

A few days before Thanksgiving, Leo Weese drove our newly purchased snow plow truck from Denver to its new home here at the School. We thank everyone who supported this project with gifts and donations, and also to Leo, who spent many hours researching various trucks and plows until he discovered the ¾ ton Chevy truck which seems to be a very good fit with what we need.

With memories of last year's snowstorms in our minds, we felt relieved knowing that this year, thanks to a new plow on a road-worthy truck, we were prepared for whatever weather the winter brought.

A few days after Thanksgiving, our first winter storm arrived, with over a foot of snow and subzero cold, and our snowplow operators were delighted at the ease with which the new rig handled the snow.

We didn't realize that this first storm would be our only storm, at least to date. The storms that have deluged most of the rest of the United States have bypassed us, leaving us dry and relatively warm.

In a few places, some new green growth (of hardy weeds) has begun, and several of our flower beds have daffodils and narcissus poking their leaves above ground, not realizing that they are two months 'early'.

Although the sun is still quite low in the south, most south-facing land is completely free of snow and ice. Areas that face north or in the shadow of a building still have the remains of that early December storm. The contours of the Great Basin show up in high relief in wintertime due to the sun's position, and the patterns of the terrain stand out clearly. Hillsides that face south are brown, and right over their crests, on the slopes facing north, a covering of snow is still visible.

Here at Home Farm, our roads are now free of both snow and ice, except where a building casts its shadow, in which case several inches of ice remain. We have figured out the corners and sections of road to avoid as we walk around the grounds, knowing that only springtime will allow these shaded patches of ice to disappear.

Our lack of precipitation is cause for concern as we anticipate this coming summer. But for now, we greet our sunny mornings and clear skies, and take advantage of the glorious days to go on walks and do some outside chores.

This mild weather has been a boon to our bird population. We see flocks of magpies and ravens daily, and it is a common occurrence to see several varieties of hawks perched on fence posts, looking for their next meal. Sometimes golden eagles sit on the telephone poles along the road, and occasionally a bald eagle shows up, too.

Several pairs of ducks have arrived and keep busy down at the pond, which is completely ice-free. And the calls of the great horned owls that nest in our trees often drift across the property at night.

As we move through the winter months, we continue to use up the food we put in storage last fall, as well as using many of the frozen vegetables. A few winter squash, onions, and garlic bulbs are still in the food room.

It may still be "winter" on the calendar, but we are already looking at seed catalogs and planning our spring and summer garden spaces. At the Buildings and Grounds meetings, we are discussing ways to update some of other facilities when spring arrives.

We will have a work-oriented session in late May, where we plan to implement some of what the Buildings and Grounds meetings have been discussing. If you would like to help out with these work projects in May, be sure to contact the School for more details.

We have set August 10-16 as the dates for our summer seminar, *Awakening the Power: Vitvan's Path*. Please be on the lookout for more information regarding this exciting week.

Susan Wetmore  
January, 2014

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