



# *Spruce Cottage Farm's*

## *Periodic Newsletter*

*November 19th, 2015*

*Greetings Gardeners,*

Another growing season has passed and November finds me reflecting and remembering; a season of successes and sorrow, as I remember this past summer's great growing weather and the passing of my wonderful gardening friend Claude.

I shared Claude's garden with him for the last six years of his life: we spent many working hours together; weeding, planting, complaining and complimenting! Our shared passion for growing our own food gave us common ground and the knowledge I gained from Claude, which he shared so generously, will forever shape my future growing endeavours. I will miss *mon ami de jardin*; I will miss his tip of the hat and his "*bonjour, madame*", as we passed at the garden gate and I will miss the ease of shared knowledge; but the seasons turn and next summer or the summer after that, as I walk down the garden rows, memories of Claude will make me smile and my carrots will forever be long and straight and uniform, because one of the things I learned from Claude was the value and the technique of thinning the carrots!!

This past season, I was delighted to offer retail hours at the nursery. Many thanks to all of you who came out to purchase plants: I thoroughly enjoyed all the gardening chats we had! The garden did very well this year too: the warm nights we had in spring really encouraged plants to become well-established and allowed them to hold their own over the season. Beets (which I grew under cover in the hoop house), carrots and turnips were a few of the crops that I was quite pleased with. A few crop failures come to mind too: Romaine lettuce (it went from being good one week to bitter the next) and mizuna (eaten to the ground by a little red and black-striped beetle), but all-in-all, I'd categorize the growing season as above average. Flowers and herbs enjoyed this past season's growing weather too, with Pot Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) 'Erfurter Orange' and *Petunia x hybrida* 'African Sunset' (a multiflora type petunia in a vibrant coral-orange) standing out as spectacular, along with Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*, a lovely licorice scented herb with purple flower spires).

As we move closer to the Winter Solstice and the days grow shorter and shorter, I'm ready to move indoors and rest a little bit. I want to remember my friend Claude and all the fun we had in the garden and I'm ready to plan the garden's future. It may be a little quieter for awhile and it may be not quite as well-weeded, but it will have the eternal hope and joy of the gardener; it will have willing hands in the soil and it will have the promise of a bountiful harvest.

In growing harmony,

Jolene Billwiller

~ Gardening Maven ~



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