

Our much-anticipated Indian summer has arrived. The mountainsides are filled with the oranges, scarlets, and yellows of fall aspens, the roadside weeds are purple, and the rabbit brush has turned from its brilliant gold to a dusty brown.

Despite the shortening days (the sun rises much farther south on the eastern horizon) and cooler nights, our fall has been exceptionally wet and warm, so much of our near-by autumn splendor has been delayed. Our orchard trees and landscaping are mostly still green, our garden is still full of vegetables and flowers, and the lawns are still lush and need regular mowing.

We continue to enjoy the bounty of the garden. The corn is past, but there are still abundant harvests of tomatoes, herbs, cucumbers, kale, summer squash, tomatillos and peppers (sweet and hot). As we move further into fall, we anticipate picking lots of winter squash, "mortgage lifter" beans (a delicious dried variety), and Brussels sprouts. We have a dense Brussels sprout 'forest', about four feet tall, with thick stalks that are loaded with those miniature cabbage-like buds just waiting for the first frost to be harvested.

The garlic bed has already been replanted. The garlic bulbs rest in the ground until early spring, when they send up thin green shoots, sometimes right through a layer of snow. Many of the onions we harvested have been dried for later use. Although we haven't dried onions before, the pieces we chopped dried well in the dehydrator and we now have jars of these in our food room ready for winter use.

The group dinners that we enjoy thanks to our garden are accompanied by bouquets of our garden flowers. Many of these flowers have re-seeded themselves, so that hollyhocks tower above the winter squash, marigolds nestle next to tomato plants, and calendulas and cosmos bloom happily everywhere.

Work in the garden these days is accompanied by periodic plops, as the pears drop off the stately old trees and fall to the ground, both inside and

outside the garden fence. Waiting patiently in the orchard are several families of deer who very efficiently eat each fallen fruit. And there is at least one coyote who spends time in the orchard and who is also a fruit connoisseur. One morning we watched him gobble pears from a tree in a remote orchard spot.

Rain from our many late summer/early fall storms has also created some drainage issues that we haven't seen before. These downpours have eroded gullies in some of our roads. We used the tractor to break up rocks (sharp pieces don't roll, so erosion is better controlled), smooth roads, and make earthen channels and dams to divert running water.

The mild fall weather has allowed us to undertake other outside projects as well.

Brush trimmings and garden refuse (weeds, old corn stalks, etc.) have been shredded and, along with chopped hay, been combined to make several compost piles alongside the garden.



Some of the doorways and trim are being painted in preparation for the onset of winter. The "School of the Natural Order" sign at the intersection of our dirt road and the highway has been repainted and looks bright and inviting.



Several visitors spent the better part of a day cleaning the water weeds from one of the springs along the water line between the spring box and the pump house.

The pond has been drained, both by opening the gate valve and by diverting the water flow from our springs. However, the rainfall of the past month has refilled the pond with another six inches of water. Once that water is gone, a crew will work to pry out the rocks that are presently stuck in the valve, preventing its complete closure. Then a grate will be installed to cover the outflow pipe to prevent further rock obstructions, and the pond will be refilled. We are looking forward to clearing out the invasive cattails, reintroducing fish, and being able to easily adjust the level of the pond as needed.

September was also a busy month in terms of visitors. Memorial celebrations were held for both Tonia Harvey and Mary Ann Satriano on consecutive weekends, and we were delighted to host the families of both of these women. These memorials not only honored the lives of both Tonia and Mary Ann, but they provided a wonderful opportunity for friends and family to spend time together.

We mark several other milestones here at the School headquarters. Frank Burney, who has lived here off and on since the late 1970's and most recently since 2002, has moved to St. George for medical reasons. Frank is a skilled electrician, and whenever a small motor or appliance needed fixing, we took it to Frank. Frank also was the caretaker of the upstairs Centrum. We will miss his being here.

Pat and Jane Murray will be loading up their moving van in the coming week, and we will be saying good-bye to dear friends and faithful members of our School and our Home Farm community. We wish them well in their new home in Texas.

And we welcome the arrival of Leo Weese, who will be moving his base of operations from the Denver area to Home Farm. Leo will not be living here full-time, since he still has business projects in Colorado, but he will be here often, and it is reassuring to us to have his practical expertise, his devotion to the School, and his ideas and viewpoints available to us on a regular basis.

So, as you can see, it is not only the seasons that are in transition here at Home Farm. Our community dynamics are also in flux. We may feel sad about some of the changes and the loss that accompanies them, but we also greet each day with curiosity, hope, and gratitude that we live here and are able to serve the School.

Susan Wetmore

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