

# 2010 at Golden Skep Farm

Dear Gardening Friends,

PHEW ! The 2009 gardening season was quite a challenge for most all of us. Not only was the economy “down in the dumps”, the weather did not cooperate as well. The summer of 2009 was unusually cool and wet (June was the second gloomiest month in 124 years) causing buds to drop, tomato blight and more slugs than usual. The unrelenting wet weather also watered down our honey bees’ pollen, making it necessary for the honey bees to work harder, making several trips to get the same amount of pollen they would in a normal year. Such conditions not only reduced honey yields, they also took a toll on the bees, bringing them to the brink of physical exhaustion and starvation.

Despite the adverse economic conditions and a 2009 summer that will be recorded as one of the coolest and soggiest, thanks to you our loyal customers who visited the farm and those that made purchases online – we are about to start our 11<sup>th</sup> year and we are very thankful for your continued support.

For the 2010 growing season, we are cautiously optimistic about an improving economy and as for the weather in the coming season, only time will tell. However, the Farmer’s Almanac and the National Weather Service are both predicting that much of the country will be hotter than normal this coming summer.

This coming season, we will once again be expanding our offerings of quality perennials for you to choose from and as always, providing you with personal advice to help you achieve a perennial garden that will be the envy of your neighborhood.

- ❖ We will be offering 18 new varieties of Tall Bearded Iris. During the early summer of 2009, we located a couple that specialize in bearded iris. In 2008, this couple won awards from the American Iris Society and in an International Iris Competition. Needless to say, their iris offerings are stunning. So, we placed a wholesale order with them and in August, we potted up the rhizomes and grew the plants in one of our greenhouses until early November when we put the beautiful looking plants “to bed” for the winter. Bearded iris are easy to grow in a garden but a bit more challenging when in pots that are to be overwintered. We are optimistic that the plants will do well and we will have some very nice bearded iris in bloom in June for you to choose from. If all goes well, this is a perennial that we plan to offer more extensively in the coming years.
- ❖ This year, the color photo centerfold of daylilies contains a selection of 35 out of a selection of 63 new varieties we are offering for 2010. (Don’t overlook August Frost, a near-white that blooms late in the season.) All of the varieties in the centerfolds are available in pots and most all will have two or more fans. We will also have encore varieties in pots such as Rosy Returns – one of the best rebloomers – and Lime Frost, a very nice late blooming green and white blend. For online orders, these plants can be shipped bare root.
- ❖ 36 new hosta varieties are included in the hosta pages of this catalog. New varieties are identified by all caps and underlined. In this year’s selection, you will find some very unusual and hard to find offerings such as ‘Empress Wu’ the largest hosta available commercially. This dark green hosta can grow to four feet tall and four feet wide - talk about a specimen plant! Then there is ‘Hacksaw’, deviating from traditional leaf shape, this small hosta displays long tapered light green leaves that are intensely rippled and lightly serrated on the leaf margins. How about ‘Goober’ – this 10” high by 24” wide dark green hosta has a dense habit

and dark green deeply puckered unruly leaves. These three unique hosta varieties are just a small sampling of our 2010 hosta offerings.

- ❖ To add instant color to your garden, we will have a nice selection of annual bedding plants and our Herb Hut will be chock-a-block full of your favorite culinary and fragrant herbs for cooking and decorative use in your garden.
- ❖ Each year, we expand our perennial offerings that can be used to complement your daylily and hosta plantings. New England hardy perennials such as peonies, iris, daisies, coneflowers, astilbe (when visiting the farm, ask to see our new astilbe garden we installed last fall), ferns and many more. We are constantly searching for hardy and unique perennials for your gardens that you won’t find at the big “box stores”.
- ❖ June 2 – 6 – Hosta Heaven Days – Large selection of plants to choose from and 10% off on all hosta.
- ❖ July 10 – The New England Daylily Society (NEDS) will be having a judged daylily exhibition at Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA. Daylilies at Golden Skep Farm will be in bloom at this time so stop by the Farm after the exhibition. We are only four miles from Tower Hill.
- ❖ July 17 – 18 – Annual Daylily Celebration will be held at the Farm from 10AM to 5PM each day – thousands of daylily plants will be at peak bloom for your viewing pleasure. Free refreshments each day and door prizes will be given away on July 18<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ This year, we shall be donating a portion of all sales from the Celebration to Berlin’s 1870 Town Hall (a non-profit community, civic and cultural facility).

This building housed the town offices until 2000. In 2007 the building, after extensive renovations, was formally re-dedicated and reopened. Today, the building is used for weekly events such as community coffee, private parties, meetings for town organizations, public theatre and dance, art and library classes and special music and learning programs. In 2008, 9,000 people attended functions in the 1870 Town Hall.

More information can be found about the 1870 Town Hall at [www.townofberlin.com](http://www.townofberlin.com).

**Organic Compost and Mulch:** 1.25 cubic feet bagged organic dehydrated cow manure will be available at the Farm. This natural soil amendment can be used with perennial and annual flowers and vegetables. We will also have 18 pound bags of organic Cocoa Shell Mulch that will help retard weeds and hold moisture in the ground. This mulch is a unique deep brown color and has a cocoa fragrance that will remind you of brownies baking in the oven. 50 lb. bags of pelletized lime to neutralize your acidic New England soil will also be available.

