

Our spring garden is finally out of my mind and in the ground. We had to work some soil before it was thoroughly dry, and are now dealing with the subsequent clods. They got raked away from the row and into the middles, where the tractor tire and cultivators can break them up. The first crops we plant are onions and potatoes. The onion plants were hoed twice before we planted the potato crop. I try to tend what is already planted before I plant again. The potatoes were harrowed over two times after they were planted, at 10 day intervals. Now let's get in the garden.

Radish is in the first row, along the fence. They will mature quickly, then be gone and allow for a long row of late, climbing beans. The next two rows of peas did not come up solid, so they were replanted into beets. The radish varieties are Cherry Belle and French Breakfast. The beet varieties are Detroit Dark Red and Chioggia.

Three rows of lettuce followed. Across the path are five rows of Danvers Half long carrot. Two rows each of Swiss Chard (the variety is French Swiss Chard) and parsley are in the next to three rows of celery. Then there is a row of leeks and four more rows of beets.

Right before the thunder shower we planted out eight rows of the lettuce plants, about a foot apart. A new onion variety, red Wing, was offered to us for trial from a seed company in Vermont. So, we planted 5,000 more onion plants. This left room for three more rows of beets. These are all frost hardy crops, which means they'll sprout in a cool soil and can withstand a short spell of below freezing weather. All can be planted safely here during the month of April. The tomato and peppers are poking up in the cold frames, where we can cover them and keep them warm. My bean, squash, corn, melon and other summer crop seeds are tucked away in the cabin awaiting May. I'll let the ground thoroughly warm up before I spill those seeds into a deep furrow in mother Earth.

The fields for the summer crops are getting composted and turned. I stir them up with a rebreaker, let seeds sprout, and stir again. I do most of my garden work before the seed is sown.

Around the house we are planting herbs and flowers, trellising up grapes and blackberries, and pulling lots of chickweed and dead nettle out of the perennial beds. The limestone bluffs are disappearing in the flush of the pastel colors of new forest growth. Flowers fall from the trees, to make room for the darker green leaves. We hoe and rake the spring garden, and keep it tended, while we wait for a few hot days to satisfy me that we won't get a late cols snap. Then I'll get the summer garden out of my mind and into reality.