

Winter Production and Marketing



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Simple Gifts Farm

Overview Winter Production and Marketing



- ❧ Storage crops and facilities
- ❧ Marketing outlets
- ❧ Winter Growing

Winter Share



- ❧ Started 2008-9 with 35 shares
- ❧ Has gone as high as 100 shares, steady now at 80 shares
- ❧ Initially bought in storage crops at \$1/lb., share price calculated at \$1.50/lb.
- ❧ 8 bi-weekly pickups, 15 lbs. storage crop per pickup, 10 bags greens over the season. Winter squash one-time distribution of 1/2 bushel
- ❧ Price \$265, or \$475 in combo with Spring Share

Spring Share



- œ Started 2013 with 60 members. 45 signed up so far for 2014
- œ 10 Weekly pickups, ~ 5-10 pounds storage crops, 3-4 green items
- œ Late March-May
- œ Featured May carrots and strawberries
- œ Price is \$225, or \$475 in combo with winter share

Winter Farmer's Market



- ❧ Started December 2010
- ❧ Initial sales \$500/week
- ❧ Best week \$1700
- ❧ Limited more by supply than by market

Storage of winter crops



- ❧ Started out with just a walk-in cooler
- ❧ Have rented additional space since fall 2010
- ❧ Additional space has been in a refrigerated warehouse, an old apple storage, and an experimental walk-in at Umass
- ❧ Generally one cold and moist, one cold and dry
- ❧ Would like to add one warmer storage for sweet potatoes and winter squash

WELCOME TO THE WINTER SHARE

FROM THE WALK-IN COOLER TO
← YOUR LEFT:

• ONE BAG OF SPINACH
AND

• FIFTEEN POUNDS MIX AND MATCH:

POTATOES, CARROTS*, PARSNIP*, ONIONS,
CABBAGE*, TURNIPS*, DAIKON RADISH*,
WATERMELON RADISH*, CELERIAL*, BEETS,
RUTABAGA*, KOHLRABI

NOT A MEMBER?

