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# NOTES FROM THE NUT

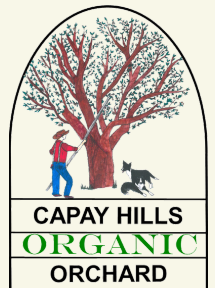
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## CAPAY HILLS ORCHARD NEWSLETTER ISSUE 32



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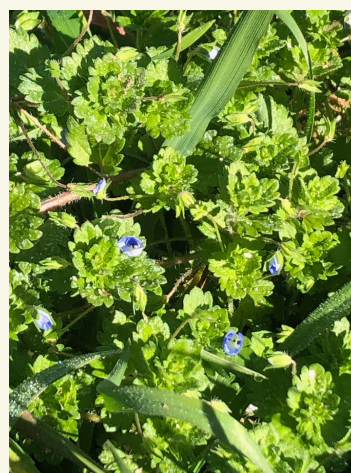
## A New Product!

If you've been roaming around our website lately or have been following our Facebook page, you'll have noticed that we have updated our product offerings. Now we are offering something that even your pets may enjoy! The new product is called "half shell" almonds. Half shell almonds are the almonds that are still partially lodged in their shell even after they have been processed by the huller-and-sheller. Not every shell can be fully removed by machine, and so there is always a small amount that makes it through the process with part of the shell left still surrounding the almond. In the past we have generally soaked these almonds whole and fed them to our chickens. We have to admit our dogs love almonds, too! The chickens have appreciated the high quality feed, but recently we have been receiving more requests from current and prospective customers seeking these in-shell almonds, both for their own consumption (since many people enjoy the satisfaction of removing the shell themselves) as well as for their pets, especially parrots! On our Facebook page we have shared a video of the pet parrot (named Paco) of one of our newest customers happily munching on some of our almonds! Her owner says our almonds are one of her (and his) favorite snacks! So whether you would love to experience the satisfaction of hand-shelling and enjoying some of our almonds yourself or you have an animal friend who's been begging you to get some that he can enjoy, too, check out our website for our latest product--half shell almonds! Due to the more limited quantity that we

have, the half shell almonds will likely be a mix of all three of our varieties (two of which have a harder shell and one with a softer shell). You can actually have more fun with a mix and see if you can learn to identify each variety by shell, nut, and taste! An additional benefit is that the price for these almonds is significantly lower than our regular hulled-and-shelled almonds. Enjoy shelling and snacking!



Half shell almonds



## Springtime on the Farm

Over our bloom period this year, we experienced what is called a "flash bloom." Ideally, a bloom (in an almond or any orchard) is long and slow. This longer bloom period gives the bees the proper chance to do their work and pollinate as many blossoms as possible. This year the bloom came early (and almonds already bloom very early!), and it was short-lived. Warmer temperatures and drier air in the weeks before bloom caused the buds to break open almost all at once this year. This led to a visually spectacular, yet worrisome flash bloom because it reduces the time the bees have to pollinate the blossoms. Almond blossoms are only viable for five days, after which point they lose their ability to develop properly into a nut. However, our fears seemed to be relieved in that regard. It appears that we had a good pollination, thanks to our good next-door neighbor John Foster and his BZ-Bee Pollination and Apiary. Yet not long after the flash bloom, which we thought we had survived fairly safely, we had more to be concerned with--two deep freezes! Almonds need a certain number of hours of specific cold temperatures, however, freezing temperatures just when the nuts are at their most vulnerable stage during and immediately after pollination can be disastrous. As a result of these two deep freezes, many locals lost 75-80% of their almond crop! Brian was not at home during these freezes, but Nicholas (second son) saved the day by running our micro-sprinkler irrigation system through the night. This helped raise the ambient temperature around the trees by about 2 degrees, just enough to save our crop! So while we have had a few scares, so far things are looking all right for our trees and upcoming 2022 crop. Honestly, we are far more concerned about the recent events in Ukraine than we are with our almonds. Please continue your thoughts, prayers, and efforts for Ukraine and for good leadership to correct that genocide!

In addition to the excitement of a flash bloom and deep freezes, spring is always a busy time for a farm. Recently, we completed two foliar sprays of Regalia. Regalia is an organic product that stimulates the natural defenses of a plant to protect it from a variety of foliar and soil-borne fungal and bacterial diseases. Its active ingredient, extract of Giant Knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*), boosts plant vigor and growth while stimulating the plant's natural ability to develop resistance to plant pathogens. This developed resistance builds plant health overall as opposed to attacking the disease directly after it has developed and is already attacking the tree. We also added some zinc and calcium micronutrients, and we have started our foliar testing program (to monitor micronutrient content). Until the end of January we had sheep grazing through the orchard, and we hope to have them come back this month for a short time before summer sets in. Though we received a period of intense rainfall in later 2021, we have had virtually no rain in 2022. Adding insult to injury, we have already had to start irrigating! Darn this drought!



Really, it's just one of the many natural challenges of farming! Last year the water table was dangerously low, but so far this year it seems to be all right.

Unfortunately, we do need to share with you that we have had to experience a drastic rise in our normal costs of production, for virtually everything we need to run our farm. Our costs have increased by 10-50%! This is regrettably most likely going to require us to raise our almond prices again, though we have not yet determined the new pricing.

Lastly, we continue our relationship with researchers and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). They provide much expert advice and solutions for focusing on our priority of soil health. We have also added a few new videos to our YouTube channel this spring, so please check them out and subscribe! Stay tuned for more.

To end, we are extremely thankful for your business and your support. Keep praying for us and for Ukraine!

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