

Dear Farm Friends,

I often run into people who wonder what happens on the farm over the winter. Many assume that we farmers spend the winter traveling to warm places or sitting by the fire with a book. This assumption is a perfect identification of Angie's and my fantasies for the winter (Angie



-warm places, John - book by the fire). In reality, we were very fortunate to spend 2 weeks in early December on some friends' sailboat in the Sea of Cortez, and I've had a few nice evenings with a book by the woodstove.

Otherwise, however, the farm is relatively busy with planning for the coming season. We spent a full week ordering seeds. Each year we grow about 280 varieties of vegetables, and we are always testing new ones looking for what's tastiest and what grows well here. We spend a lot of money buying top quality varieties because we are food snobs and want the best for ourselves and for you.

We spent another week revising our planting plan. Our planting schedule starts the last week of January and includes detailed weekly plantings through early October. As a start, we've already seeded quite a few things in the greenhouse, including many varieties of early



tomatoes, parsley, cabbage, leeks, kale, onions, shallots, fennel, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, and chard. We are fairly unique in the earliness, diversity, and richness of our plantings which allows us to offer you a long season of diverse vegetables.

I am currently rebuilding our spader - an Italian made tillage implement that is much gentler on the soil and soil microlife than a rototiller (the typical implement used by many vegetable farms). The spader loosens the soil for planting without mixing and inverting the soil profile like a rototiller does. It also doesn't smear the soil at the bottom of its till creating an impervious "plow pan." After wanting one for many years, we finally bought the spader in 2002 and though it is gentle on the soil, the soil is not gentle on it: 7 years later, several bearings are worn out. To my knowledge we are still the only farm in Nevada County practicing this kind of soil conserving tillage.

I'm also working on a number of other farm projects including planting a small orchard, building a fence at our new field, hiring a new crop of 5 interns, farm budgeting and taxes, buying supplies from organic fertilizer to string, and maintaining and fixing other equipment.

We are excited about the upcoming season and all the new challenges and mysteries it will bring. See the sidebar to the right for details on how to sign up for our summer shares. For those of you who are currently receiving the winter shares through our friends at Riverdog Farm and Chaffin Family Orchards, we hope you are enjoying it. We are very lucky to have access to such good produce in the winter months! Let's hope the rest of winter brings a lot more rain and relaxing times by the woodstove.

**SUMMER SHARES ARE NOW AVAILABLE!**



**We are now accepting sign ups for our summer vegetable and fruit shares. Please [visit our website](#) or see our brochure (attached). Every year our farm shares sell out--so send in your sign up form soon to reserve your spot. Call us at 292-3776 if you have any questions or would like to get on our mailing list directly.**