

WHATS GROWING ON?

the ohio state student farm's bi-weekly newsletter
volume one || edition two

FARMING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE:

Anthropocene (noun) :

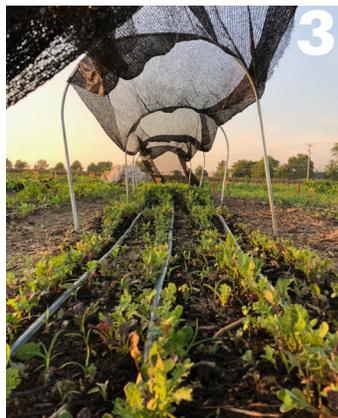
the period of time during which human activities have had an environmental impact on the Earth regarded as constituting a distinct geological age

As the OSU Student Farm continues to develop its structure, community, and practices, it has been crucial for us to be extremely aware of the context in which we reside. In this issue, we look into some of the ways in which this age of climate change alters our farming practices and more.

As you may have noticed, this season has been crazy. A super wet April meant that we were unable to prepare the soil without damaging it. The accompanying cold meant that whatever we could get in the ground took a very long time to germinate and begin growing.

Keeping this in mind, one of our major goals right now is to create on-farm infrastructure that allows us to cultivate regardless of weather. This edition will explore some of the techniques and structures (mainly for season extension) that we are enacting in hopes of helping the Student Farm to be more resilient in this tumultuous climate.

Happy reading!



1. High tunnel: the most expensive and probably most effective strategy. A high tunnel is essentially an unheated greenhouse. By installing a 50 x 20' high tunnel, we will be able to control conditions and plant on schedule, regardless of what's happening outside. It will even allow us to grow certain crops throughout the winter.

2. Caterpillar tunnel: A caterpillar tunnel is a smaller, cheaper, and impermanent version of the high tunnel. Ours will be constructed on tracks, so we can plant heat-loving crops earlier in the season, then move the structure to cover fall and winter crops late in the season. Shout out to Mary Boltri for spearheading the construction of our caterpillar tunnel!

3. Row covers: 10' lengths of standard ½" conduit are bent and covered with light and rain permeable cloth to form a temporary structure over row crops. These can protect crops from late frosts, as well as insect pressure. By changing the cloth for different scenarios, we are given greater flexibility in our planting.

the importance of:

Water is crucial to the growth and life of just about everything. Our plants are no exception, so we spend a lot of time thinking about how to make sure we keep our crops happy, healthy, and hydrated.

Waterman Farms, for good reason, doesn't turn on the whole-farm irrigation system until after the danger of frost has passed. In our area of Ohio, that is around May 10. This season, we had about a week of temperatures over 80 degrees before the irrigation was turned on, and so a lot of valuable early-season time was lost to hand-watering the crops. For the future, we plan to build water-catchment systems from our tunnel structures so that a source of water is available to irrigate the fields before the last frost date.

WATER!

Especially in the short-term, mulch can help quite a bit with protecting our soil and, thus, all that grows from it. Acting as a barrier between the elements and the soil, mulch helps keep soil wet and can decrease soil temperature by up to 15 degrees Fahrenheit, making for much better growing conditions for our assorted crops.

there's so much to love about mulch



There is such a thing as too much of a good thing, even when that thing is water. Indeed, the current hot, dry weather interspersed with torrential rain is extremely damaging to soil. To combat this damage, we are exploring cover crop strategies to maintain a living cover on the soil at all times of the year so that bare soil is never exposed to the elements.

Graduate student Joey Hamrock is currently conducting research on a variety of potential cover crops out on the farm, including many species that originate in drier, hotter climates.

The above picture was taken just after the crops were seeded; soon there will be a lush mane of cover crops covering the field. Hopefully, in the coming seasons we'll be able to enact some of our cover crop findings!



in other news

THIS WEEK'S CSA

BAG WILL INCLUDE:

**all-star lettuce mix,
basil,
jalapenos,
head lettuce**

**EXTRAS:
eggplant,
cilantro,
etc.**

**ATTENTION
CSA
MEMBERS!**



MAKING DEEPER CONNECTIONS: OUTREACH TEAM WORKING WITH CMN GARDEN

This past Saturday, outreach team members Madison Taylor and Madeline Marshall attended the Charles Mad-

ison Nabrit Memorial Garden's season opener! They were inspired by Rev. Dr. Heber M. Brown

III, pastor of Baltimore's Pleasant Hope Baptist Church, and founder of The Black Church

Food Security Network. The network fights food apartheid by helping congregations grow food on church-owned land

and serves as a food hub, linking black churches and black farmers, creating a community-controlled, alternative food system based on self-sufficiency and black food and land sovereignty.

Moving forward, Madison and Madeline are planning to forge deeper bonds with the garden, by continuing to show up to their weekly work days on Saturdays (10-12) and helping the founder, Paula Penn-Nabrit, in any capacity needed. The Student Farm is excited to see what this friendship holds for the future!

