



AROUND THE PLACE

June 2016

The previous *Around the Place* was sent out shortly after the spring equinox. As this *Around the Place* is being sent to you, a week has passed since the summer solstice and already the days begin to grow shorter!

Spring took its time getting here, with many of our April and May days cold and damp, threatening a final frost which actually never arrived. However, we held off transplanting fragile seedlings out into the garden until Memorial Day – that’s the rule of thumb we traditionally use as our transplant date for vegetables like tomatoes and peppers. Our dedicated planting crew took these two months to get flowers, herbs, and vegetables started under Marj Coffman’s grow-lights, transplanting them as they outgrew their seed nurseries. And several of the community gardeners worked in the garden, planting onion sets and direct seeding spring vegetables like carrots and beets.

And then, seemingly almost in the blink of an eye, summer arrived. Our days dawned early and became hot by mid-morning. The gardeners tried

to get into the garden early in the day when the temperatures weren’t so high, and the gardeners and transplants alike had a better chance of not wilting in the heat. Bit by bit we got all the plants set out in the garden, the hoses repaired and the sprinkler systems arranged, and the tomato cages and stakes securely placed around each small plant.

Each year we marvel at the persistence and vigor of the life process as it expresses itself around the place. We see this in a tiny seed sprouting to become a huge tomato plant laden with fruit, or a small cabbage seedling becoming a gigantic head of cabbage. We see this in the abundance of weeds and ‘volunteers’ that grow throughout the garden, in great profusion and with great rapidity. And we see this in the explosion of insect life in every garden nook and row: the native pollinators, the butterflies, and of course the ants... always the ants.

From the earlier grape hyacinths and lilies of the valley in March to Mid-Summer Eve, our flowers have been spectacular – irises, daffodils, viburnum, lilacs (the lilacs were especially abundant and

fragrant this year), daisies, gaillardia, columbine, delphinium... so many lovely perennials. Each flower bed has been filled with a succession of beauty and color this entire season. They have given us such pleasure.

Unlike last year's orchard harvest – which was a non-event, thanks to a mid-May cold spell – the orchard trees this year are loaded with fruit – apricots, apples, peaches, plums and pears. We anticipate a very good fruit harvest beginning in five or six weeks. We've had some strong winds this season which have acted as natural thinners, but this is probably good for the trees so that their branches don't get too heavy with fruit as it grows and ripens.

Although the hard work of cleaning up the cattails from our pond is complete, one project still remains before the pond is once again filled. A new dock is under construction on the west side of the pond. It is almost completed, and we look forward, not only to a lovely pond but also to a dock perfect for swimming and enjoying the quiet beauty of a sunrise or a sunset.

Other work around the grounds continues – mowing lawns and orchards, readying guest rooms for summer visitors, completing plumbing and renovation projects in various buildings... each of us living here has an abundance of projects to choose from on any given day.

Mr. Tibbs and his two good friends Lucy and Marsha continue their daily patrol of the grounds around the Main House. They have made a real difference in our rodent population. The antelope squirrels

that ate so many of our garden seedlings last year are practically non-existent this year (the little squirrels liked to hang out in the carport, which is where Mr. Tibbs has claimed several choice spots to survey his world), and the gophers are staying down near the pond now. We seldom catch mice in the Main House or in the guest units that lie in the "Kitty Patrol Area". We have enjoyed giving these three cats a good home and we feel they more than earn their keep.

Occasionally we see a deer or two grazing on the lawns, and we smell a skunk from time to time. The rabbits are, of course, more than abundant, which is true every year, it seems. And the birds are busy from dawn until dark – killdeer, ravens, magpies, flickers, swallows, various other songbirds, and hummingbirds. Early mornings and evenings are filled with various chirps, hoots, and cries, and we have watched smaller birds work together to chase away larger ones such as ravens or magpies who threaten their nests and young.

We continue to meet as a group for Sunday class and a Monday reading group. We also meet several times each month to discuss residency, buildings and grounds issues. We are grateful for the support that students of the School, whether living here or elsewhere, share so generously with us.

May the Peace and Power of the Infinite Spirit, which passes all understanding, hold us and keep us in the love of the Christed consciousness while we are seemingly separated one from another.

Susan Wetmore
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