

# HEDGEHOG HILL FARM NEWS

## FAREWELL

It is with sadness that I am announcing the closing of Hedgehog Hill Farm as of **August 31, 2006**. The reasons for this end of an era are many, really a confluence of events that precipitated my decision.

Four years ago, my wife Terry got the heart-wrenching news that she had terminal cancer. On July 6, 2003, she passed away. While she was sick, undergoing various treatments, I took over her responsibilities – design, advertising, financial planning, and plant catalogue management. In addition to my own responsibilities, I have been doing her job for four years. I have also been teaching Anthropology at USM; continue my almost 25-year position as selectman of Sumner; am working on several photo-documentary projects, with one major exhibition at Museum L-A in Lewiston at the Bates Mill on September 17th; and have the responsibility to care for my elderly father.

Though accustomed to hard work and a full schedule, I have realized that there are limitations that can not be surmounted by just getting a bit less sleep. Perpetual concerns, on all fronts, have led me to a decision that I cannot maintain all of my responsibilities. Farming just does not allow me to attend to my other critical duties, especially that of a family caretaker.

Certainly, I have no intention to stop my gardening or to move away from my home. I will still have annual and perennial gardens and welcome visitors to this idyllic setting, where the predominant cacophony is that of singing birds in the spring or chirping crickets in the summer. From August 31 on, there just won't be any seedlings, nursery plants, or the shop items for sale.

### A Short, Personal, History of the Farm

We have been farming for thirty-five years, even as we were still living in Boston. My wife, Terry, and I purchased the farm and used it first as a weekend retreat. Later, in 1978, as many of you know (Terry chronicled much of this in *A Small Farm in Maine*), our hearts and minds were drawn to this rural setting, we decided to live here full-time and so we left our city jobs for the beauty of the countryside.

As we started farming, while still living in Boston, the notion of creating our own food was thrilling. The early seventies, were times of turmoil. The quietude of the countryside was in remarkable contrast to the noisy, smelly, corporate existence in the city. Here, Terry and I started discovering abandoned garden plants in all the nooks and crannies of our old farmstead. This was the spark that ignited our desire to garden and, eventually, to farm.

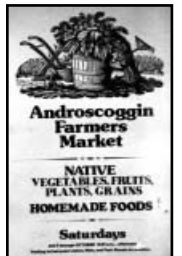
Our quest for knowledge about plants and soils, about gardening, was stimulating intellectually and physically. We cleared the fields overgrown with pines, brambles, and scrub grey birches. We reclaimed land that farmers of the last century

used for survival. Our goal was the same – to have a viable farm, where we would create a healthful, delightful, and participatory environment for us, our son Jacob, and our friends and neighbors.

From the stumps and ashes of cleared land, from the very beginnings, we have hoped to share our knowledge in a non-traditional way. We wanted our discoveries and our enthusiasm for the outdoors, for the miracle of creating our sustenance, for the beauty of flowers and rural living, to be a shared experience. That we did by becoming involved in our community and the community of farmers.

Though, still living in Boston, where I was a photo-journalist, and later, a graduate

student in a Ph.D. program in Anthropology, and Terry was the art director of the *Atlantic Monthly*, we started farming, organizing farmers markets, and becoming involved, with Charlie Gould, UM extension agent, in the nascent movement – now known as Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. We became advocates for local agriculture and support by local institutions of native food suppliers. We sold vegetables



*Terry's poster design for farmers' market from the early 1970s*

and flowers to restaurants, florists, and retail outlets from here to California.

We, ourselves, built our shop building, which was initially designed as a barn and was intended to help us store cabbage and carrots for the winter. As a value-added product, cole



*David Maynard, Terry, and Roger Crockett putting up rafters on the first part of the shop building in 1980*

slaw was made for Arby's restaurants. We built greenhouses, grape arbors, and a barn for our horses. We learned carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrical wiring, welding, as well as small- and large-machine maintenance.

Shortly after starting farmers' markets in Lewiston, Auburn, and Rumford, we began offering workshops on perennial and herb gardening, growing and cooking with herbs, Japanese cuisine (when Eiko Fulenwider was on our staff), designing with everlastings, making



*In addition to workshops, attended by thousands over the years, we instituted a free lecture series entitled Sunday in the Garden at Two, to foster an environment of learning in a bona fide garden setting*



*Our farmhouse in the late 1800s*



*Bulldozer rooting out stumps in 1978*

hypertufa container gardens, pressing flowers, and a myriad other workshops which conveyed our enthusiasm for everything that had to do with gardening and for the relative self-sufficiency that we sought. Our commitment to make gardening ubiquitous, pioneered what now, many other farms and institutions do.

