Can you have a garden in cold weather?

Yes you can! The experimental garden at the Craven County Ag Center in Clarks Industrial park is full of cold tolerant vegetables that will be harvested during the next three months. We will be picking 5 different kinds of cabbage, turnips, onions, leaf lettuce, beets, Bok Choi (choy) and all kinds of greens like collards, kale and mustard.

If we don’t get any big storms this will be our best year since the garden started almost seventeen years ago. As of September 27th our computer records show that we harvested 4782 pounds of vegetables with a value of $7,173.00 dollars based on market prices. These were all delivered to nursing homes, RCS (the soup kitchen) and folks with special needs in the inner city.

With our expected heavy production in the next three months we should deliver close to $9,000.00 dollars worth of vegetables. Since a lot of our seed etc. is donated we produce over $20.00 dollars worth of food for every $1.00 dollar we spend. We are very proud of that result and challenge any other charitable group to meet that goal.

If you are interested in learning more about cold weather gardening or the Crop Master organization call Mike Price at 252-638-8539 or the Cooperative Extension Service at 252-633-1477. We are at the garden every Wednesday morning from 8:30AM to 10:30AM unless it is raining, snowing or frozen hard. It is a lot of fun and good exercise.

A baking potato for the southern states?

The classic russet baking potato grown in Idaho and other northern states has never been produced with any success in the South. We grow great new potatoes with a thin skin and a high moisture content and buy our baking potatoes in the store.

We may have found the answer to this problem. This year we tried a new variety at the Ag Center Garden called “Goldrush” from the Gurney Seed company. The sets came late and were planted about 4 weeks after our regular potatoes. The delay didn’t bother them. The plants held up great in the hot weather and had no problems.

The harvest was outstanding. We will try them again next spring and report on our outcome.

Gurney’s can be contacted at 573-354-1491. You might find this variety in other catalogs – just look for “Goldrush”.