

A Summer Garden
Beth Batlle

I was standing in the middle of my garden the other day, surveying the results of several days of tilling and planting. The young corn plants are up and enjoying the warmth of the sun. Will they be knee high by the 4th of July? – whose knees do we use to measure!

The cucumbers are spreading out and climbing up the special trellis made for them. Where did all these plants come from? It looks like there will be a lot of pickling to be done, ready to be eaten next winter.

The potatoe plants are growing green and tall. They especially enjoy their neighbors, the green beans. But there is a reason for them to be partners in the garden. Bill Pavlus once told me, the bean bugs don't like the potato bugs, and the potato bugs don't like the bean bugs. So both stay out of the garden! And it seems to work.

The trouble with growing potatoes is that you don't know how many the plant is producing until you dig them up in the fall. One year we found that the potatoes had all rotted in the ground. The stench from those rotten potatoes was awful. No wonder James McLaughlin left Ireland and came to Skaneateles. However, three of his children starved to death during that potato famine. They are memorialized on the McLaughlin stone in St. Mary's cemetery.

We also plant Brussels sprouts. These plants have tiny cabbages growing up the thick stem of the plant. They mature to be about the size of walnuts. Speaking of cabbages, did you know there was once a sauerkraut factory in Skaneateles? It is now an empty space down on Fennel Street just before the Village D.P.W.

Having a garden is a lot of work. However, at harvest time, it a great satisfaction to see the freezer full of organic healthy vegetables to eat over the long winter.