

Peach Cobbler

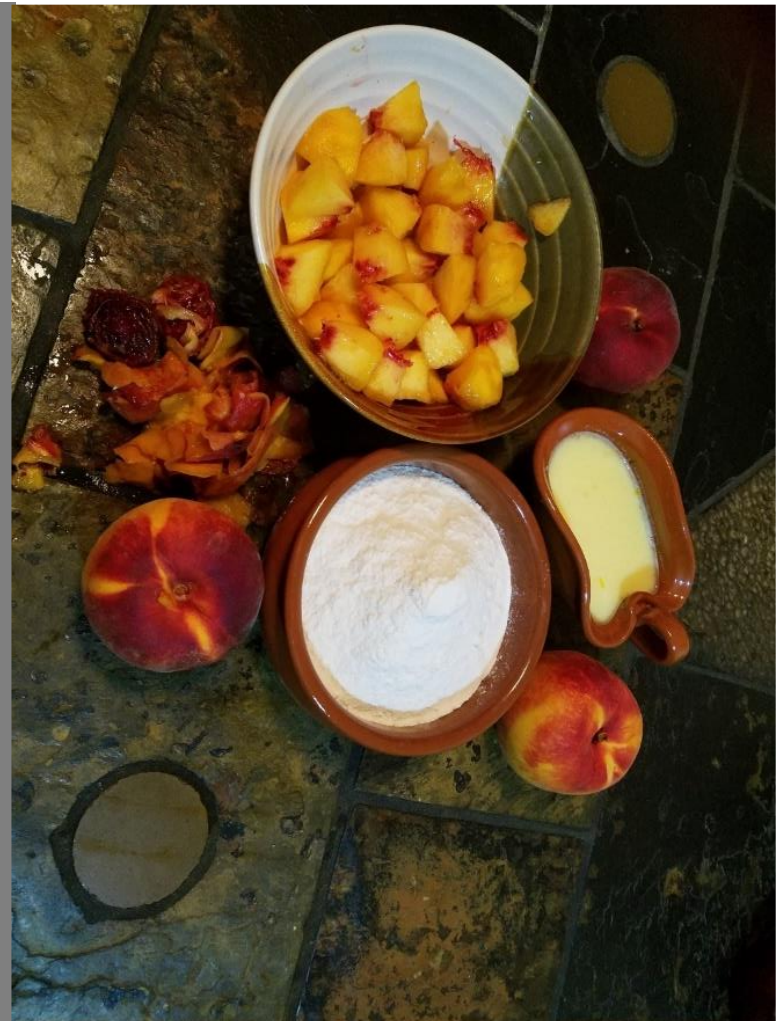


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SUMMER 2020

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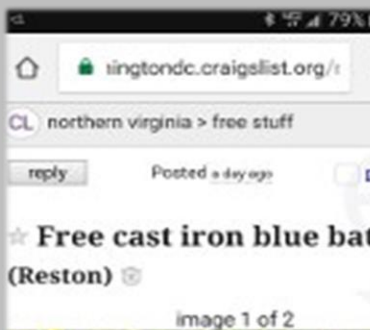




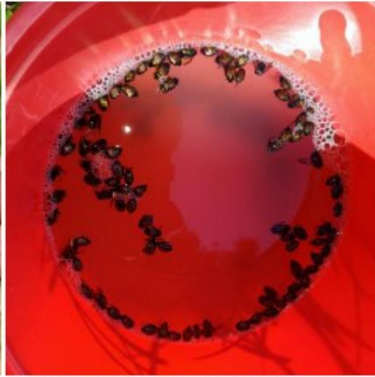
Throwback Titbits-*Summer 2017*



We spent the early part of the summer of 2017 planting all the fruit trees and berry plants... 3 each of apple, pear, plum, cherry, peach, fig, persimmon, apricot, grapes, blackberry, blueberry and gooseberry.... a sum total of 36 plantings. Most of the holes for the trees were due with the backhoe; but some had to be dug by hand. We also had to put a peat mixture down for the fruit trees. We ring fenced most of the trees with a solar electric fence. Some fruit tree areas were surrounded with invisible fishing lines. The berry area was demarcated using a wire fence that we found on the land. Girija developed an intense rash and itch which lasted for a few weeks and we suspect that she came in contact with some allergen during the clearing of undergrowth in the berry planting area. We had our first brush with Japanese beetles, black Maryland rat snakes, wild raspberries and monarch butterflies. Alan did some research and ordered milky spores to help kill the beetles. Our seated mower gave issues and we tinkered with the starting mechanism to get it fixed; but had to call for some local help when the problems re-appeared. Our ex-colleague moved back to Australia and we took care of his dog for a short while. We also got some of his stuff – a huge dog crate that we converted to a storage area by building it on pallets; a bunch of garden tools and most importantly an outdoor grill which we moved up near the test house area using the backhoe. Alan had the bright idea of using the pool tarps to cover huge swaths of the stilt grass weeds. They look unsightly; but might help control the infestation. Girija's cousin Kaushal made his debut on the land and helped us organize the wood pile. We also picked up a few windows for the test house from Second Chance in Baltimore. We finally commenced clearing the area for the bathtub next to the test house. We also did trail clearing work with Kaushal for what would eventually become the green trail and initial clearing of the ground for the test house. We did a lot of scavenging which included a discarded bathtub, a beautiful handmade glass lantern, gardening pots, bamboo, ladders, pool covers and concrete rubble.



