



# *Spruce Cottage Farm's*

## *Periodic Newsletter*

November 20, 2017

*Greetings Gardeners!*

November: for me, the month when it all finally slows down and I can look forward to a winter of dreaming about the garden, instead of working in it! We had an interesting growing season this year. What with the cool start to the season, the snow in June, the rainy days and the frost in mid-August, it is amazing that we were able to grow anything this year! Despite all of that, I still had plenty of food for myself and extra to sell at the market. Brassicas, root vegetables and leafy greens seemed to thrive. The peas and beans did not survive the frost in August, nor did my cut flowers. But here is the great thing about gardening: there is always next year!

As we move toward the Solstice and the darker days of winter, I am going through my garden map and jotting notes down on what worked this year and what didn't. I find this map to be invaluable the following season. As the years progress, all the seasons blend together, so having the map of each season's garden is very helpful when going to plant or layout the new garden. Despite thinking I will remember it all, I never do and the map is a great memory reminder!

I thoroughly enjoyed the nursery this season and I thank all of you who came to buy plants from me. I really appreciate your support. Every year, the nursery runs a little bit smoother and I figure out a few more tricks about growing plants North of 60! Next season, I'm looking forward to trying a new heat source for the greenhouse (an RV propane space heater, with a thermostatic control). My hope is that I can heat the greenhouse in March, for a minimum cost, in order to start some seeds in the greenhouse, instead of inside under lights. I know all the plants in the Brassica family (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and kale) as well as the pansies would appreciate a bit of a cooler start, under natural light. Starting the seeds this way will make for a hardier, more robust plant start - exactly what we need for our unpredictable spring! Of course, all the warm start seeds (petunia, lobelia, tomato and basil) will still need to be under lights in the seeding room. With the Brassicas and pansies out of the seeding room, a bit more room under the starting lights won't go amiss. I'll keep you posted as to whether it works or not!

A wonderful winter to all of you: full of delightful sunny days, perfect for skiing or tucking up with a good book and dreams of the garden ahead!

In growing harmony,

Jolene Billwiller

~ Gardening Maven ~



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