

# Common Ground Farm

P.O. Box 59,  
Glenham, NY 12527

*Newsletter Numero Once ... Literati Edition*

Ah, too fortunate farmers! If they knew their own good fortune...  
Virgil

## **Farmer's Note: From Fine Homebuilding to Johnny's Seeds** A Conversion Process

It has become clear to me that my conversion from building contractor to farmer has progressed at a rapid rate as I find that *Growing Great Garlic*, *The Cover Crop Handbook* and *Johnny's Selected Seeds Catalogue* have completely supplanted my previous predilection for *Fine Homebuilding* magazine. The daily exigencies of growing a diverse selection of vegetables demand constant attention, planning, and time for nurture. There is just no other way than devotion as far as I can see.

So I devote -- and watch with appreciation and a bit of wonder as Mark Guenther switches around the tires on my tractor (no small deal since the tires weigh 250 pounds apiece), removes the front end loader and backhoe attachments and presto, bingo there he is, driving my former construction tractor through the beds of the farm in its new farm tractor role. Cool.

### Pot of Gold at the End of the Rain

There have been many other developments since I wrote my first and only farmer's notes a month ago. I am struggling with how to convey all of this in one sitting. I will spare you, with promises that from here on I will put together weekly reports. That way it will be more likely that if you are one of the fantastic harvest or distribution workers or folk who have helped out in other ways, I will be able to give you due praise and thanks.

The spring is over, marked by the passing of mei quing choy and yukina savoy. Soon, spinach, which has been outrageously bountiful and resisted going to seed with remarkable tardiness, will pass on. The spinach has gotten much help from a cool and rainy, rainy season. I recorded 7.55 inches of rain during June, and 3.05 inches in May. Just when I thought that the entire farm was going to flood or my toes were going to develop some dreadful fungus, akin to "damping off", this blast of Florida weather rolled in. Needless to say I am a bit concerned about the upcoming Hurricane season! Parts of the farm did pond, but the rain stopped in time before major damage was done, and since the soil is sandy it has drained quite well, considering. Flea beetles have been putting a hurt on some of the crops, but for the most part we are doing well. The Peas are fecund (will somebody tell me if that word works) absolutely gorgeous and lush. Soon our distributions will be moving out of the Greens only stage into squashes, cukes and more...

### Berry Shares?

Thinking ahead to next year I want to order 1000 strawberry plant plugs which would go in the ground in late summer this year. The plants would produce for a

number of years. The problem is that we do not have money to pay for them. The investment figures out to about \$ 3.00 per member. If 40 members are willing, \$5.00 each would do it. Are there 40 members who would be willing to take a chance on berries?

Walk in Cooler? Refrigerator? Anybody?

Money concerns have also put a snafu on buying a cooler to keep our produce fresh. Is there anyone who might have an old refrigerator just sitting around??

Hope to see you soon, Robb

### **UPCOMING EVENT**

#### **Saturday, July 5: Gardening with Kids**

“Inch by inch, row by row”, come help the Children’s Garden grow. Dig, plant, water and weed, and learn about what makes our vegetables and flowers flourish, which garden critters are helpful & which ones we could do without. Bring any garden tools you have and dress appropriately (garden clothes, hat, sunscreen, sturdy shoes). For kids ages 6-10, parents welcome.

***All workshops will take place at the farm, 10:00-11:30a.m.  
Space limited, so please register by calling Jen Clapp, 888-1822***

#### ***Garlic Scapes***

Our recipe man, Bruce Merry, writes:

A note for the garlic scapes: They have a delicate garlic flavor and you can use lots of them. They take less cooking than clove garlic. Use them as you would garlic where you want a nice hint and not a preponderant taste. They are especially good chopped with mushrooms and Common Ground Farm sage. For a real nice meat sauce add light cream and brandy.

#### ***Bread and Cheese and Cooler***

The bread man came to our most recent two distributions, bringing fabulous organic whole wheat, sourdough, scones, and more. We would also like to offer cheese from Sprout Creek farm, and we’d like to offer free-range eggs and other good things, but to do that we need a keep-cook machine. A walk-in cooler would be ideal but barring that a refrigerator would serve. (See farmer’s note, above).

#### ***A Farm Epic is Born***

You’ve doubtless been wondering why this newsletter is called the Literati Edition. At last, you are about to find out.

Now that we are in our second season, we feel the time has come for a farm epic, or, at least, a modest attempt at one. Having said that, let us say that what follows may not be the definitive Common Ground epic. Most likely it is not. Surely, some genius is out there awaiting the lightning inspiration that will release

from her or his gifted pen a thundering saga of matchless beauty, probity, passion, depth and wit, but, hey, meanwhile, we'll take a stab at it.

*Splendor in the Chard, part 1*

Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower...

Wordsworth

It was a dark and stormy morning. "Oh why, why, why must it forever rain?" cried Dimity Grasmere Chard, a spunky young charmer pouting deep within the nodding, emerald plumes of her more placid sisters. Dimity let her plume, weighted by the rain, droop. "I am the only one of all my sisters with a purple stem. It would seem fate has chosen me for a singular destiny but, no, nothing ever happens to me. Nothing. Why? Why? Why?"

On the other side of the family cluster, Dimity's mother, Dame Frutilda Chard, wrung her plume. "Dimity, darling," she cried, "alas and alack. How I wish the wisdom of age were yours at last. If you dare to question destiny, you must know: you cannot meet your destiny without patience. If you do not have patience, you are but the plaything of destiny, the plaything of evil, the plaything" – Frutilda shuddered – "of Lord Flea Beetle. And I know that he is the source of all your anguish. You've been sighing for him ever since you met him."

At that moment, a cold, mad wind whipped through the chard rows and, speak of the devil, upon it rode Lord Flea Beetle, heading straight toward Dimity.

*to be continued*

*And now, we move on to our second entry in the literary mode, but before we do we wish to say that both these entries are by your newsletter editor and she would love it if writing type farm members would send poems, thoughts, whatever for inclusion in the newsletter. Email Janetruhe@aol.com (no attachments please) or bring to Blodgett Library in Fishkill, which is where she works.*

*The Big Fig*

"That fig tree's too big,"  
said old Mr. Pig.

"It'll fall on our house.  
It'll fall on our car.  
That fig tree has gone too far."

"And besides," Mrs. Pig said,  
"there are too many figs  
kissing too many bees.  
Two bees stung my knees,  
didn't even say please –  
I mean really."

So the tree-fearing pigs  
called the man with the rig  
to come cut down the fig,  
and he came and he did. He cut

and he sawed. His motor noise  
awed all the neighbors  
all day, but I'm sorry to say

that he cut the wrong way.  
Yes, he did something rash,  
and the fig tree went crash  
on the house  
and the car  
and the pigs.

A very big splat!  
Nothing left but the cat  
and one fig tree root  
that put forth a shoot,  
a shoot that bore fruit.  
And so ends the story  
of a fig tree in glory.

***And, a note before closing: Many, many thanks to the hard workers who are turning out to help with harvest & distribution!***