

Homesteader Haikus

morning garden time
only sound-the birds chirping
and veggies growing

on a morning stroll
What! No black flies swarming here
peace is mine at last

ripe tomatoes, yum
too many all at one time
anyone want some?
~ Judi Reis



Photo by Evelyn LaBree

From Ron and Jan Sacco...

Pond in a Pandemic

Our pond is a gift – perhaps one whose value had yet to be fully appreciated, until now. As we sit by our little pond, its mirrored waters seem to repel the anxiety and fear swirling through a troubled and uncertain human world. We find ourselves enveloped in a deep calm, as our minds are drawn elsewhere – engrossed in the lives of pond residents and by neighbors from nearby woods and fields, who stop in for an occasional visit.



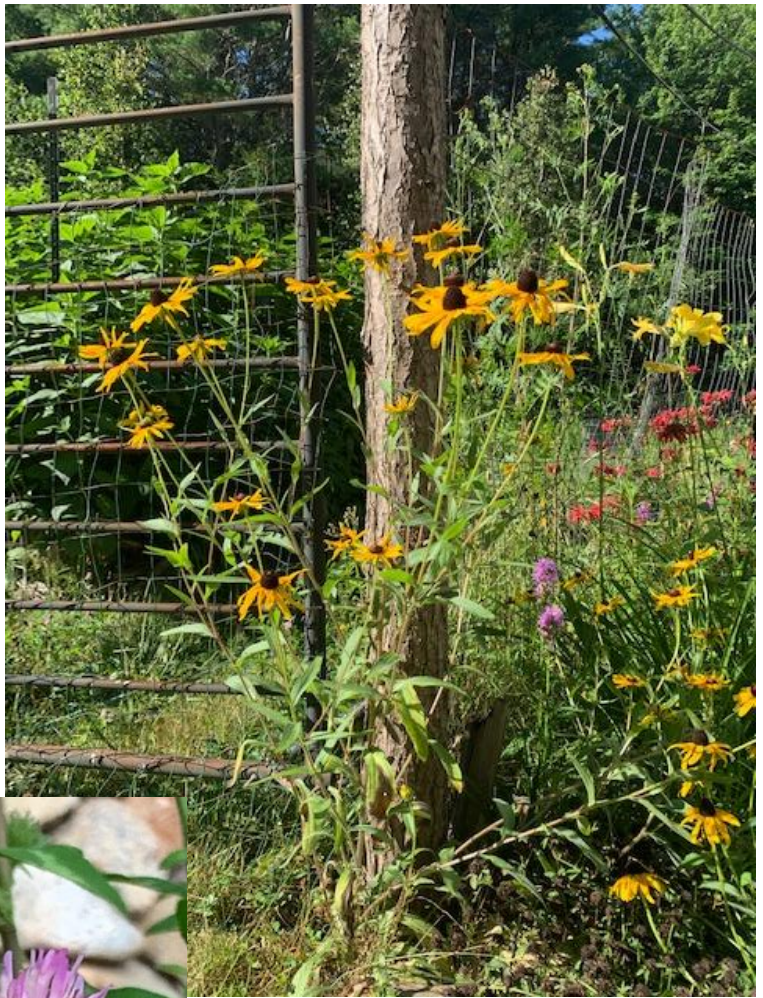






Sitting by the pond, we are grounded in its rhythms – rhythms of days and seasons, and the promise of returning. In this predictability, we find a peace that opens the mind to the joys of change. The pond reminds us of the constancy of life's rhythms. But also that its melody will vary, and bring with it wonders to ponder or delight – the timing of the seasons, surprising new visitors, disappearances to mourn, and rebirths to celebrate.