ITEMS WITH A STAR *
CAN BE PURCHASED FOR \$2
PER POUND



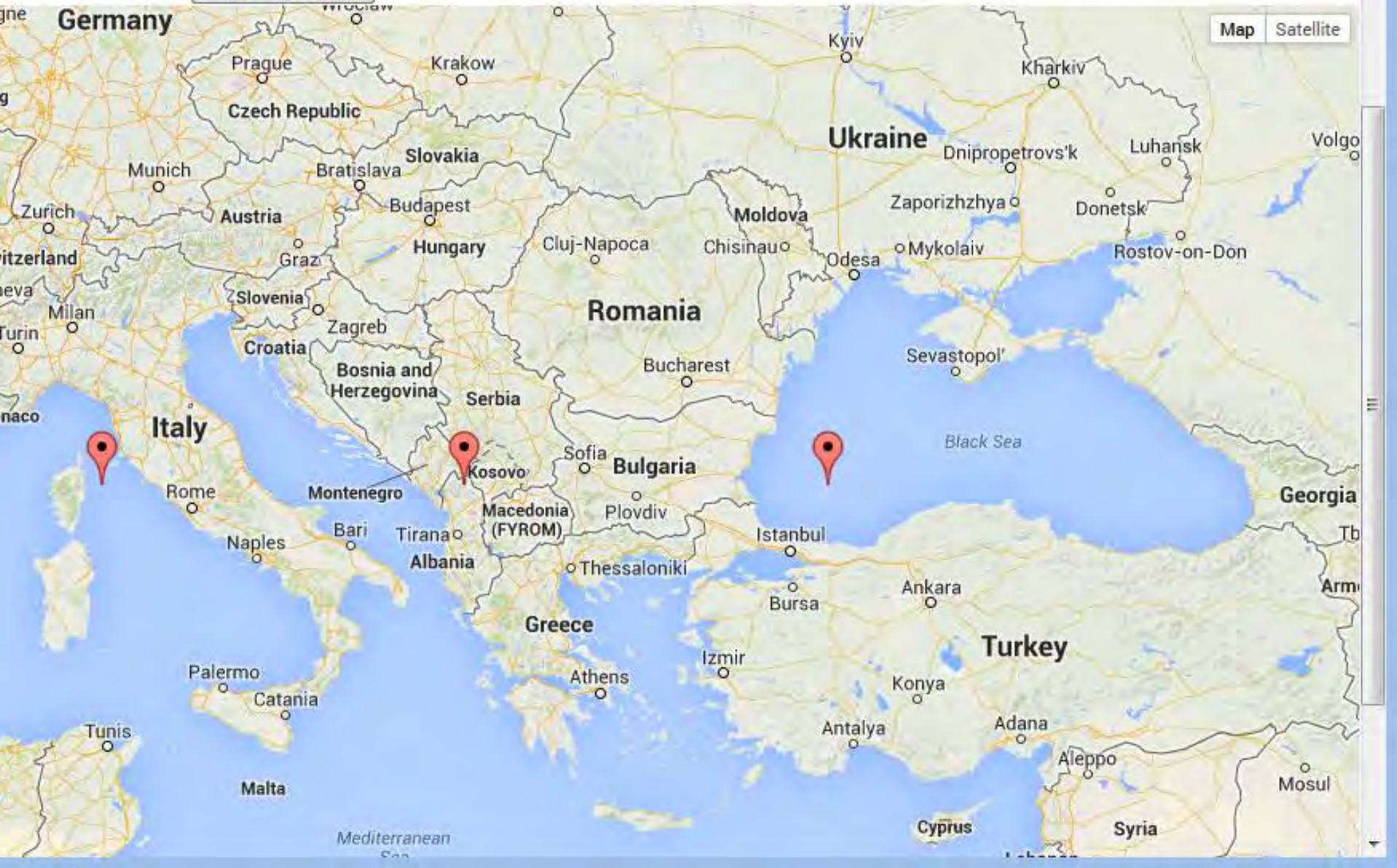
Principles of Winter Growing

- ❧ Elliot Coleman in Maine has pioneered these systems
- ❧ Maine is at the same latitude as St. Tropez, France — if we can moderate temperature, we have the daylight.
- ❧ “Persephone Months,” when days drop below 10 hours, growth slows dramatically
- ❧ In Massachusetts, this period is November 9 – January 31

667, 0
667, 10
667, 30

Plot Map Points

Map Satellite



Principles of Winter Growing

- ❧ To harvest during the “Persephone Months” greens need to be grown and stockpiled during the winter
- ❧ Or, greens can be overwintered at a small size, and will grow when daylength increases
- ❧ The warmer the temperature, the shorter/less extreme the Persephone period
- ❧ “Pyramid” of structures from lower to higher level of protection can be used at different times of the season, and for more or less hardy crops

Principles of Winter Growing

- ☞ Sun heats structure
- ☞ Larger structures retain heat better
- ☞ Layers of protection
- ☞ Ventilation is important
- ☞ Added heat = more growth

Principles of Winter Growing



- ❧ Most Hardy Crops: Kale, Spinach, Miner's Lettuce, Totsoi
- ❧ Less Hardy: Arugula, Bok Choy, Mizuna (and prone to bolt in the spring), Cilantro, Cress
- ❧ Least Hardy: Lettuce, Chard, Radish, Turnip

How We Grow at SGF



How We Grow at SGF



☞ Low Tunnels

- ☞ Cheap and easy structures
- ☞ Can cover large sections of field
- ☞ Hard to access in winter
- ☞ Best for overwintered crops for early spring harvest
- ☞ Carrots, lettuce, kale – Plant early November, harvest March (lettuce and kale) or May (carrots)
- ☞ Strawberries --Plant September, harvest May

How We Grow at SGF









How We Grow at SGF



- ❧ “Caterpillar” tunnels
- ❧ Also cheap and easy to construct
- ❧ Easier winter access than a low tunnel
- ❧ Good for late fall harvest of somewhat tender crops or overwintering
- ❧ Stockpiled lettuce (plant September, harvest December), kale (plant September, harvest December-January), spinach (plant September, harvest December)
- ❧ Overwintered onions, lettuce

How We Grow at SGF

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How We Grow at SGF



- ❧ Hoophouse = unheated greenhouse
- ❧ 100' X 14'
- ❧ One set of hoophouses is “early”
 - ❧ Lettuce, bok choy, radish, salad turnip – Plant September
 - ❧ Harvested in December and then used for chicken housing
 - ❧ Second early house is planted to spinach in September and harvested December-February





How We Grow at SGF



- ❧ Second set of hoopouses is “late”
- ❧ Tomatoes grown into October
- ❧ Spinach, miner’s lettuce, lettuce, chard
 - ❧ Plant mid-October, harvest February-April





How We Grow at SGF





How We Grow at SGF



- ❧ Rolling Hoophouse can move between sites
- ❧ Greens can be planted in September and then house moved over site after tomatoes are done in October
- ❧ March? Overwintered greens could be grown and new greens started in a third spot.
- ❧ Sprouting Broccoli undersown with early winter greens all planted in early September





How We Grow at SGF



- ❧ Greenhouse heated to 30° – just kept from freezing
- ❧ Head lettuce in deep winter
- ❧ Start early September, harvest December and January
- ❧ Interseed with fennel, bok choy, chard to come in later
- ❧ Also, heated bench is used for seedlings and for microgreens











