

Gardening

Taking stock of season

By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

Hallelujah! The harvest is in. The freezer is full, beans are drying in the barn and cellar shelves are filled with winter squash and potatoes.

Opening the door to the pantry is like entering Ali Baba's cave. Jars of jams and jellies, pickles and relishes, tomatoes and beets glow softly like jewels and I feel as rich as Croesus. I am satisfied.

But now, with the garden season fresh in my mind, I'm going to make some notes, what went well and what could be done in other

ways next year. My list will be different from yours, but I do recommend that you put some reminders in your garden notebook. You'll be glad to have them handy when it is time to order seeds and plant next year's garden.

Beans: The wax beans produced well and prolifically. They were tender and delicious. The pole beans and bush stringbeans were tougher and not as good. Research why this happened.

The dry beans did well after a slow start in spite of the deer who made a meal of the bean foliage early in the season. What a treat to split open a dried pod and shake out creamy Jacob's cattle beans with their splashes of vermilion to admire the satiny sheen of a black turtle bean.

Beets: The kids didn't like the Golden Beets. Plant more red beets next year.

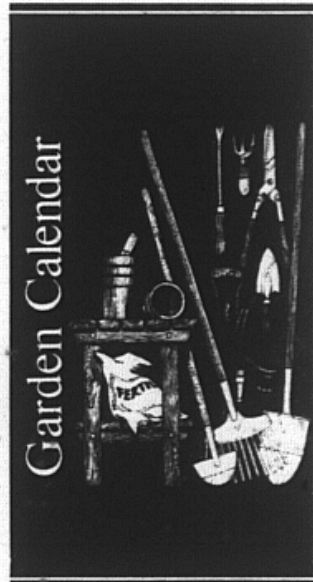
Cabbage: Plant less. There is a limit to how much sauerkraut and coleslaw one family can eat!

Carrots: Plant more. A 40-foot row is not enough. How long will it take before I correctly estimate the amounts to plant?

Cucumbers: They did well, but next year they must be planted to grow on a fence. They're harder to find hiding in their vines than peas are.

Corn: It would have done better if I had thinned more. Next year I vow to be ruthless.

Lettuce: It was doing beautifully and we enjoyed every tender leaf we



The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service.

Now is the time to:

- Start a compost pile. Compost any non-woody plant material. Do not compost animal refuse, or skunks and rats may appear.
- Make a terrarium from materials collected in the woods.
- Watch for fall garden equipment sales.
- Pick apples before a hard freeze and call the office for apple uses.
- Force your poinsettia into blooming this year by placing it in a dark room (absolutely no artificial light) from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m., starting this week.

Note:

- Don't store firewood indoors. Store outside to avoid carpenter ants and termite problem.

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got, but the geese found the garden and while they are known for their weeding talents, it is not so well known that they take their pay out of the lettuce rows. Recommendation — next year put up a low electric fence around the garden.

Peas: We all loved the sugar snaps, but the vines were so heavy and our prevailing winds so strong that the pea strings I put up were not enough to hold the vines upright. Next year I'll try to invest in pea fences.

Potatoes: I told you I would give a report on my sawdust mulch. As far as I can tell, it worked fine. The harvest was easy and the potatoes were good quality. The problem is that the Red Norlands got a blight and were somewhat bothered by potato bugs, so the potatoes that I harvested were quite small. The Katahdins escaped the blight and the bugs because I didn't get them in until the end of June, almost too late. And then with the summer so dry, the harvest was disappointingly small. We'll try the mulch again next year and hope for better weather.

Tomatoes: In Heath they must be mulched with black plastic if they are going to ripen. Also, I must remember to give away more of my homegrown tomato seedlings. I had far too many plants, but I still do

want to have cherry tomatoes and paste tomatoes in addition to the regular variety.

Winter squash: Another disappointing harvest that I am blaming on the dry summer. I planted my seeds and seedlings in hills of compost and mulched heavily, but squash needs a lot of moisture. By the time I thought about watering the garden, neighbors were having trouble with their wells and I was afraid to put our well to the test and I never dared to water the garden.

Summer squash and zucchini: They were delicious and prolific. I had lovely bowls of steaming buttered squash every day for weeks and the pigs and chickens loved all the surplus I could give them. I never baked one loaf of zucchini bread.

General thoughts. The drought caused lots of problems this year. Many plants need a plentiful supply of water to mature properly and they all need ample water to grow quickly and healthily. They didn't get it this year. However, because my garden was so heavily mulched, I think my garden suffered less than many.

On the whole, considering the weather and the fact that mine was a new garden, I am satisfied with this year's harvest — but just wait until next year! □