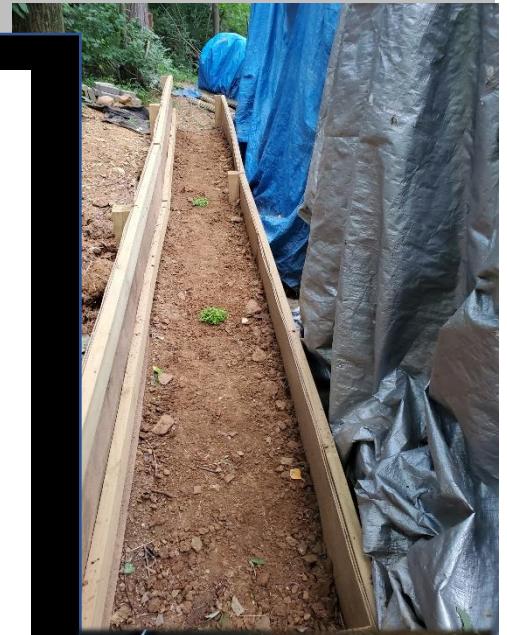
Throwback Titbits cont...





Construction Corner

We lost a good chunk of summer this year (2020) since we had gone out to California for work. A 2-week trip ended up being almost 4 weeks. We worked on widening and reinforcing the stem fall for both the front and long cob walls since our original build for too narrow. We also flattened and planted a couple of rock plants along the pathway between the bathtub and the house. The floor was dug up with the backhoe to help roughly set the higher and lower floor levels. This will need more leveling by hand to complete the job. A major roadblock was overcome when we managed to move the threshold stone that stands in front of the front door. It will double up as a back rest for the stone seat below the window. We will have to chip off some of the concrete blocks that are sticking out and holding up the stone. Girija decided to get arty and collected a bunch of the fallen oak nuts (acorns); washed them and painted them in acrylic colors.



Construction Corner



Entry way stones
with seating



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Horticultural Haven

The good news is that the cardboard/paper treatment to the paths and beds are doing a great job and suppressing most of the weeds. We plan on continuing to work on different sections of the garden each year and hope that the cardboard on the paths lasts at least 3 years; at which time we will be working on the first bit of the garden again. We lost the tomato and lettuce that our neighbor gave us to a late frost. The cucumber, butternut squash and corn grew well. You can see that the rabbit manure is working its magic based on the size of the plants. Since the seeds were old; only a few of them sprouted; but the ones that did grow extremely well. We had a good butternut squash harvest; but the corn was destroyed by an animal – we suspect deer. We caught one racoon and many deer in trail cameras. So this winter we plan on encircling the veggie garden with the solar electric fence. The fungicide has helped the fruit trees; but the pears are not doing too well and will have to be replaced. One fig is doing extremely well. As you can see from the photo, we planted a rock garden in the veggie garden and used steppables and plants that grow well in crevices for that.



*Stone
Garden*



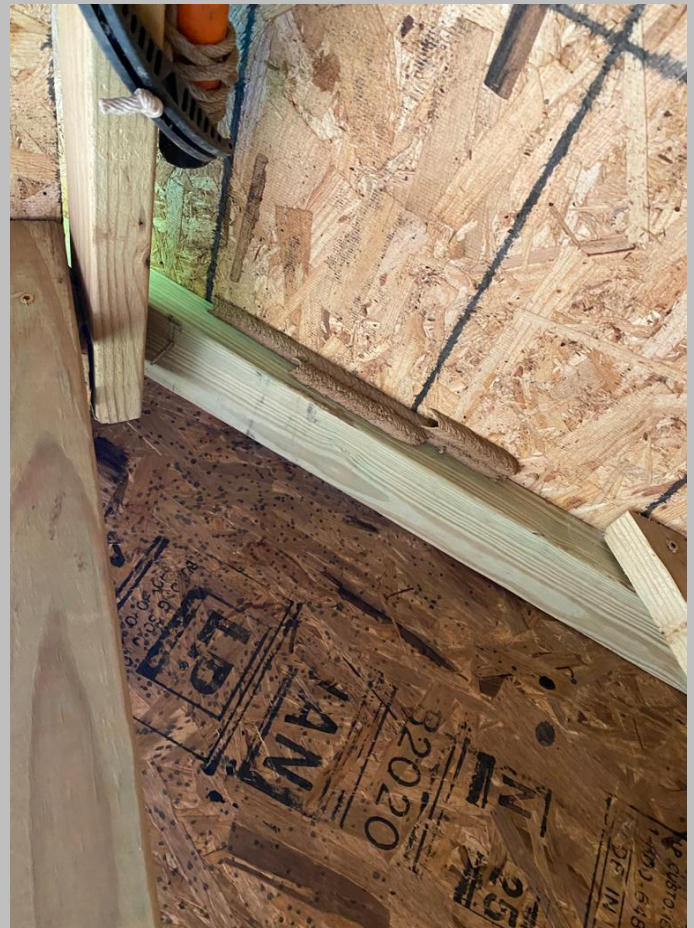
Horticultural Haven





Volunteers and Visitors

The social isolation and hence lack of visitors continues.....at least human visitors. The trail camera however has been catching a lot of deer in and around the veggie garden and test house area. In fact the deer seem to frequent the green trail around the test house and leave big chunks of deer poop as mementos for us. Alan also found mud dauber nests in the storage shed that we have built with wood. These most probably belong to the dark blue mud wasp that we have seen around the construction site of the test house.





Secondhand Scrounging

Our Scrounging was limited to one visit to Community Forklift; an architectural salvage store in Maryland. Our priority was to look for raw edge wood since we remember seeing prices that were much cheaper than other raw wood sellers. We lucked out and got 3 beautiful pieces of wood. The white 10-foot piece of cotton wood can serve as one side of the storage area. The maple piece will work well for the study desk and the worm wood would look good as the seat cum ledge for the large arched window. We even lucked out with a \$10.00 window for the study since the one we had purchased earlier was too small and this one will let in more light.

