Plowing and planting, we put in overtime last week to get 30 more bunches of onions planted, along with 30 bunches of leeks. More carrots, beets and lettuce get sowed while the peas and celery get hoed. An endless cycle of vegetables in, vegetables out during the course of the year keeps us busy, and wondering.Are there crops, which are only planted once? The answer is yes, the fruit crops.

Late spring frosts are the reason Tennessee is not fruit-growing country. Be that as it may, we dove in the setting out grapes and cherry trees this spring. The years that we avoid frost injury will be sweet and juicy.

Twelve holes were dug in a line toward the barn. We saved the topsoil but removed a few buckets of subsoil from each hole, filling up a low spot elsewhere with it. Granite meal was worked into the hold with a big iron bar, further breaking up the ground below the future vines. Soil preparation for fruit is a one-time deal; we will not be working the ground below the plants again.

Each hole gets a bucket of compost mixed in with the topsoil, and then a small mound is made in the hole. After pruning the roots, they are carefully spread out over the mound and more soil is tamped in over them. I make sure there are no air pockets by firming in the soil around the grape vine with my feet.

Three each of Canadice, Reliance, Steuben and Worden are in and perfectly lined up. Nearby we plant a Buffalo and two seedless concords. Up at the other farm, on orchard hill, we set out three Niagra and two Glemora seedless. Strawberries are planted under most of the vines to give us fruit long before the grapes come in. The arbor for them to grow up on is still in my mind.

As we were heading over to plant the cherry trees, a great group of really nice folks dropped by to look at the gardens. After a short tour I told them what we were up to, and they came along. I enjoy people who love gardening, and love to help, and these were them.

A few pear trees had succumbed to last year’s spring freeze, and I’d already pulled out the roots. So, the digging was easy. Again we went deep, and worked in a few handfuls of the granite meal. I love to re-mineralize the soil, especially down below a future fruit tree. We added compost, of course, and mixed it in well with the topsoil.

It took everybody to keep me in line, we wanted the new tree to be right in the row. Two Mount Morency cherry trees were set and the soil firmed in well around the roots. The next two hoes were planted with Dwarf North Star cherry trees, and the promise of pies lit up our eyes.

The apples and pears were in full bloom, and a lovelier evening would be hard to imagine. Good people, good work, good fun, and surrounded by beauty. I believe we all felt blessed. And there'll be no more plowing or planting here, just the light filled chores of pruning and picking.