Garage Berry Farms

The bare minimum hydroponic gardener

Garage Berry Farms LLC · Juneau, Alaska

October 2026 issue · Oct 1–30, 2026

Monthly Newsletter · October 2026

WELCOME

About Garage Berry Farms

Thank you for reading the first Garage Berry Farms (GBF) newsletter. I'm excited to share my hydroponic adventure with you.

For the last year and a half I've been experimenting in my garage to see what I can grow here in Alaska year-round. I got tired of deer and slugs chewing through my outdoor plants. I'd only get a few strawberries each summer before the wildlife got to them. Then I watched some hydroponic videos on YouTube and realized my garage was well set up for vertical farming.



The strawberry row, Oct 23.

Since then my systems have grown and I've found a few crops that do well for me: broccoli, cabbage, strawberries and carrots.

I started GBF as a way to grow this hydroponic work into a more commercial operation that can offer some exciting services to our local community. I have ideas for agritourism, retail horticultural supplies and sales of my own produce, all to help our remote community rely more on local alternatives. I'm still learning and I hope you'll come along as I grow the operation and keep trying new and unique approaches to hydroponics.

My philosophy: keep it simple and grow with as little effort and as few inputs as possible. I'm lazy by nature, so when I find a way to get results with less work, that's the sweet spot. It may not be optimized, but it's good enough to let me balance my busy life outside of this hydro project.

OCTOBER RECAP

October was the month the power went out twice.

This is my log of how October went. The power went out first on Sunday, Oct 18, from about 11:49 AM to 1:41 PM. Then again Tuesday morning, Oct 20, from about 8:47 to 11:07. Both Growee monitors went quiet and the room sensor went blank. Those are the grey bars on the charts. After each outage I checked the plants. No wilting.

• October at a glance •

4 broccoli heads cut (1,102 g)	**3** strawberries picked (1 weighed)	**3 of 33** carrots still growing	**64.2°F** average garage air

STRAWBERRIES

First berries of the season

Bare roots went in on both shelves on Aug 15. There are about 68 Albion plants in the NFT now (I've been adding runner plants), under lights 16 hours a day. The first truss is in flower and I'm hand-pollinating with a brush.



The bottom shelf, October.

The first berries came off the bottom shelf: two small ones on Oct 14 that I didn't weigh and one 9.1 g berry on Oct 17 from the same plant. None since then but new flowers are open on the bottom shelf. Spider mites showed up. I sprayed neem on Oct 14, Oct 20 and Oct 26.

If you want to see past posts and discussions on strawberry hydroponics, check out **r/strawberryhydroponic**.

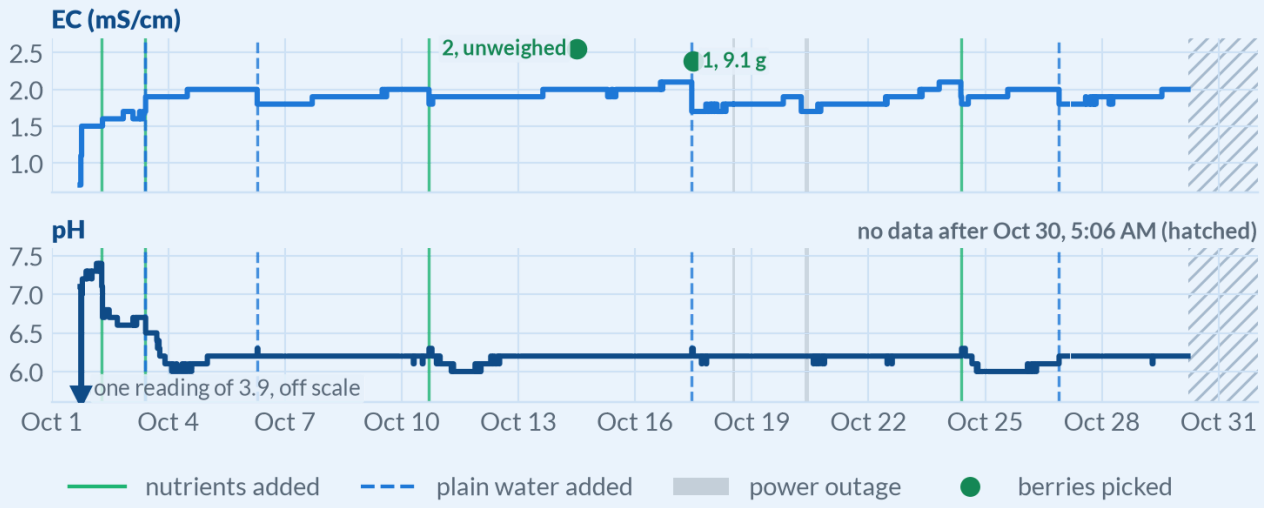
The Growee started logging this reservoir steadily on the evening of Oct 1. I added nutrients on Oct 2 (plus pH down), Oct 3, Oct 10 and Oct 24 and plain water on Oct 3, Oct 6, Oct 17 and Oct 26. EC worked up from about 1.5 to 2.0 by Oct 4 and held between 1.7 and 2.1 after that. pH came down from above 7 to about 6.0 by Oct 4 and stayed between 6.0 and 6.3.

