

Topic: Harvest

## The Bounty of Harvest Time

*by Liz Gibbons*

Have you ever reflected on how spiritual gardening and farming are? In even the tiniest of seeds lies an embryo, a small dormant plant that begins to develop given the proper growing conditions. Seeds produce plants as diverse as a tomato, an avocado tree, or a carrot. How can anyone who plants a pot of flowers not see the miracle of life and not believe in a higher power that creates so many variations of beauty.

From my gardening experience I learned that you cannot hurry a harvest. There are no shortcuts. You prepare the soil, plant the seeds, fertilize, weed, water and watch as nature does its job over weeks or months. You may have to deal with poor soil, insect infestations, rabbits, drought, floods, hail storms, frost, extreme heat, or plant diseases. In autumn, with successfully have met any challenges, the fields and gardens hopefully overflow with the bounty from our spring planting. You finally enjoy the fruits of your labor as nature pours forth its treasures for our enjoyment or nourishment. I was fortunate this year to be blessed with an overabundance of tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and zucchini. Even with a beetle infestation of green bean and basil plants that many of us here at Windsor experienced, I was able to get an adequate harvest of those plants.

For most annual plants autumn marks the end of the growing season. While I mourn the passing of the long hours of summer daylight and dread the approaching cold winter, autumn provides a sense of sustenance and caring with its rich harvest. I can understand how harvest celebrations evolved as a means of gratitude for this abundance. It is a time to preserve your bounty and store it for the long winter months ahead. While harvest time is a time of change, it feels amicable, as if nature puts on a colorful show for our enjoyment as traditionally we rested from our labors and gave thanks for nature's bounty.