In the midst of a pandemic we must find contentment where we are. No longer too busy, too tired or too late to experience the pond's comforting rhythms, or notice its enchanting surprises, we see and hear more now, and we are overflowing with gratitude...Ron and Jan



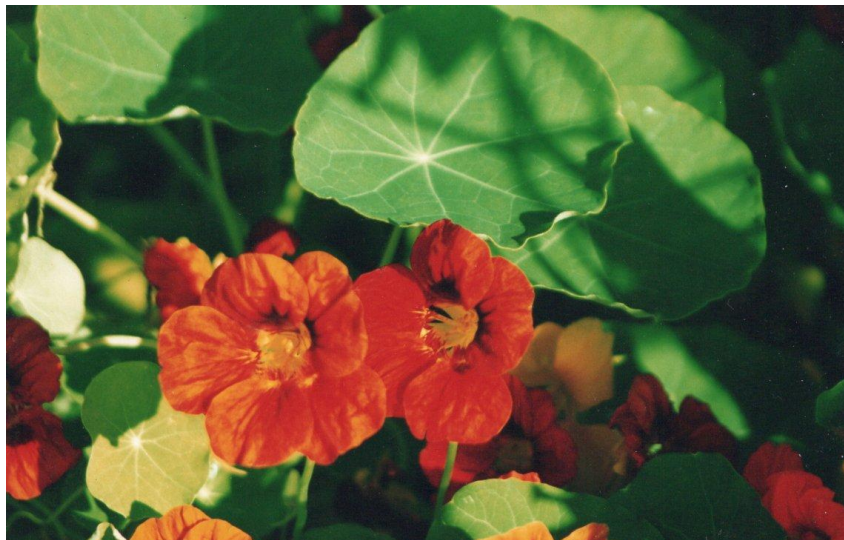
From Ginny Howe...

My Uncle Spatch was an avid gardener, and he would always recite this poem when we visited in his garden:

*The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.*

- Dorothy Frances Gurney

He surely nurtured my appreciation of Mother Earth and growing food.



Reflections on Life at the Huber-Wood Homestead July 16, 2020

And then we weren't...in school, at concerts, with family or friends. A stopping that was immensely appreciated initially. I felt completely overwhelmed at work and spending time with Tom is my favorite activity. Spring was beautiful. I walked and watched the leaves emerge from the trees. Most years I'm so lost in my head driving into work that I look up one morning to see the trees in full bloom and am shocked. I worked in the garden, something that is usually mostly relegated to Tom. Early lettuce, onions, radishes were gifts from our hoop sheltered garden bed. Kale, peas, summer squash, and cucumbers have subsequently emerged and our haricot vert beans are close!! One of our Brahman hens went broody and is currently the devoted mother of 6 beautiful chicks.

Transitioning from an almost nonstop schedule, I struggled to organize my time in a way that felt good at the end of the day. And then, as for everyone, the losses began to roll in. No trip to France to see our 18-month old granddaughter. No Portland Symphony concerts, no UU Notes or choir rehearsals. Musicians performing from home filled in the gap at first but then seemed to fade from our lives. Time playing my harp remained a gift but somehow not having the goal of sharing my music changed things. My annual week-long harp intensive in Lubec (my one week each year of being only responsible for me) was cancelled. Meetings on Zoom of every sort were wonderful but didn't make up for not seeing the students or my colleagues at school or missing the week in Santa Fe with my siblings to celebrate my mom's life.

A stable feature of my time with Tom is reading something inspirational in the morning and taking time to meditate together. Adyashanti's book, *Falling Into Grace*, has been the perfect book for our journey through COVID. From Adya's (mostly) Buddhist perspective, we were reminded over and over that our illusion of control, demanding that things be different, and arguing with what is, is the basis of not being able to lean back into the grace and freedom in any moment (even in hard times like when you fall down steps with your harp and sprain both ankles). Time to read introduced me to one of Tom's favorite authors, Haruki Murakami (1Q84). I learned just this morning that Louise Penny put out a novella in April this year. This will be my next read! My brother, Brent, a professor in his real life, came and stacked 4 cords of firewood and helped Tom take down trees that were threatening our home. We're currently repairing the damage from last fall's windstorm that landed a tamarack tree across the deck and length of our roof.

As things open up, I'm back to in-person yoga and may get to play my flute with Joy soon. I've picked raspberries with Janie and made my first ever batch of raspberry pepper jelly. Strawberry and raspberry freezer jam are made for the year, along with my first batch of bread and butter pickles. And the adventure continues. At the moment, the European peasant dough that is proofing in the kitchen needs attention. How wonderful to have a cool day! So, from our homestead to each of you, we send love and gratitude for our shared journey!

Melody & Tom

From Evelyn LaBree & Tonia Chase ...



