

Peach Cobblair

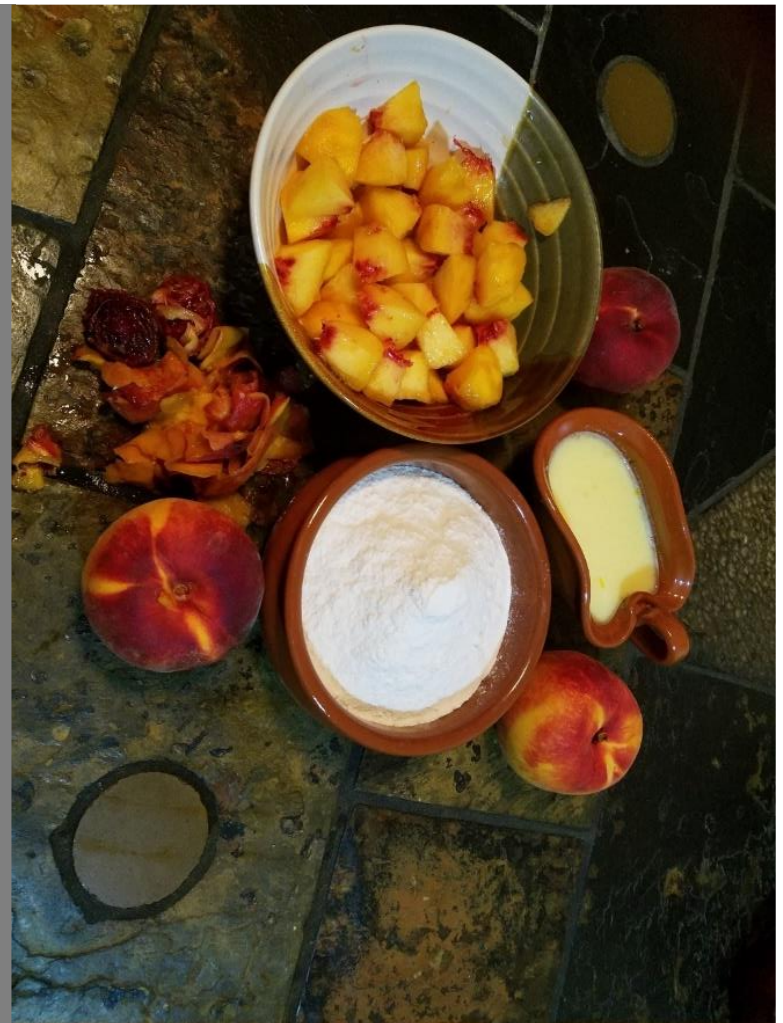


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FALL 2021

- Throwback Titbits
- Construction Corner
- Horticultural Haven
- Errors and Omissions
- Repair and Recovery
- Volunteers and Visitors
- Secondhand Scrounging
- Tracking with Tech





Throwback Titbits: *Summer 2018*

We got the dog fence operational and Patches was quick to catch on after getting shocked a few times 😊 It got broken soon after by a road clearing machine and then again by a deer. We were able to use the tester to locate the faults and this time around decided to bury the wire at the land entrance. We continued moving tarps around to cover the stiltgrass in a piecemeal fashion since it takes a few weeks to kill the stiltgrass after it is covered up. We were rewarded with 2 other healthy rat snake spottings with one even climbing a tree. Fall always brings with it a stunning bloom of golden rods and New guinea impatiens with visitors in the form of monarch butterflies. Girija managed to move the website's hosting from godaddy to bluehost and got much better rates and service. We harvested all the colorful corn and squash at the end of the growing season. Much to our joy, one fig tree did pretty well and even had small figs on them in late fall after which we winterized them. We also accidentally grew beautiful blue morning glories along the garden fence. We continued facing problems with the collapsing tool shed and Patches even chased a mouse that she spotted. The berry area was finally weeded and mulched well and the hope was that it would not need attention for a couple of years. We salvaged free roof tiles and granite pieces, garden metal gates and drain pipes from Craigslist and got 3 loads of asphalt delivered and used it to pave the path to the garden area and then up to the stone wall gap. We also picked up a set of classical music records from Maryland estate treasures and located a local source for straw bales. We visited hardware stores in the Gude drive area to learn more about wood and coal stoves and chimney piping requirements. The test house location was finalized and foundation digging was commenced along with clearing of an adjacent trail to the woods behind. We also dug up the path in front of the test house and put down asphalt filings. Other problems continued – leaks in our house, Girija coming down with strep, the backhoe breaking couple of seals and leaking oil and our truck giving problems with its electronics followed by a drained truck battery. Overhanging branches that neighbors complained about had to be attended to. We attended a conference and had a couple of work trips and a violin concert for Girija. We attended the Zigbone farm open house and also stopped once at Waynesboro to check out the little stores. Alan joined the Frederick beekeepers association and started attending their monthly meetings. Finally, we started building window frames at home as work on the land was interrupted by snow.



Throwback Titbits cont....





