



# *Spruce Cottage Farm's*

## *Periodic Newsletter*

March 1, 2018

*Greetings Gardeners,*

It is a beautiful winter's day (although that North wind is *still* blowing!) and the warmth in the sun is a balm to my winter-weary soul. This time of year, I always feel as though I'm emerging from winter's chrysalis; my skin and my soul soaking up the sun and the warmth: changing me from a creature of the dark days to a creature of the bright green days to come. This time of year always feels like a rejuvenation.

I've started seeding the nursery and I've got some plants (geranium, petunia, dianthus and brachycome) germinating already! The little green seedlings are harbingers of the season to come, full of the promise of tasty veggies, bright blooms and healing herbs. As always at this time of year, I am awed by seeds: sometimes larger than my thumb and sometimes no larger than a speck of dust, they contain all of the genetic material to grow a living organism; this living organism will then grow and mature its own seeds, perpetuating its genetic material and living on through the aeons. Truly amazing.

I am looking forward to the nursery season and I've got a few new varieties of vegetables and flowers to introduce to everyone - a good mix of reliable open-pollinated varieties and hybrids. Open-pollinated seeds are produced by crossing two parent plants of the same variety to produce offspring (seeds) just like the parent plants. Open-pollinated varieties have generally been grown for many (think hundreds) of years. Hybrid seeds are produced by crossing two parent plants of different varieties within the same species. The resulting offspring (seeds) will have characteristics from both parents. It is important to note the difference between hybrid and genetically engineered: hybrid seeds are crosses between the same species and genetically engineered seeds are the result of manipulating DNA between different species. In our growing climate, I've found that hybrids are useful for varieties that take longer to mature or flower, such as cauliflower and petunia. I value open-pollinated varieties for their ability to adapt to variable growing conditions and as a seed-saver.

The 2018 Plant List and Order Form is completed, and my brother is working on 'pdf-ing' it (thanks, Lee!). I will send it out as soon as it is ready!

All the best to everyone as 2018 moves into Spring - here's to a season of many ripe tomatoes, floriferous flowers and zestful herbs!

Jolene Billwiller

~ Gardening Maven ~



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