We did not complain about the rain, but our spirits fired up when it finally dried up. After the wettest spring in many years, and a bit of consternation over all the seeds still in their packets, the weather cleared and the sun came out. It's time to move and move we did.

First things first. The spring crops (Onions, potatoes, carrots, beets, lettuce, swiss chard, parsley and celery) all get hoed and cultivated before we can plant. The rows are laid off for the summer vegetables. The extra day or two helped dry the soil out a little more, but some spots were still damper than I like.

If the ground doesn't shatter, clods form. Subsequent tillage will help alleviate the problem, but not completely. Our bottom land, with more rocks and sand, was ready first. Into the furrows go seeds of beans, cucumbers and summer squash. Then we walk over the rows, heel to toe, and firm the seeds in. the cultivators toss soil back on top.

Four days later a harrow is pulled over the rows, disturbing the soil surface and the shallow, sprouting weed seeds. This allows our vegetables to pop up clean as a whistle. We immediately rake the soil away from the row, so the cultivator can go through and leave three straight ridges and valleys down the garden. As weeds sprout on these, hoes and the cultivators run through and knock the ridges down. It is much easier to destroy weeds in corrugated soil rather than when it's perfectly flat.

Aeration is what we are doing through tillage. Weeds need firmed soil to sprout, so we keep the soil loose and fluffy. Thanks go to the many tons of biodynamic compost for helping create good soil structure.

Another field gets winter squash, alternating with rows of beans. The middle section of this field had a beautiful stand of crimson clover on it, while the outside sections didn't. I left it to grow a little more when we composted and tilled the other two sections. I figured it would do more good alive, but it was a mistake.

When I finally moved it, the soil remained wet. I let it dry a few days, but with all the organic matter on top, it didn't. So when I plowed it, clods formed. When it came time to plant the whole field, I could tell the difference in soil structure. We grew a half dozen varieties of winter squash, so I put my least favorite in those rows.

Four days later I harrowed the field, and could still tell the difference. If it had been a normal spring, leaving the cover crop would not have been a mistake. In the long run, after the organic matter breaks down, it'll probably be okay. But I'll be keeping my eyes on it.

The cold frames were still full of tomatoes when warnings of frost were in and on the air. We simply closed them up and slept well. It didn't frost, but I remain skeptical of transplanting out the tomatoes until the third week of May. It would be a lot harder to cover a field of tomatoes than the cold frames.

Rows were made, and holes dug in the furrows about four feet apart. Each hole got a shovelful of compost, and then the bare root tomato plant is set in the hole. If it's long, we simply lay them over and let just the top five inches stick out. Tomatoes will root along their buried stems. They get a dash of water, and are checked daily for Colorado potato beetles, who can munch a small plant quickly.

As rain threatened yesterday, I plowed land for melons and pumpkins, and pulled up sweet potato slips. The slips are healed in the freshly emptied cold frames, and the sweet potato bed will sprout more. A gentle shower fell in the late afternoon, allowing us to relax and watch the garden grow. I didn't really want to plant that last bed of lettuce anyway.