

January-Veggie garden REVIEW

2016 recap

Weird year this past growing season weatherwise. Mother Nature was very different than in previous years and so I must talk about this again, but this time in more detail.

Our normal weather pattern is:

By May 15th it's usually warm enough to plant warm season crops but it is still windy.

June is our hot, dry, windy month with temps peaking the last week of June thru the first week of July. Then the monsoons come in, usually in the second week of July and cool things down. Not so this year.

This year's weather pattern was:

This year we had 2 months of heat that averaged over 92 degrees for 2 months straight. Which means it was hot not only in June which it always is but also ALL of July where the average temp was 94 this year and the high in July was 100, plus the monsoons didn't come until August and then only sporadically.

June average temp was 90°F and we had a high of 100°F with many days over 92°.-no rain-

July average temp was 94°F and we had a high of 100°F.-no rain

August average temp was 82°F and we had a high of 88°F.

Our first big rain was August 13 where we finally got .80 of an inch of rain but the nighttime temp dropped to 51°F that night and stayed in the low 50's at night thereafter until Aug. 21 where we got .28 inch of rain. and we got our first night of 48°.

So what did this mean?

Tomatoes won't set fruit in 92° heat so I had tomato blossom drop and squash blossom drop in June and July. Fruit set when the temps dropped but then we started getting cold nights in the low 50's and 40's so their growth slowed down. I thought we would not really have a season but then something miraculous happened-we had a really long warm fall. I was still picking tomatoes in early November.

So here's the rundown for this season for me:

GARLIC-I planted last fall and they were small due to lack of water.

TOMATOES- Late but did come in because of the wonderful warm fall. My favorite this year was a tomato called LUCKY CROSS. A cross that was

pollinated between a Brandywine and mystery tomato. The tomato grower grew it out 12 generations and now it is stable to grow the seeds out and they will be true.

SUMMER SQUASH- My summer squash got some kind of wilt and died so I didn't get any. I actually had to ask people for zucchini!

WINTER SQUASH- Did ok. I grew 2 different kinds of butternut squash-an Italian version called Butternut Rugosa Violina and an American version called Waltham which is the one you find in the stores. Both produced fairly well and are good keepers. I always heard that they don't get squash bugs and I found this to be true this year.

PEPPERS AND EGGPLANTS- They did well in the heat and I got a lot of peppers and eggplants. They liked the heat.

POTATOES- They probably could have used more rain. They were smaller than usual and less of them.

LEEKs-I started them in March and covered them with shade cloth and they actually did really well.

ONIONS-did great this year.

KALE/CHARD- Kale did great early and the chard got leaf miners pretty bad so had to pick through that.

CABBAGE-Did ok but got lots of aphids in the fall. good chicken food.

CUCUMBERS-Dismal year for me. First I had to plant 4x because the roly pollys ate the seedlings as they emerged. Then someone told me to put SLUGGO PLUS on the soil when I planted and it did the trick-no more roly pollys ate them and it's organic-it has spinosad in it. But the season was mostly past. No pickles this year.

Another dismal year for the **GIANT PUMPKINS**. The female blossoms wouldn't set fruit in all the early heat and they need 3 months to grow big. maybe next year.

FRUIT: GOOD YEAR

GRAPES- did great this year-lots!

APPLES-fantastic year

APRICOTS-first crop in 7 years-no early frost this year.