Construction Corner

We assembled and installed our self-built long glass window into the straw bale wall opening. We fixed up the outer stem wall of the closing wall since some of the stones were not set well. We used wooden forms to pour the concrete base for the wood stove and also concreted the bed post into the floor. You can see the nice steps that we shaped into the study wall to help climb into the bunk bed. We covered all the windows with a combination of bubble wrap or cardboard to protect them during the construction phase. Roughly 2 feet of additional cobbing on all the walls have been completed over Fall; with the exception of some corners that have to be cobbed without forms. We have also been able to fix up imperfections in the cob walls after we remove the forms; giving a nice finish to the walls. We installed the main breaker box, some outlets including one outside the test house and dead men for floating shelves. Since the colder temperatures are coming in, we stopped building the walls in late Fall and worked on the floor. This involved putting down insulation sheets followed by piping for underfloor heating and a layer of cob. We used 2 slates and dug out a couple of crevices in the living room area to serve as alcoves. We then fixed up the verticals; joined them, assembled and installed the final set of bond beams and roof trusses and OSB boards. The exciting part is that we are now starting to reveal window sills as we remove the last cob forms around the windows.



Construction Corner cont...



Construction Corner cont...





Horticultural Haven

We found some strikingly colorful red mushrooms with yellow bottoms in the veggie garden. We believe it is the *Baorangia bicolor* and is possibly edible. Alan headed out to the land on his own one day and caught up on mulching the berry area and fixing up one overgrown garden bed. We harvested a few more dried up bottle gourds for our arts projects. You can see that they are moldy; but that can be fixed with vinegar and some brushing. Fall colors have been one of the best we have seen in this area since we bought the land and it peaked towards the end of October.



Horticultural Haven cont....





Errors and Omissions

Part of our off-shoot wall collapsed completely after a week of rain. We don't think this has to do with the mix or technique; rather the fact that water collected inside the forms that we had left on. This is not an issue for the main walls since they are not exposed to direct rain due to the roof cover.





Repair and Recovery

We started to rebuild the offshoot wall after the collapse in the rains. This time around we are using dowels like rebar to connect the L-corner of the wall well and wrapping chicken wire to connect the 2 arms of the off-shoot wall properly. Note that the slope on the ground and the exposed nature of this wall are what make it trickier to build. The dying trees around the land were finally taken down in early November by labor that we hired.





Volunteers and Visitors

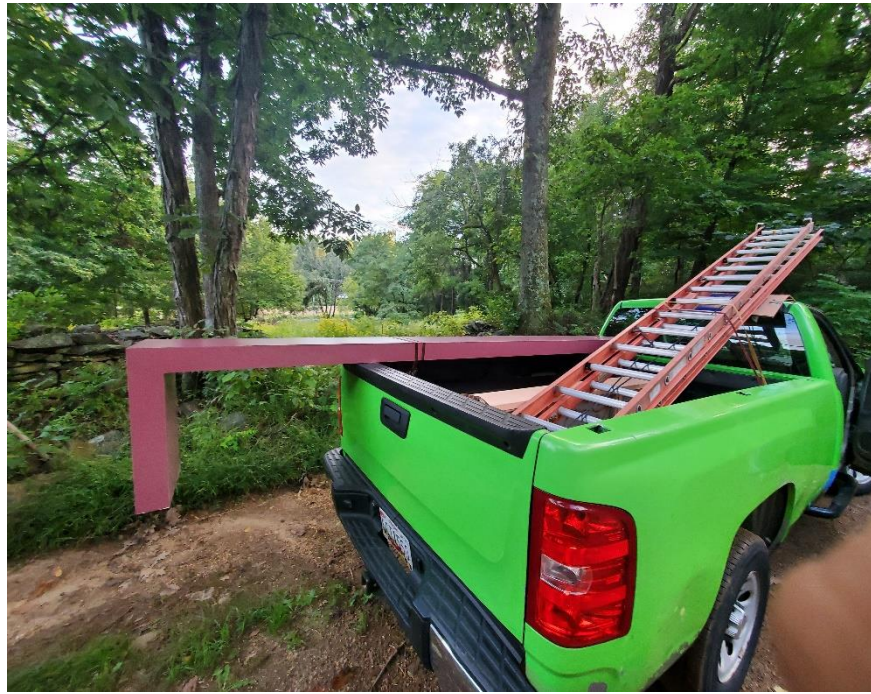
Our friendly toad made his appearance again in our cob mixing area and had to be chased away. One of our neighbors expressed concerns about a dead tree bordering our land. So we met up with them and later got the contact of a Mormon family that would do the job of cutting down dead trees for us. We also got a quote from one another company for the work of cutting down a handful of dead trees around the land before asking the family business to do the job. We did lose 3 weeks since we went on a train trip that we had been putting off for a long time. During a run to the local Lowes, we discovered a nice little shop that sold Native American art for good prices. Both Ronnie and our neighbor showed up to take some of the wood for burning and woodwork. Our neighbor even helped us to load up our truck with some of the rounds that we had to transport to the test house.





Secondhand Scrounging

We picked up a long free bench and a 32' long extension fiber glass ladder for \$100 from Nextdoor. Girija had the nice idea of asking the tree cutters to cut up one of the larger trees into rounds and they did a whole chunk (almost 90) for us in under 2 hours for a little under \$200. This was huge since we had not had luck finding anyone who would do the job of cutting rounds for a decent price. We then had to move all of them to the test house so that they could dry under the roof. We coated all the rounds with Pentacryl to prevent any cracks as the rounds dried up. We have set aside a few of these wood pieces for art projects.





Tracking with Tech

Given that we have finally hit upon the interesting part of the build process, we have decided to make narration videos for different aspects of the construction work. Also, the only video of ours that got a decent number of views was the narration video we made for the backhoe fluids. Since we were assembling the last set of trusses, we decided to start with narrations for the roof design and truss/bond beam work. Since we are doing some of this narration retroactively, we are using historic photos into some of our design narrations to give a better idea of the process to our audience.

