

Transplants for Profit

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Checkerberry Farm is located in the Maine Central Highlands south of Moosehead Lake. We are a MOFGA certified organic farm. Our main focus is wholesale vegetables. We produce seedlings for FEDCO Seeds, other farms and our own field production.

By starting seedlings in a greenhouse environment we have relative control over germination and growth. We can transplant seedlings out when conditions are agreeable. While in the greenhouse actions such as potting up, singulating, grafting and tending becomes efficient.

We have a production greenhouse which has heating and venting systems and rolling benches to maximize production area. We have heatable high tunnels to handle the overflow of seedlings. For example in March the onions can migrate into a cooler tunnel. This makes more room in the production greenhouse for the seedlings requiring more heat.

The field equipment that we use for planting transplants out in the field include a bed shaper, a mulch layer, a water wheel transplanter and a three unit 22C Mechanical Transplanter.

By using this approach we can have a much earlier start for both one shot crops like onions and celeriac and sequential crops like broccoli and lettuce. Other benefits include scheduling, a uniform stand and there's no thinning involved.

We found that this method makes the best use of our labor costs and benefits the overall efficiency of the farm.