For Tonia and I, the Covid quarantine has been a honeymoon of sorts (we are celebrating our 18th month anniversary as you read this). My North Berwick residence sold in the spring and together we've nested in our new home and enjoyed making a life together. With Tonia working from home and me painting and exploring a variety of creative endeavors, including sewing masks for family members and friends, we count ourselves very fortunate. We've eaten well and imbibed much. Ahh, life has been very good. Together we've created several new flower beds, redesigned the vegetable gardens and are now enjoying the blooms and epicurean delicacies of our labor. We take great pleasure in the comforting rhythms of our daily lives together.





Sunset at Lake Mooselookmeguntic, Rangeley ME

Though sequestered somewhat by the pandemic, we've enjoyed social distance camping and paddling, covering many miles on lakes, rivers and the ocean in our kayaks. We've walked, hiked and explored. Along our journey we've individually, and as a couple, discovered new and shared interests, including our love of art in its many forms, gardening, working together on wood and concrete projects and observing the star-studded nighttime sky. This troubling time of illness and grief for many in the world has brought into sharp focus how precious and fragile life is.

Reading and discussing meditations from Mark Nepo's book *Awakening* is a daily ritual in our home. This reflection is especially apt during this time of challenge as we navigate the changes mandated by our shared new "normal."

Mark Nepo writes:

When in the midst of great change, it is helpful to remember how a chick is born. From the view of the chick, it is a terrifying struggle. Confined and curled in a dark shell, half-formed, the chick eats all its food and stretches to the contours of its shell. It begins to feel hungry and cramped. Eventually, the chick begins to starve and feels suffocated by the ever-shrinking space of its world.

Finally its own growth begins to crack the shell, and the world as the chick knows it is coming to an end. Its sky is falling. As the chick wriggles through the cracks, it begins to eat its shell. In that moment-growing but fragile, starving and cramped, its world breaking- the chick must feel like it is dying. Yet once everything it has relied on falls away; the chick is born. It does not die but falls into the world.



The lesson is profound. Transformation always involves the falling away of things we relied on, and we are left with a feeling that the world as we know it is coming to an end, because it is.

Yet the chick offers us the wisdom that the way to be born while still alive is to eat our own shell. When faced with great change- in self, in relationship, in our sense of calling, in spiritual truth, we somehow must take in all that has enclosed us, nurtured us, incubated us, so when the new life is upon us, the old is within us, a part of our past, a memory. Reborn we face a new world.



From Janie Waterhouse...

A Recipe for Garlic Scape Pesto

This recipe is from the New York Times, where it noted it was featured in “A Chef in the Fields.” I’m sending it pretty much as it was written, with all the tips included. I made it the other night, following the directions almost exactly (used toasted walnuts instead of sunflower seeds) and it was delicious. I was tempted to lick the plate!

1 cup garlic scapes, sliced crosswise into 1”-2” inch pieces (about 12 - 15 scapes)
1/4 cup sunflower seeds (or toasted walnuts)
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup basil leaves
Juice of 1 lemon
1/2 tsp. salt

Tip: Munch on a scape to see how strong it is; may want to pour boiling water over them to mellow them out a bit. I actually blanched them for a minute in boiling water, then put them in ice water for a minute to keep them crisp. Trim the scapes by cutting just below the bulb, compost the bulbs.

A food processor is a must for this recipe. For pesto, ingredient order matters. Start with the scapes and process for about 30 seconds. Add the walnuts, process until they are broken down and mixed well with the scapes, about 30 seconds. Scrape the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula for wandering bits. Next pour in the olive oil, process for about 30 seconds. If you have parmesan in chunks, add it now, but if it’s grated, wait until the scapes and nuts smooth out. If you are serving it right away, add the basil and lemon juice, process ‘til reaching desired consistency. If not, hold back on the basil for now - otherwise the pesto will lose its vibrant color. Add salt to taste, serve immediately.
Add generously to cooked pasta or spread on crusty bread.

If you want to freeze the pesto, never add any liquid (lemon juice). Just process the scapes and olive oil. Nuts are okay but not necessary at this point. Never add the cheese to this or any pesto when freezing. Put cheese on when serving. This will avoid a stringy mess if the pesto gets heated.

I loved it, hope you’ll like it too.

And Messages of Solidarity...



From Janet and Gary Wood...

A visiting deer photographed through the screen of our porch.

