

# From the Archives of Demeter's Running

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## **Perspectives**

My father was an enthusiastic and very successful gardener. I remember putting seeds into the rich dark Louisiana delta soil and being rewarded seemingly immediately with lush growth and bountiful harvests. My sister, who still gardens in southern Louisiana, reminds me that while seeds do sprout (if they do not rot first) shortly thereafter the fledgling plants are attacked by every fungus and insect known to man. My father was a state university trained gardener; he was a convert to "better living through chemistry". I remember only the wonderful gardens and not the dozens of chemicals liberally used to produce those gardens of my childhood.

Mike and I are biologists by training. When we began to garden about 20 years ago, we wanted to use as few chemicals as we could to grow our own fresh vegetables. We wanted to work with nature rather than against it. We read organic gardening magazines and companion planting guides and started to experiment with growing salad greens and fresh vegetables each summer. I began growing berries only when we moved here to Potters Mills. Gardening for us is both a passive and an active sport. Selecting seeds and plants and planning the garden are relatively passive efforts; while turning the earth, mixing in compost and manure and planting are downright active and pleasantly exhausting in spring and early summer.

Mike was raised on a dairy farm in north central Indiana and has a farmer's perspective. I was raised in suburbia and have a gardener's perspective. The two are not always perfectly compatible; compromise is a daily practice. When we decided to start a very small agricultural venture here in the mountains of central Pennsylvania, we wanted to do something that is suited to the soil of the area, to work with nature rather than against it; we wanted to do something that we could share, hence the salad greens and raspberries that I knew that I could grow. We wanted to supply only the local market; we wanted to sell fresh food essentially to our neighbors. The size of the venture must be larger than a typical garden and hence the need for Mike's agricultural know how and practice.

So, what is our vision for this experiment? We want to sell raspberries, gooseberries, currents, and salad greens to our neighbors and we want to sell no product that we would not offer to our grandsons or to our guests. We are organic growers, committed to building healthy soil, for healthy berries and fresh salad greens to delight the palate while providing healthful vitamins and minerals for our customers. And we want to do it at a scale that is larger than a garden and smaller than most farms. We use all our resources including our perspectives to accomplish our vision.