🔧 What I use: Growee

I have a Growee monitor in my strawberry reservoir and another in my broccoli reservoir. Each one reads EC, pH and water temperature about every half hour. The EC and pH charts here come from those readings. It also controls my pH and you can see that in how little the pH lines move: from Oct 4 on the strawberries held 6.0 to 6.3 and the broccoli held 6.0 to 6.2 all month.

STRAWBERRY RESERVOIR — **Oct 1–30**

Data: Growee reservoir monitor · EC (mS/cm) and pH



Data: Growee reservoir monitor (strawberry reservoir), every reading from 5:39 PM Oct 1 to 5:06 AM Oct 30, AK time. One pH reading of 3.9 at 6:06 PM Oct 1 is below the scale (arrow). No readings from 2:39 to 6:32 AM Oct 27 (probe offline).

BROCCOLI · GREEN MAGIC

Four heads and a new set in channel 4

Broccoli runs in four NFT channels, each with its own set of Green Magic. I cut four heads in October: 430 g on Oct 7, 490 g on Oct 9, 145 g on Oct 15 and 37 g on Oct 16. That's 1,102 g for the month. The Oct 16 head was the last one from the oldest planting. The season stands at 52 heads and about 21.8 lb since late April.

Channel 3 got its plants on Oct 4. On Oct 17 I replanted channel 4 with three seedlings. Channel 2 started forming heads on Oct 20. On Oct 24 I cleared a plugged air line and found clean white roots. I tried smaller 1/4-inch feed lines that day and went back to 3/8-inch on Oct 25.

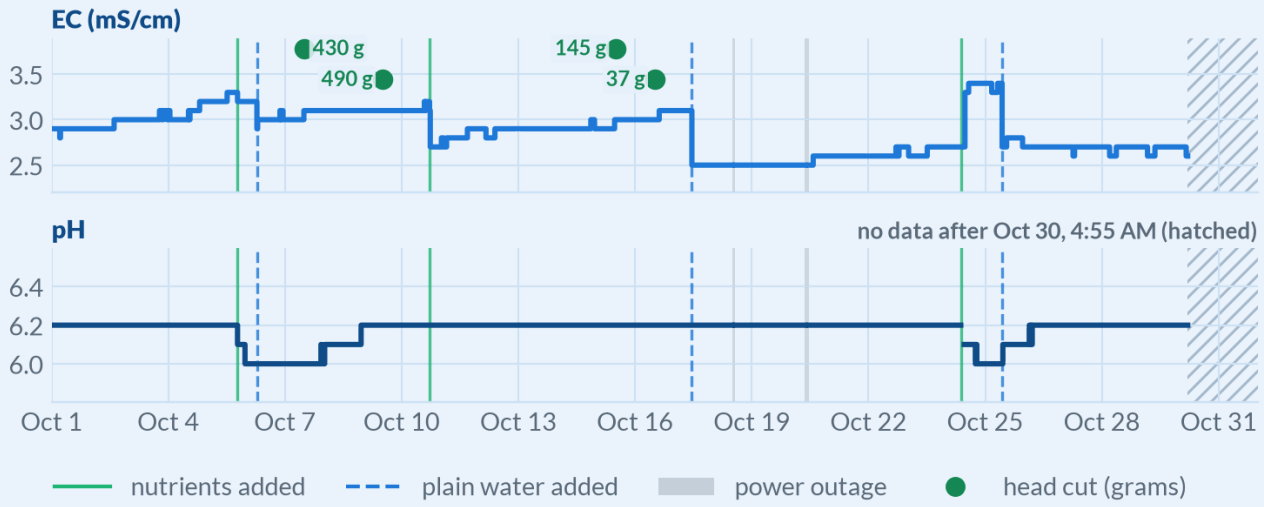


The broccoli channels, Oct 30.

I added nutrient solution on Oct 5 (15 gal), Oct 10 (5 gal) and Oct 24 (5 gal) and plain water on Oct 6 (1 gal), Oct 17 (5 gal) and Oct 25 (4 gal). EC ran between 2.7 and 3.3 through Oct 16 and dropped to 2.5 after the Oct 17 water. It read 3.3 to 3.4 after the Oct 24 nutrients. I confirmed that high reading with my handheld meter and it came down to 2.6 to 2.8 after I added water on Oct 25. pH stayed between 6.0 and 6.2 all month.

BROCCOLI RESERVOIR
Data: Growee reservoir monitor · EC (mS/cm) and pH

Oct 1–30



Data: Growee reservoir monitor (broccoli reservoir), every reading from 12:02 AM Oct 1 to 4:55 AM Oct 30, AK time. Head weights rounded to the gram. No readings from 8:56 to 11:04 AM Oct 24.

CARROTS · TRIAL 26-03

Three survivors

I sowed this trial on Aug 27: 33 sites in deep water culture with no soil. Three made it, about 9%. They're 4 to 6 inches long and about as thick as my thumb. One is bright orange with an even taper and clean white root hairs. Several empty plugs have algae on them.

