

# Sharing the Harvest, Being the Recipient

## Sharing the Harvest



Some years I had so much produce I would take bags of squash to work with me. We had some abundant years where the shredded zucchini in my freezer lasted much longer than the winter. We fed neighbors and left the anonymous bags of zucchini on doorsteps. We enjoyed sharing the harvest. And then, there was this year. In my effort to get enough produce for canning and freezing but not have an over abundance of food, I started a whole new garden plot. I added soil and compost and fertilizer. I planted what I thought would yield the return I was looking for. Six different types of tomatoes but only one

of each variety, a few pepper plants, green onions, yellow squash, zucchini and cucumbers, with a many of them training to climb up a trellis or cage. I carefully watched for bottom rot, insects, and weak leaf coloring. Things started off well. The herbs and greens had a good spring. The tomatoes were thriving and I didn't see any bugs! I thought I might have it right for once. The vine vegetables were vining, the tomatoes were blossoming and the peppers were already producing. And, then it stopped. Beetles found their way to my garden and although I stood there hand picking them off and crushing them, they continued to increase. I used neem oil and organic pest repellents for vegetable plants. I picked more beetles. And the plants died. They withered away despite my efforts. Except for the cherry tomato (seriously, do those ever die?) and the green onions. My herbs continued to do well but I am not a rabbit and cannot live on herbs alone.



# **Being the Recipient**

Enter, my generous friend with an abundance this year. Not only did she have plenty to sell and plenty for her families needs but she offered me the seconds, for no charge! What?? I was overwhelmed. I had shared with her my love of canning and putting up fresh food for winter. Actually, first she had offered the “second” for the chickens and pigs to enjoy. But I confessed that her “second” were way too good to all go to the pigs. I did ask if she would sell them to me for canning and she said no, I was welcome to them. This generosity touched my heart in so many ways. This blessed me because I would still be able to can produce for my family and enjoy some extra during the season as well. I had not been on this end of the generosity scale as far as gardening was concerned. Always happy to share our abundance during the summer, I was now on the receiving end and I can’t even put into words the emotions it brought up.

## **What is a born giver to do when on the receiving end of generosity?**

### **I passed it on.**

A long time friend and I recently reconnected and I see her about once a week since she is helping with some work for our business. One day she offered to help me with the huge pile of tomatoes that needed to be blanched and cooked down for sauce. Now there is something else you might as well know about me. I am an introvert. I love people but I prefer my solitude and tackling projects on my own. But, this time, when help was offered, I said, yes I would love to have help with the tomatoes! So Kim and I set out to can over two bushels of tomatoes over the next couple of weeks. She had been wanting to learn the canning skill but didn’t know where to start. So,

step by step, we covered canning tomatoes and she learned hands on. We did salsa and sauce and I am proud to report that Kim took her sauce and made delicious pasta sauce using it and fresh veggies from her local farmer's market. Now we each have tomatoes, fresh from the farm, to enjoy this winter. No, not my farm but I am learning to be OK with that.

Knowing that my gardening friend was busy with her produce and plant business during the summer and did not have time to can, I also canned some produce for her. As each batch would come out of the canner, I would put aside a couple jars to return to her. After all, receiving is hard for me and I still needed to give back.

## **What did I learn from this year's garden?**

- Don't count your tomatoes before they ripen.
- Beetles are not cute
- Don't plant so many green onions
- Chives planted near your veggies will deter squirrels
- Friends are special people and should be treated as such
- Blessings come when least expected

It may never be easy for me to accept huge blessings, but being able to share the skill of canning with another friend, was the ultimate reward for allowing someone to bless my life. How has this season's garden abundance blessed you and those around you? Do you have a garden over load story to share? I'd love to hear about it in the comments!

September is National Organic Harvest Month and to help you make the most of your harvests, I've teamed up with these other amazing bloggers. Please be sure to check out their tips and more: Rachel from Grow a Good Life – Kathie from Homespun Seasonal Living – Teri from Homestead Honey – Chris from

Joybilee Farm – Susan from Learning and Yearning – Shelle from Preparedness Mama – Angi from SchneiderPeeps – Janet from Timber Creek Farm



## *National Organic Harvest Month*

Learning and Yearning  
Joybilee Farm  
Timber Creek Farm  
Preparedness Mama

General Harvesting Tips  
Eating It Fresh  
Putting It Up  
Sharing the Harvest

Homestead Honey  
SchneiderPeeps  
Grow a Good Life  
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