

RESONANCE

November / December 2010

Around the Place

October and November are supposed to be transition times between the busy months of summer and the much quieter winter season. However, the past two months have been very full ones, filled with activity, plans, and projects.

The gardens continued producing until early November, when the first killing frost occurred. We harvested vegetables and flowers daily during October's Indian summer days. Working in the garden was a real pleasure, since the air was warm, the orchard trees were blazing with color, the birds were happily eating bugs, and we could stop and pick up ripe fallen pears to munch on whenever we wanted a snack.

The potato garden behind the north trailer increased our overall garden size by almost half, and we had several harvesting parties there. This garden yielded a huge crop of potatoes and winter squash, as well as beautiful striped zucchinis.

Our root cellar, where we planned to store some of our harvest, was dug into the hillside many years ago, and part of the entrance had collapsed over time. This meant that the door didn't close tightly, and small critters like mice and packrats could get in. The problem was solved by jacking up the doorway and rebuilding the frame. Then the potatoes, onions, and winter

squash were put in the root cellar for use this winter.

The garden near the Main House also yielded abundant crops. We froze beans and tomatillos, dug potatoes (we have a LOT of potatoes in the root cellar!), harvested hot and sweet peppers, pulled onions, and picked tomatoes. In fact, we are still eating fresh garden tomatoes, picked before the frost and put in the food room to ripen in boxes.

Some of the tomato plants that were already in pots were placed in the greenhouse in early October. They thrived, producing delicious tomatoes until several days before Thanksgiving, when the nighttime temperatures outside plummeted below zero and the tomato plants inside the greenhouse froze.

Several crops were mulched in the garden this year as an experiment. We are hoping that thick layers of hay will protect the carrots, chard and spinach.

Once the gardens were harvested, the plants were pulled and stacked outside the fences, where they were shredded and used as the basis for several new compost piles. Then the gardens were tilled.

All irrigated areas (lawns, orchard, gardens) received a final compost spray in

late fall as part of the ongoing focus on improving soil fertility.

At the north end of the farm, work was begun on developing the old dump into an industrial storage area. Land was graded by a bulldozer rented for just this purpose. Sites were prepared for storage containers to be off-loaded and placed out of sight from the living and visitor areas here at Home Farm. The area can also be used to store our trailers, farm equipment, and vehicles when they are not in use. Additionally, a new road was made so that vehicles can both access the container sites and also continue to drive north through the property .

The south end of the farm has been equally busy. A dedicated crew has completely gutted the south apartment unit. To date, the paneling has been completely replaced by sheetrock which is now being painted. The bathroom floor and walls have been torn out so that the old plumbing pipes could be replaced with Pex pipes. The entire unit has been rewired. New lavatory and shower units have been purchased and are ready to install.

The overall plan is to remove the 1950s materials and replace everything with modern materials that meet all codes, and are efficient and attractive.

With the first snowfall of the season, the need for a better snowplow became clear. Our current snowplow was purchased in the 1980s and put on the 1974 International dump truck. This arrangement has provided yeoman's service for a quarter of a century, but the motor is now old and temperamental, and the entire arrangement requires a lot of coaxing to operate.

After researching alternatives, the decision was made to purchase a snowplow attachment that will fit onto the Kubota tractor that is already here on the property. The new snowplow is now set up and ready for the next snowfall.

We enjoyed a lovely Thanksgiving this year. The food was delicious, the tables were elegant, the dining room glowed in candlelight, and the guests thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The dining room was filled with conversation for hours after the meal itself was over. We had several guests here at Home Farm from out of town, and we also shared the evening with many friends from the surrounding Snake Valley community.

A few days after Thanksgiving, a group of Home Farm folks gathered to prepare our holiday newsletter for mailing. This year our holiday newsletter was sent to over 700 people throughout the United States and in several other countries.

After all this activity, we are looking forward to the peace and quiet that winter brings us.

And now, may the peace and power of the infinite spirit which passes all understanding hold us and keep us in the Christed consciousness while we are seemingly separated one from another.

– Susan Wetmore, 2010