**New for 2010:** We will be carrying three Espoma Organic Traditions products:

**Flower Tone** is a complex blend of 100% natural organics to provide complete and balanced feeding. This product is specifically formulated to promote and prolong abundant bloom. – **4 lb. @ \$ 6.95 each**

**Bone Meal** is very good fertilizer for iris and fall bulbs as well as other perennials. – **5 lb. @ 9.25 each**

**Garden Lime** (pelletized) will aid in neutralizing typically acidic New England garden soil and thus provide for a better growing environment for most annuals and perennials. – **5 lb. @3.85 each**

The Espoma company was founded in 1929 and its Organic Traditions products are natural soil amendments that are approved for organic gardening. Comprised of 100% organic nutrients, these products are pure plant food with no fillers or sludge.

**Valuable Coupons** (located on the inside back cover) are offered for use during the 2010 season. Use them and **Save \$!**

**2010 HOURS:** From May 5 through September 6, we will be open  
Wednesday through Sunday and holiday Mondays  
from 10:00 AM through 5:00 PM.  
**NOW OPEN THRU LABOR DAY!**

Our goal has always been to provide our customers with quality plants, personal service and an enjoyable experience when visiting our Circa 1740 farmstead. Hope to see all of you at the Farm this season. Meanwhile, you may visit us on our website at [www.goldenskepfarm.com](http://www.goldenskepfarm.com) where you will find more photographs of the daylilies we have in our garden. You can also contact us at 978-838-2471 or via e-mail at [info@goldenskepfarm.com](mailto:info@goldenskepfarm.com).

Happy Gardening!

*Elaine & Carl*



**We accept American Express, MasterCard, Visa,  
personal checks and of course, cash.**

**ATTENTION GARDEN CLUBS, PHOTO AND ART CLUBS:** Looking for a new venue to hold your July or August meeting? Consider meeting at Golden Skep Farm because during these months, our gardens explode with color! Refreshments can be made available as well as a brief lecture on daylilies, hostas and beekeeping, if desired. Please contact us early in the season so proper arrangements can be made. On May 18, 2010, we are looking forward to hosting the West Boylston Garden Club at the Farm. During 2009, it was our great pleasure to have hosted the Hudson Garden Club, Future Farmers of America from the Bristol County Agricultural School and the Learning in Retirement organization from University of Lowell (they had a brown-bag lunch at the farm after hiking up Mount Pisgah (just up the road from the farm on Ball Hill Road) – not bad for retired folks!

**ATTENTION: MEMBERS of WCHS:** Upon presenting proof of membership to WCHS Tower Hill Botanic Garden at the time of purchase of any plant material, you will be entitled to a 10% discount. Offer expires September 6, 2010 and may not be combined with other offers.

**Gift Certificates:** Gift certificates are available at the Farm in denominations of \$25, \$50, \$75 and \$100. Makes a great gift for that gardening relative or friend. Gift Certificates may be purchased year round ~ just contact us by phone or e-mail when you need a birthday, Christmas or other "event" Certificate.

**Garden Shed:** Our own bee spit, a.k.a. honey, will be available (in limited supply due to 2009 weather conditions) for sale again this year in our garden shed along with other beeswax products, Elaine's beautiful lavender wands, plant markers, antique flower frogs, as well as antique daylily vases.

**HOW TO FIND US: From Rte 495 north or south:** take Exit 26 for Rte 62 west towards Berlin Center (approximately 2 miles)... at caution light, go left onto Linden Street. Farm is located approximately 1.5 miles from the Berlin Municipal Center... we are on the left hand side. **From Tower Hill Botanic Garden** in Boylston: Take a left exiting the gate and go just a little way and take your first left onto Linden Street... the Farm is approximately 4 miles away and will be on your right hand side immediately after Ball Hill Road. **From Solomon Pond Mall** (just 4 miles): Upon leaving Donald Lynch Boulevard, take a right at the lights; upon entering the rotary, take second right onto South Street; bear left onto South Street at the fork near the Berlin Post Office on the right. At the stop sign at the end of South Street, go left onto Linden Street; from this point, we are just 1.5 miles on the left hand side. (Look for our Farm sign)

**MAKE A DAY OF IT IN BERLIN!** In addition to Golden Skep Farm, our small and beautiful town of Berlin has several small businesses and farms that can make for a very pleasurable summer day spent in town after visiting Golden Skep. Some of the businesses are: **ART:** Silver Buffalo Gallery, Two Crows Studio; **CAFE:** Berlin Farms; **HAND CRAFTS:** North Brook Farm and Mill, Old Goat Folk Art, Wood'N'Things; **RIDING LESSONS:** Maplewood Farms, Orchard Hill Equestrian Center; **MARKET GARDEN STORES:** Berlin Farms, Balance Rock Farm, Great Oak Farm and Indian Head Farm; **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Martin Miller; **LUNCH AND/OR DINNER:** Lowe's Variety (General Store), Train Stop Restaurant; **MUSIC:** Mockingbird Music Company. Inquire about these businesses when at the farm – many of them are listed on our website.

Although not located within Berlin's town limits, the **Tower Hill Botanic Garden** is an amazing spot located just four miles from the Farm. \$2 off admission coupons to Tower Hill are available at the farm while supplies last. [www.towerhillbg.org](http://www.towerhillbg.org)

Again, not located within Berlin's town limits, **The Museum of Russian Icons** is a relatively new museum located about four miles from the farm in the town of Clinton. The museum is a place of deep reflection and inspiration with both centuries old as well as more contemporary icons. [www.museumofrussianicons.org](http://www.museumofrussianicons.org)

We will be glad to give you directions to these establishments when you are at the farm.



**If you plan to walk our daylily gardens, we recommend wearing  
comfortable walking shoes... no high heels or open shoes/sandals.**

*Golden Skep Farm*

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[www.goldenskepfarm.com](http://www.goldenskepfarm.com)