties.

Total Yield: 38.7lbs

### **Bok Choy:**

The bok choy did ok, we planted it in two rows, one of which grew quite well and one of which didn't grow so well and there was a lot of yellowing that occurred. The less productive row was the long curved one next to the herb spiral. I am not sure why the bok choy started yellowing since we were unable to do soil tests in the spring due to covid shutdowns. Also, the little green caterpillars seemed to particularly like the bok choy out of all the plants in the garden.

Total Yield: 48.18lbs

### **Garlic:**

The garlic put out scapes in June and then was hung in the shed to dry in July and August. The cloves were planted in mid-November.

### **Lettuce:**

The majority of the garden's output this year was lettuce. We grew a lot of lettuce and kept planting more through September. It did quite well, especially with the row cover added once the temperatures started dropping a bit.

Total Yield: 80.74lbs

### **Kale:**

The kale did amazing this year! It was seeded in July and then planted in August. Since it is such a cold hardy plant, we left large harvests of it until the end of the semester (on campus, so mid-late November), and that worked out super well.

Total Yield: 13.11lbs



Kale in October, feat. row cover over some of the lettuce

**Peas:**

The peas also did super well this year! They grew quite tall (over 6' in some spots) and were able to continue producing for weeks after powdery mildew started showing up at the bottom of the plants. They were planted at the beginning of august, which I think is later than most years, which may have been why they were so tall in the fall.

Total Yield: 19.09lbs



Peas were so tall!

**Radishes:**

The german giant radishes did a bit better than the watermelon radishes, but all told, the radishes did pretty good.

Total Yield: 20.18



First radish harvest of the year (german giants)

### **Spinach:**

The spinach also had some issues with yellowing, again I'm not sure why since we didn't do soil tests this year. The spinach was planted in the row by the fence with the sunflowers and raspberries, and more yellowing occurred on the end closest to the sink.

Total Yield: 6.77lbs

Sidenote: the raspberries grew way longer into the fall than I had expected and were quite delicious.

### **Flowers and other plants:**

- No additional crops were planted in the garden, since I could not come in over the summer.

- We stopped using compost on the beds in late September because of the unknown soil compositions.
- Fruit trees were pruned in the fall, as branches from the trunk of the trees had become prolific. We installed durable tree guards around the trees and the blueberry bushes to prevent rodents from nibbling the bark and ringing the trees through the winter months.
- All told, we had a total of 237.53lbs of produce that were delivered to dhall for the fall semester.

### **Work Parties:**

Due to Covid, we had to cap work parties at a maximum of five people. However, even with this small amount, it was difficult to fill up each work party.

Volunteers were also required to sign up in advance by emailing [garden@skidmore.edu](mailto:garden@skidmore.edu), which I was operating for the semester. Even though most work parties filled up in advance, people would regularly ditch because they had homework or just not show up and not give me an excuse. Most weeks I ended up sending a reminder email out around friday-ish to all the people who had signed up for that week reminding them they had signed up and asking them to please notify me 24hrs in advance if they didn't want to come. That way I had some extra time to round up more people.

Another note: spreadsheets are your best friend!! I had a sign in sheet on google sheets as part of the garden google drive and when people emailed me they wanted to come on a certain date I wrote down their name and email in the sheet for that date. I also asked people that showed up for their phone numbers and if they wanted to come again (usually yes) and created a running list of people I could text if I had spots available on a short notice.

I also had a spreadsheet going on the harvests and how much was harvested on what days. That was super helpful in creating invoices.

However, even with all of these steps in place, I still rarely had the full 5 volunteers to work with. In those cases you just have to prioritize tasks, do your best, and communicate with Jen and Levi about what's going on. They will be understanding and will do their best to help you out.

### **Photos:**













