

Farm Notes

CSA Newsletter

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Potomac Vegetable Farms
www.potomacvegetablefarms.com

Saturday, October 24, 2020: A Day In Our Life On and Off the Farm

AM

2:11: Secure the final knots on my cozy crocheted ghost rug then slide into bed for the night. (Caroline at home)

4:30: Alarm goes off, snooze. (Michael B)

4:40: Second alarm, second snooze. (Michael B)

4:49: Out of bed, feed the cat, feed the chickens and let them out, turn on their electric fence, look for my least dirty clothes and most fashionable face mask. (Michael B)

5:05: Up before dawn, naturally. Why does this always seem to happen on a Saturday? A full day of sunshine, fresh air and physical work on Friday helps. (Kathryn at home)

5:05: Drive to the green barn, trade my pickup truck for another one that can be driven on a real road. Leave the Purcellville farm, heading for the Vienna farm. (Michael B)

5:15: Woke up for a market I don't usually go to. Was sitting in my kitchen when I realized I didn't have to wait for anyone and I could just load the truck and get there early. (Ciara at the Loudoun farm)

5:25: Stop at McDonalds in Leesburg for a large coffee with two creams and one sugar and two sausage egg and cheese McMuffins. \$5.90. (Michael B)

6:00: Arrive at farm in Vienna. Sit in parking lot for two minutes to finish my coffee because as soon as I show my face my aunt Hana will put me to work and my coffee will get cold. (Michael B)



Reston Farmers Market at 8 AM

6:00: Headed out to Leesburg to work a market by ourselves! (Yael and Benjamin)

6:02: Load market trucks. (Michael B)

6:05: Hana and Carrie had finished loading the truck when I got there. Usually I drive someone else with me to Arlington, but James was meeting me at the market so I had a rare quiet drive down 7 and 66. I sipped my coffee and finished my podcast, and the peaceful part of the morning before the storm of setup went on just a little longer. (Isabel)

6:10: Drive truck to Lake Anne in Reston. (Michael B)

6:20: Arrive at market, met by my mom and her husband. Set up our tent and tables and displays in the dark. (Michael B)

6:20: Trying to set up the tent by myself and figure out I'm missing a pole. After a few minutes of searching I start sending texts asking the last people who used the truck where the missing pole is. Almost immediately after I send the texts I find the missing pole shoved in the wrong spot. Then I spend a little while moving things around so I can actually reach the missing pole. (Ciara in Leesburg)

6:25: Arrived at Falls Church Farmers Market and started unloading the truck with Keesha. (Olivia)

6:30: Hana arrives and reminds me that we only need to set up a 10 by 20 tent, not a 10 by 30 like I had been imagining. So it turns out we didn't need that one pole after all. (Ciara)

6:45: We are missing our other market helper and I text a dramatic plea to Hana for backup. We kick into high gear and are slinging crates like never before. (Olivia at Falls Church)

6:48: Finally a morning without fog to walk the dog. It had been quite creepy the last two mornings, but there was such a pleasant start to this day that I decided we would just keep walking. Even the bike path was pretty empty for once which made it easier for me to persuade the dog to go right instead of his usual left. For the most part nothing has changed along this route. Coming up the lower end of our street heading home, I suddenly stopped to view the amount of rot that had occurred on a once beautifully carved eagle. One side of the tree had rotted more as well, from the base to the bird, but the bird! It had hollowed out from the back end. Time and elements were responsible, yet this changed appearance symbolized so much more. (Susan at home)



Susan's carved eagle



Purcellville farm rainbow

7:45: Unloaded CSA shares at the Purcellville stand and admired the rainbow to the west. (Hana)

7:47: With my eyes still closed, I was thinking about having a leisurely French toast breakfast with Michael. My cell phone rang at the other end of the room. Even though I promptly rolled out of bed I missed the call. It was Hana saying Olivia and Keesha needed help at the Falls Church market. No time to stretch or feed the chickens and pigs or check the greenhouse. A cup of hot water, a bowl of granola and yogurt to go, only three red lights and I was at the market by 8:20. (Hiu)

7:57: Miraculously every vegetable is displayed, signs are out, walkways are cleared, and we are ready to go. Mia arrives, then Hiu, then Susan, and we switch from under to overprepared. Every backstocked veggie gets beautifully panted, weighed, or bunched. Hiu may have been oblivious to her celebrity status, but her rare presence at market caused a stir! A few customers recognized her and two vendors told me they did double-takes seeing the famed founder of PVF walking in her quiet way through the crowd. (Olivia)

7:58: I wake up and start my morning routine. I make my bed, put my solar string lights outside my window angling toward the sun to recharge for the coming night, brush my teeth. I walk to the main house and make breakfast with

some housemates and offer to take the adored three year old we live with to Home Depot. This would allow her parents to have some much needed time to work on our internal farm theater production performance. (Sophia at home)

