

Our usual summer monsoon season came late this year. And while we had many days of overcast skies and some thunder and lightning, we received very little rain. Finally a real gully washer arrived which flooded several low lying spots along Home Farm Road, created small arroyos on the drives and seeped into the main house basement. We then enjoyed about a week of our much anticipated Indian summer with its warm, crisp days, and beautiful fall color, when our first winter storm arrived. Within 24 hours strong winds dropped temperatures from the mid 70's down into the 30's with a mix of rain, hail and snow. Now that this storm has passed we have spectacular views of the surrounding mountains dusted with snow and highlighted with bright splashes of yellow, gold and orange aspen leaves.

Production from the Home Farm garden was slowed slightly by the overcast, unsettled weather of August but it rebounded during our short week of Indian summer. The recent snow storm damaged the foliage of the peppers, beans and squash, but the underneath foliage was protected and we believe they will continue to produce fruit until a really hard frost hits. We are glad we covered a lot of the tomato plants since many of them are loaded with unripe fruit.

We have harvested most of the corn, which was deemed the best we have ever grown by residents and neighbors. We have been able to host two dinners for twenty friends and neighbors with the menu being almost totally made from Home Farm produce. Some of the summer squash plants have reached almost four feet in height and double that in width

and can hide squash the size of watermelons in their dense foliage. The garden is still producing an abundance of greens of all types, in addition to broccoli, cauliflower, onions, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, peppers, and tomatoes. Tomatoes are being frozen to be made into sauce and salsa as time allows. Many bags of beans, greens, and corn have been frozen. Onions are drying on racks in the carport and the garlic crop has been harvested and stored in the food room. Several of our residents have roasted and frozen over 100 pounds of chilies and two others are working on a batch of plum wine from our small purple plum trees. Beautiful flowers greet visitors at the entrance to the garden and adorn the tables in the dining room. While we did not get an apricot crop this year, we have harvested peaches and plums and the apple and pear trees are loaded with fruit. Our small families of deer and overabundance of rabbits contentedly chomp on all the fallen fruit.

Our new garden shed has also been completed with inside shelving and tool holders. We happily moved all of our garden tools and supplies into it several weeks ago. A clean, organized shed and the scent of fresh cut wood now greet the gardeners instead of dust, clutter and signs of rodent occupation. The old shed will be dismantled and a new gate and fence added to take its place on the east end of the garden.

In other good news, we have purchased a "new" 2005 Chevrolet snow plow truck to replace our forty year old, cumbersome, and hard-to-operate plow. One of our Denver students was able to locate it for us and will be driving it out in the near future. We have not

had a functioning farm truck in many years and the plow truck itself will be usable for other purposes as well.

The snow plow truck took quite a bite out of our maintenance fund, and we have several other much-needed, major projects planned as time and funds allow. One such project is the outside re-siding of the Meditation Center which has been bare cement for years and years and is now crumbling. New energy efficient windows also need to be added to the building during the re-siding process. Other projects include overhauling the water pumps from our water system which have been leaking, repairing and improving several showers in guest quarters, repairing and/or replacing the flooring in the Garden Units attic and running a new power line to the rental cabin. We have put the rehab of the two vacant rental trailers on hold for the time being and will determine whether to repair them or replace them as the need arises and the funds are available.

Maintaining our aging buildings, which were often constructed hastily with minimal funds, is a constant and expensive task. We have received offers of hands-on help from several people who attended the summer seminar but the costs for materials will run into the thousands of dollars and we may still have to hire out several of the projects to professionals. We would greatly appreciate it if you could remember to add us to your holiday donation list if at all possible. Thank you in advance!

At the annual meeting of the School of the Natural Order Board of Directors in August, Pat Murray was chosen as the new SNO board president following the resignation of Marj Coffman as president. Marj has served on the board for over 20 years and will remain a valuable board member. Susan Wetmore remains the board treasurer and Lynne Hoffman is now the board secretary. Brian

Morrison, who has been associated the School since childhood, was selected to fill the open board position after serving as an advisor during the last year. Val Taylor and Robert Cozzie continue as board advisors. Leo Weese, who is president of SNO Colorado, was selected to be the third advisor.

As the weather turns cold and our outdoor activities become more limited we will turn our attention to inside projects such as the ongoing process of editing and updating Vitvan's teachings and making more available in digital form. But while we can still comfortably work outside during this beautiful time of year, we realize how fortunate we are to be able to consciously experience the dynamic natural cycles and the infolding and unfolding of the energy world of which we are expressions. We hear the first hummingbird arrive in the spring and wait for the last stragglers to leave in the fall. We plant tiny seeds and are in awe at the huge plants and beautiful fruit that develop. We watch the weather change from day to day and sometimes even minute to minute! We observe birds building their nests and raising their young in our trees. On many nights we feel that we can reach up and touch the Milky Way. We feel our own energies wax and wane with the seasons and with the circumstances in our lives. And as Albert Einstein once said, "Look deep into Nature and then you will understand everything better."

May the Blessed Ones lead us from darkness into Light.

Jane Murray and Susan Wetmore