



Spruce Cottage Farm's

Periodic Newsletter

June 23rd, 2015

Greetings Gardeners,

The Solstice has passed and the long summer days are ahead of us. I am looking forward to a delicious harvest in August - my tomatoes and cucumbers are loving this warm weather! It's a good thing these are doing well - I've had a red beetle with black stripes decimating anything in the Brassica family! There go the arugula, radishes and mizuna. Hopefully I've caught the infestation in time to save the turnips. I've been squishing beetles all weekend - they seem to live in the soil and come up during the day to feed. It is my hope I've squished enough of them that they won't be able to breed another round of beetles. I've also removed all the plants that have been affected and I won't grow those plants in the same spot next year. This beetle is probably similar to many other beetle pests, in that it lays its eggs (or larvae) in the soil to over-winter and then, the following spring, the eggs hatch and the adults emerge to eat the fresh green growth. Removing the affected plants this season (as well as squishing as many beetles as possible) and not planting these plants in the affected areas next season will go a long way to stopping the infestation for next year.

As the end of June approaches, so does the end of the annual plant season. To that end, all annual stock at the nursery is half-price this weekend (June 26, 27, 28)! I have a great selection left, so if you still have holes in the garden, come out and stock up! It is also the last weekend of the nursery retail hours. I will be bringing perennials to the market as they are ready. Many thanks to all of you who came out to the nursery this season - I'm already planning next season!

As the hot weather arrives, water conservation in the garden is on my mind. One method I use all the time is mulch: a 2-inch layer of organic matter (aged manure, leaves or straw) placed on the soil helps the soil retain moisture as well as suppresses weeds. The organic matter is also essential for the soil food web: all those micro-organisms that are working away, sight unseen, to break down organic matter, thereby releasing nutrients for our plants to use.

Have a great growing season everyone!

In growing harmony,

Jolene Billwiller

~ Gardening Maven ~



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