8:00: We're mostly set up and ready to go at Leesburg and there's a little sliver of a rainbow in the sky. (Ciara)

8:00 Market opens. Practice Spanish, Russian and Hebrew with customers! (Yael and Benjamin)

8:20: Mia had arrived and the scheduled team were cheerfully greeting and helping the earliest shoppers. The display was beautiful and showed no evidence of the 7 am frenzy that prompted the distress call. Still, since I and Susan who also answered the call showed up, Olivia made us feel useful by having us box peppers and potatoes before dismissing us at 9:15. (Hiu)

8:45: I leave Benjamin and Yael at market and I get back to the farm, wake up my partner and take him out to breakfast at the Panera drive through since we mostly haven't seen each other all week. (Ciara)

8:47: Convincing the three year old that a Home Depot run would be a lot of fun was surprisingly easy. With fig newtons and pb&j's in hand it turns out that trips to Home Depot are way more fun with snacks and an enthusiastic three year old. Farmers may laugh at this one, the three year old kept correcting me that the shopping cart she got to ride on was in fact a "golfie" (golf cart), and not a shopping cart. (Sophia)

8:50: Finally hobbling out the door with poor little Chico (hurt his back leg on Thursday). Weird short walk because I'm not carrying him home from a mile out. (Kathryn)

8:55: Today's project is a moving sale. By noon the sale was over, having had lots

of masked shoppers looking for bargains. (Dick at home)

9:00: I woke up today thankful it was officially the weekend. I spend this Shabbat being with my family and spending time with my dog, Rosie. We got take-out sushi and decided to go on a walk by some of the great lakes of Reston. After our walk, I came home and continued to work on school work and college work. (Avi at home)

9:15: I was glad to have a chance to walk through the market afterwards and chat a bit with some of the vendors before driving off to Tractor Supply in Leesburg for some chicken feed. I was surprised to see how bad the traffic was on a Saturday morning going west on Rt 7 with lanes closed for widening construction. Returning to the farm was a breeze and I was home before noon. (Hiu)

10:00: Picking all the different colored winter radishes. There are critters munching in the beds but they seem to only like the purple alpine daikons. (Ciara in the field)

11:00: Pack car in light rain with every completed cozy item for Fairfax night market. (Caroline)

11:00: Behind the stand in Vienna, bagged vegetables with Hana in prep for Sunday markets: beautiful bok choy; head lettuce grown in the cold frame, unusual for the farm in late October. (Michael L)

11:15-1:45: Picking beans. (Ciara in a different field)

11:32: I am sad that my usual cheese vendor is mysteriously absent today when I was in the market (literally!) for marinated feta. (Olivia at Falls Church)

PM

12:04: The timer ran out on my practice SAT and my score lit up on the screen. *Welp, I guess that's that.* Three hours of sitting at my chaotic desk in my

chaotic bedroom for four pointless digits that can tell the world that I'm smart enough to get into college? I think not. I didn't have time to ponder this idea because my stand shift would start at 1:00 pm and I was in no state to leave my house. I raced to take a shower and eat lunch, and as I slipped on my muddy Converse, I remembered my 6 page (front and back!!) Calc homework sitting on the printer. Back upstairs I ran, grabbing my homework, a pencil, and my calculator, just in case it was a slow day at the stand. What a wonderful feeling it was to know that while my brain felt fried from high school exhaustion, I was able to be surrounded by shining pumpkins, apples, squash, radishes, and pie on a Saturday afternoon. Most kids aren't this lucky! (Leah)

12:25: Drive truck back from Reston to farm in Vienna. (Michael B)

12:30: Arrived home from a busy Falls Church farmers market. Helped get lamb chops onto the smoker and started watching college football outside. Had a beautiful view of the yellow and red trees shedding their leaves. Such a fun fall Saturday! (Keesha)

12:30: Uggghhh ... still in the kitchen. Note to self (and should have learned by now): kombucha days are NOT cooking days as well. (Kathryn)

12:35: Unload truck with Hana, load my pickup truck with cinderblocks and gifts and theatrical supplies. (Michael B)

12:30-2:20: Drive to Nalls Produce in Alexandria to pick up two bins of pumpkins to resell at the farm. Many farms turn into weekend tourist attractions in October. Cary Nalls has figured out how to turn his acre usually devoted to parking and potted plant displays into "Pumpkin Hill," a riot of pumpkins, decorative squash and gourds. My favorite feature was the "Pumpkin Wall," a collection of intrig-



Nalls Produce Pumpkin Wall

ing squash beauties arranged to museum standards. My second favorite: the three giant pumpkins each resembling Star Wars' Jabba the Hutt, the largest, according to a sign, weighing over 900 pounds. (Michael L)

12:50: Eat Turkish comfort food that I traded for greens at market while complaining to my mom and my aunt about people who do things differently than me. (Michael B)