Since 1981, for 25 years, with the exception of two, we attended Common Ground Country Fair in Windsor and then in Unity

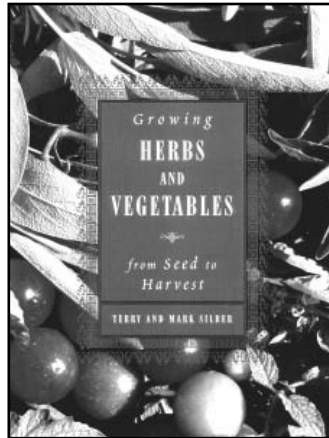
Terry and I have written combined our interest in historical uses of plants, ethnobotany, as well as our empirical knowledge, gained over the years of exploring, probing, and making mistakes.

Terry's chronicle, *A Small Farm in Maine*, was published in 1988 by Houghton Mifflin Company and was reviewed all over the country as a must-read for those who are thinking of living off the land. Our *The Complete Book of Everlastings* was also published in 1988 by A.A. Knopf. The everlastings book was a seminal volume on dry flowers and has not been equaled in its thoroughness or information. Our last book was published in 1999 also by A.A. Knopf, a book relating the knowledge that we have acquired about growing herbs and vegetables over our long career as farmers. It was the unique combination of elements – the energy that we shared, that allowed us to work together tirelessly spring, summer, fall, and winter on the variety of projects. And, I believe, the unique constellation of skills that Terry and I shared and fostered in each other gave us the stimulus to come up with endless ideas to make our life in the country fruitful and exciting in a community of supportive friends and neighbors.

Throughout our career, we shared work in the field, in the greenhouses, and in the shop with many people, employees and friends. Oftentimes, it was arduous physical work, or work demanding a sustaining effort, or the delicate creative work in the design studio, upstairs in the shop. It would be a folly to say that our effort and successes were all of our own making. Our friends and the many loyal customers shared our hopes.

There are many memorable individuals whose very presence contributed to making this farm exciting. The many friends, including many who have become friends as a result of bartering over the years, should be acknowledged here, but there are simply too many names to include in this newsletter. Needless to say, I thank them all for their work and their friendship. I also thank them for the sustenance and encouragement that they have given me during the trying

One aspect of our farm has been, of course, our writing. The books that



Autographed copies of *Growing Herbs and Vegetables from Seed to Harvest* - our last book, will be available until August 31

times when Terry was ill and after she died. Every rock, every blade of grass, every tree, was a witness to Terry's and my hopes and thoughts about land and our lives, being a constant reminder of her absence. During our Spring Fairs, Terry and I often joked that the farm had so much support and everyone knew his or her job so well, that we could all but disappear and it would still be able to function because of our friends.

One individual to whom we owe endless thanks, an individual most familiar to you, has been our friend and employee, Cathy Lee. We have worked side by side for twenty five years. Her dedication, her punctiliousness, her attention to customers, and her creativity have made her not only an integral member of our "team" but also an integral member of our family. We shared work and we shared decision-making. We grew together. As our families matured, we shared the most intimate details of our hardships and our joys. We shared the successes of our children and the loss of our parents. We supported each other. To her I extend the great appreciation, the thanks, that words can not express.

To all of you, thank you for being a part of the Hedgehog Hill Farm legacy.

### Some Attention to Detail

As many of you read this last newsletter, you may wonder about the **Barter Certificates** for plants and workshops. With the receipt of this newsletter, please redeem your certificate as soon as is possible for herbs, first-year and field-grown perennials, and shrubs. There are many plants available, with a large assortment. If you have **Gift Certificates**, you can redeem them for plants or for items from the shop – wreaths, bouquets, raw materials, culinary and decorative items. There will be a sale on plants, on most shop items, including a **half-price sale on the Great Flower Crate**. It is a unique opportunity to stock up on craft projects and gifts for the holidays.

**There will be only one more workshop offered.**

### HAND-MADE PAPERMAKING WORKSHOP: Saturday July 29 with Jim Neal

Spend the day learning the ancient art of making paper by hand. Using natural fibers, herbs and flowers, create elegant papers as art, as decoration, or cards. Jim Neal, artist and craftsman, was also an owner of *Drop Me a Line*, a shop in Portland, specializing in hand-made papers and cards.

**COSTS:** \$45.00 per person. The cost includes the class, all materials for the project, and a light lunch prepared at the farm. **CLASS TIMES:** 9:30 until approximately 3:30.

### Please Attend the Last SUNDAYS IN THE GARDENS AT TWO

Programs are **FREE** and open to the public every Sunday afternoon at **2 p.m.** One hour lectures are held rain or shine.

**JULY 30 – EVERLASTINGS ON DISPLAY:** Tour the production gardens that include thousands of plants that can be air dried. Learn about harvesting and designing.

**AUGUST 6 – FLOWERS FOR BEAUTY AND CUTTING:** The brilliance of the cutting gardens is stunning at this time of the summer. See old favorites and new varieties.

**AUGUST 13 – PRESERVING HERBS FOR USE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:**

When and how to pick and preserve herbs for culinary use throughout the year. Unique tips for gardeners and cooks.

**AUGUST 20 – SAVING SEEDS:** Learn to gather, dry and store a variety of seeds from your own plants.

To August 31: Tuesday-Saturday 9-5, Sunday 12-5

### HOURS

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