



It has been inordinately grey here and greenhouse plants definitely respond when the sun does come out. We are busy seeding onions, which is a pretty good crop for us. We are hoping to move towards singulated transplants that will be transplanted directly into the soil and move away from plastic. The weak link-and a real concern for us is timely cultivation. Being conventional, we do have herbicides as a back-up, but we are trying to reduce their use, improve nutrient supply with the ability to sidedress, and we believe that we can literally cut our transplant time by 80-90% on our 1.5 - 2 acres by avoiding the waterwheel transplanter and plastic.

Tomatoes will go into ground in the greenhouses this week, and peppers for pak sales as well as the field will be seeded end of the week. Getting the pest pressure under control in the propagation houses using beneficial insects. No whiteflies or thrips, a couple of foxglove aphids hiding about, and hopefully the curve is downward on two spotted mites. If not controlled, the stronger sun and warming temps later in March and April will bring them out.

(Newburyport MA) Arrowhead Farm. Peas, fava beans, and spinach direct seeded in field February 28, earliest planting date ever. Dry soil tilled up very nicely for seeding, but now under 6" heavy, wet snow. They'll be fine though. Cherry tomato, celery, chard, head lettuce, beet, snap peas, green, yellow and purple bean mix, and cucumber transplants coming along nicely for planting into heated greenhouses next week.

Seeding this week: cabbage, kohlrabi, cauliflower, onion, beet, lettuce, sugar snap peas, and leek transplants for April field planting. Finishing up rooting herb plant cuttings for 4" pots. Planting Albion strawberries in 36-count plug trays for field transplanting next month. Cleaning up aphids in spinach houses with ladybugs. Running on generator these past few days after massive power outage north of Boston during storm.

Farmers markets very busy and strong sales. CSA signups coming in although we plan to cap memberships earlier this year as we are continuing to downsize our farming operations. Getting ready to start feeder pigs for sausages, one of our highest-margin enterprises. Wishing everyone a profitable and enjoyable growing season.

easter to sharpen one greenhouse issues! Eight days ago we got 85 mph gusts and sustained winds over 55 mph. With trees toppling everywhere power went out early in the storm. Our gutter-connect greenhouse had one bay split right down the fold seam on both layers! This is the second time in two years we have lost a greenhouse cover for this reason. If you ever need ends of your greenhouse plastic shipping boxes with the manufacturers production date and production run number. The last piece we did lose was made by Klerks. (Significa know.)

Another lesson learned is that wiggle wire can cause failure. Produce recommends double-wiring the end corners and a few extra across the middle of long runs. Without this procedure, we have had the wiggle wire cut a saw-tooth rip in the plastic! This last storm we had an end corner piece cut out about 7 feet in a saw tooth manner. We made the mistake of screwing in the wiggle wire base with galva

Here are a few more details. The unit requires 240V electricity supply. AZS set us up with a quick connect fitting in the pressure rinse line, so we can switch from running the pressure rinse to running a power washer nozzle, which is great for washing crates, or washing the conveyor when we're finished each day. There can be gallons of mud to clean out at the end of a roots wash. We use it to wash black bulb crates sometimes, just by running them through empty. We bought ours used, which came with a more expensive conveyor chain than AZS normally was including, and I'm not sure what difference that may make for something like sensitive summer squash skins.

Initially, we found that leaves from lettuce heads and arugula bunch leaves were getting bruised. So we installed a 2" ball valve in the circulation run, which allowed us to restrict flow enough to prevent the bruising but not enough to damage the pump. We also find that the pressure nozzles throw out a lot of mist, so about half our crew wears goggles for that (along with ear protection for the noise). We have more trials to do, to see if a different nozzle size or operating pressure can either reduce the mist or provide an even better scrub wash for the roots, without damaging the skins.

### **CHECK YOUR WINTER GREENS FOR MILDEW DISEASES**

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Downy mildew was confirmed on spinach last week in Massachusetts and Long Island. This is one of several powdery mildew and downy mildew diseases that have been plaguing lettuce and

