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We just picked ten bushels of beautiful tomatoes, on October 25, and the plants are loaded with blooms and green ones. Compare this to last year when there was not one tomato by the middle of August. It makes one wonder about the nature of disease.

When an organism and its environment are not integrated, synchronized or well organized, specific organs malfunction. Health prevails when life forces are in the preferred element. Ecological stress disorganizes the stream of life.

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Every living thing must die. The stage before death we call disease. The ease of living so prevalent in the growing stages, eventually wanes and life isn’t so easy. Then we have a disease.

Last July we had record low temperatures. The nights were surprisingly cool, and noticeable unusual for that time of the year. I liked it, as my cabin has no air conditioning, but the tomatoes didn’t.

On our end, we planted and tended the tomato patch just as we always had. Plenty of compost was spread and the soil was properly tilled. Holes were dug and the plants were lifted from the cold frames and watered in. Subsequent cultivation and hoeing kept the soil loose and weed-free.

Four hundred tomato cages were put on and stakes pounded in the ground held them in place. Hay was applied a food thick over the whole field as a mulch. By the end of June they looked great.

After a couple of weeks of good harvests, we noticed that some plants had grey, moldy leaves

at their bottoms, and this gradually crept up the plant. We pulled about a quarter of the plants out of the field, hoping to prevent the spread of a disease. But the nights remained chilly and the tomatoes kept wilting.

Apparently, it was all throughout the southeast, a tomato disaster. We soon had zero tomatoes and many disappointed CSA members. Because we are supported financially by this community, we lost no money. Our coop got plenty of other vegetables, just no tomatoes. If I had been marketing them differently than with the CSA program, it would have been about a huge financial loss.

This year I was so concerned about putting all of this work in another tomato patch, but we did it anyways. The results, using the same methods, could not have been more different. The bumper crop more than made up for last year's failure. Again, because of the CSA model, I did not make an extra dime on the tomatoes this year. The coop got all of the crop, and are still getting them.

This summer our beans failed. My apologies go out to Clara Dean and all of the farm's supporters. Something was not organized well between the beans and their environment.

All the farmer can do is organize the life in the soil, and then sow and tend as usual. Life arises as organization increases. Good quality compost has organization abilities latent in the dormant microbes. Cover crop roots are excellent organizers of soil structure. Proper tillage sets the stage for planting and growing.

But then there is the weather. Each season I can guarantee the customers bumper crops, and crop failures. I just don't know ahead of time which ones. My faith in good farming practices has been bolstered by the unbelievable tomato harvest this year, and next year I'm looking for lots of beans.