By Oct 20 (day 54) the biggest one was nearly as wide as its net pot. By Oct 30 (day 64) it filled the pot and a few of its oldest leaves were yellowing, which is normal this close to harvest.

This one is set and forget, so there are no EC or pH readings and no chart.


The big one, Oct 17.

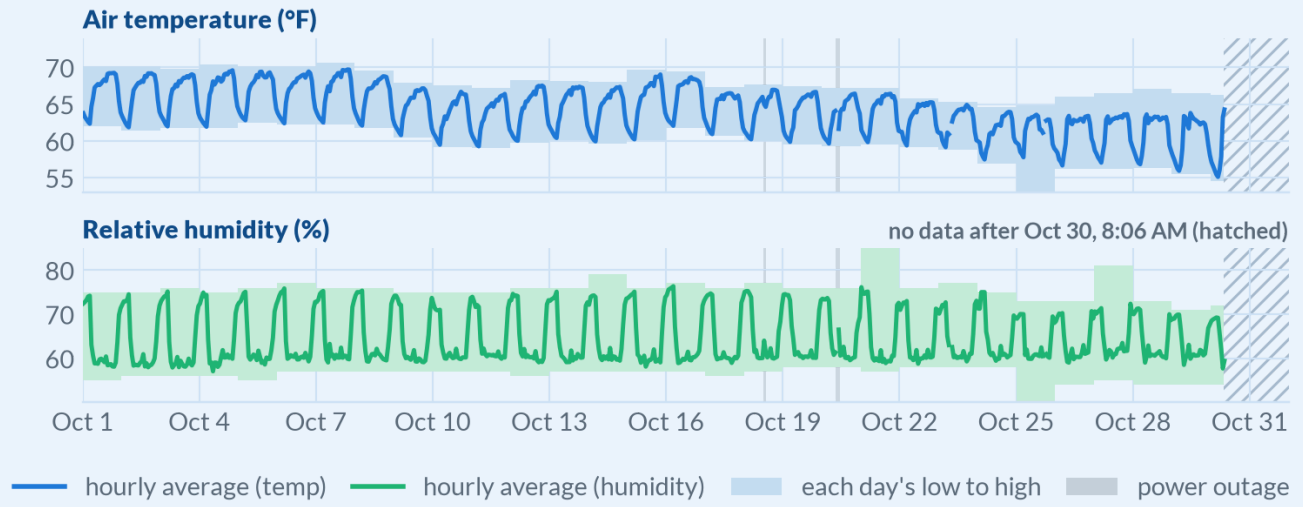
THE GROW SPACE

Air in the garage

A VIVOSUN probe logs the garage air every minute. From Oct 1 to 8:06 AM Oct 30 the room ran from about 47°F to 70.6°F and averaged 64.2°F. The first week was the warmest (daily averages about 66 to 67°F). From Oct 9 to Oct 19, days averaged 63.5 to 66.3°F. From Oct 24 on it was cooler, with days averaging 60.7 to 61.4°F. On Oct 25 at about 4:28 PM the garage air briefly dropped to about 47°F, likely while the garage door was open. It was back above 60°F within 8 minutes. Humidity ran between 49% and 85% and averaged 64%. VPD ran from 0.26 to 1.12 kPa and averaged 0.74 kPa.

ROOM AIR
Data: VIVOSUN room probe · temperature (°F) and humidity (%)

Oct 1–30



Data: VIVOSUN room probe in the garage grow space, 1-minute readings averaged by hour, 12:00 AM Oct 1 to 8:06 AM Oct 30, AK time (latest export on file). No readings Oct 18 12:01 to 1:23 PM, Oct 20 8:57 to 10:49 AM, Oct 23 6:01 to 8:05 AM and Oct 25 4:55 to 6:27 PM.

🗓️ What's next

CROP	PLANTS	HARVEST
Carrots (Trial 26-03)	3 plants	pull around Nov 1–7
Broccoli ch 2 · GM-260828	4 plants, heading	est. about Nov 10
Broccoli ch 1 · GM-260907	4 plants	est. Nov 2–16
Broccoli ch 3 · GM-260915	3 + 1 overflow	est. Nov 9–20
Broccoli ch 4 · GM-260927	3 seedlings	est. Nov 21–28

- Set ID = seeding date, so GM-260907 was seeded Sep 7, 2026. Broccoli dates are estimates.
- Strawberries: the next mite spray is Oct 31 (insecticidal soap if I have it, neem if not).

🛣️ Down the road

None of this is set in stone. I'd like to grow the broccoli side over time, maybe with bigger channels, so more heads come off each week. Maybe another crop at some point and some equipment upgrades along the way. If something actually changes in the garage I'll log it here.

That's October. Rain outside, roots inside.

Your turn: what would you grow in a garage through an Alaska winter? Email me at moose.ak@mail.grokbot.com and tell me.

The Bare Minimum Hydroponic Gardener
From Juneau, Alaska