1:00: Lunch at Second Spring Farm with David Giusti and Julia, amid free-roaming chickens. (Benjamin and Yael)

1:15: Back at the Vienna farm stand post-market, Leah and I make a time to discuss political lessons learned through the Octavia's Parables podcast. A customer drops off probably close to a hundred neatly stacked egg cartons she saved for us to reuse. (Olivia)

1:45: Head back home. Stop at 7-11 for an extra-large hot drink and a spicy hot dog. \$3.29. (Michael B)

2:15-3:30: Planting onion sets for next year! (Ciara in a different field)

2:30-3:30: Alas, one farmhand sans mushrooms. I had not been able to go to market like I usually do, as I was making a necessary trip to Winchester. I had been putting off buying mushrooms for the house until today because the guy who forages for Lion's Mane and Hen-of-The-Woods would be there. No fungi for this fun gal. When I began the drive back home, I decided to drive



Chicken-of-the-Woods

aimlessly around some back roads for a while. No native, restless Virginian can resist the urge to waste gas. I happened to pass over a bridge near a tiny farmhouse, so I slowed down. There were chickens all over the road, so my eyes wandered out the window, making sure they all could leisurely trot to safety. Among these chickens, I spotted a tree that was home to a Chicken not at all like the others. Chicken-of-The-Woods! With my amateur foraging skills, I am limited to a not-very-robust ability to identify things... but there is no mistaking Chicken-of-The-Woods. I narrowed my eyes. Do I pull over? Is this someone's property? There was nothing to really signify this tree as out-of-bounds for my mushroom-less self. I located a little knife I had in my car and popped out to say hello to the chickens, then headed straight for the tree. It looked like someone had cut off multiple brackets, so I figured I wasn't the only one who wanted a free lunch. I left as much of the base as I could, then swiftly left. I got home and made a mushroom & swiss cheese melt in a spinach wrap. (I made sure what I had acquired was safe to eat and clean. Always make sure you correctly ID your mushrooms and wash them.) (Tara wandering the back roads of Virginia)

2:30: The music starts and Fairfax night market begins. (Caroline)

2:45: Unload gifts and cinderblocks, read instructions for my new on-demand propane water heater. (Michael B)

3:00: First shift on the VA Voter hotline. Nervous and excited. Hope the phone doesn't ring off the hook! (Kathryn)

3:30: Watch Hamilton for the third time while taking a nap. (Michael B)

3:45: Yard work in the afternoon was followed by a trip to the farm to buy apples. Lucky me, Hiu was there. We had a great time loading pumpkins with "issues," and feeding them to those hungry pigs (Dick)

4:00: Running out the door...need to get out of the house AND get to the Fairfax Night Market to peruse Cozy Experience's handmade rugs. (Kathryn)

4:00: Visited Caroline at artist fair in Fairfax. Bought a tie dye face mask. (Yael and Benjamin)

5:00: Haven't been this far out in the 'burbs on a weekend day in months. Not real comfortable with the lack of COVID protocols I'm seeing. But everyone is friendly/caring/happy at the Fairfax Night Market. And... got the white round rug! And another jeans one as well. (Kathryn)



Zoey feeds the pigs

5:45: Ran into Carrie and Zoey and Olivia when I went to feed the pigs. Zoey

helped dump the food into the pen. (Hana)

6:00: Help my brother Stephen into a towering puppet/costume of a creepy pregnant bride with a mirror for a face. Slowly walk behind him and three dancers who hold his train while I drum. (Michael B)

6:00: My last work task of the day - loading the market truck (again! I just did this 12 hours ago). I drive it back to my house for the night and think about going to bed immediately. (Ciara)

6:30: Family dinner at Anna's house, celebrating Gordon's 60th birthday. Hugh and Gordon made delicious sushi. We eat on the porch, as is our 2020 custom. (Hana)

7:00: Climb on a raft on our pond with five other people, row to the other shore while singing a Polish folk song, then discuss the technical aspects of the ego-death scene. (Michael B)

7:00: Tony needs help with his law school homework because they're making him do some math so I try to help him with that for a while. (Ciara)

7:30: A single giant wind gust breaks a glass vase, lifts a tent and scares half of the artists into packing up and leaving their booths early. (Caroline)

8:00: Go home, fix door to chicken coop and close it, turn off electric fence, feed cat. Prepare a spaghetti Meal-Ready-to-Eat (what we feed our soldiers in the field) that my friend gave to me. Eat while finishing Hamilton and then watch a few episodes of Rick and Morty before falling asleep around 11:00. (Michael B)

10:30: Finish packing up my cozy booth and leave while the last performance artists are still performing at high energy. (Caroline)

12:47: Set alarm for 4hrs from then to get up for work Sunday representing PVF at Dupont farmers market. (Caroline)