

President's Message, June, 2017

Somehow under very challenging weather conditions, my apple thinning attempts went pretty well. A few too many some places, not quite enough in others, but considering the conditions I'm pretty pleased. Peach thinning is taking longer this season than I expected. Somehow the blossoms fought off the cool spring weather and survived. Other than a few white peach varieties I'll have a full crop. I know not everyone in the region was as lucky, but hopefully you have enough to make a decent crop.

Is anyone else as frustrated with tractors as I am? We have both green and blue tractors, none more than 10 years old and none of them are reliable. I have the dealers on speed dial at this point. It's costing thousands of dollars every season to keep these things running. The new exhaust emissions systems are full of issues, and the mechanics are still trying to figure out how to work on them. If you are still farming with older tractors, my advice would be to sink some money into them and keep them running as long as possible. What engineer in their right mind makes a piece of equipment full of electronics and plastic that will be used in dusty conditions bouncing over rough ground? And heaven help you if you want to try to fix something yourself. OK, rant over.

For those of you with retail markets, we came up with an idea that you may want to borrow. We have a KitchenAid mixer in our bakery and we purchased a \$50 spiralizer attachment. We are using the less-than-perfect squash to make zucchini noodles, also known as zoodles to sell in the market. The low carb and gluten free crowd is large enough to maybe make this idea fly. They've been a hit in the early running, and we may have found a use for those pesky zucchini when the inevitable overabundance occurs in mid-summer. The spiralizer kit also came with an apple corer/slicer that will make apple baking a little easier this fall. The staff is already brainstorming other ideas to use the tool for.

This has been a spring of graduations for my family. My older daughter graduated from West Chester University with a Cell and Molecular Biology degree and a Chemistry minor, and my younger daughter graduated from high school and is headed to Rochester Institute of Technology to study Medical Biology. While neither of them caught the plant science bug like their old man, they are both self-proclaimed science geeks and plan to immerse themselves in the science world. The oldest landed a genetic research job in Philadelphia, so her days helping in the market and around the farm have sadly come to an end. I still have the younger one for this summer, but it won't be long until she spreads her wings as well. Working shoulder to shoulder with my daughters over the past few years has been a great experience. I'll miss them, but wish them well as they move on to bigger and better things far from the peach fuzz. My wish is that they find a career that is fulfilling to them as horticulture is to me.

Hope the summer weather treats you well,
Tad

Tad Kuntz
SHAP President