



Ursuline Sisters
of Mount Saint Joseph

"Around the Farm"

July 2015

Each month for the coming year, a different aspect of the Maple Mount, Kentucky, farm will be highlighted in this feature.

Bryan Dant starts his Monday, Wednesday and Fridays in July on his knees. He may be praying, but mostly he's collecting the fruit and vegetables from the Mount garden.

On July 15, he was picking tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini and yellow squash. Later in the day he was collecting a load of sweet corn from the acre planted nearby.

"We have 120 tomato plants," he said. The surprisingly rainy summer has caused some of the plants to die, including some squash. "The zucchini has not done well, it doesn't like a lot of water," he said. "We've had a ton of yellow squash."

His job is to load tomatoes and the vegetables in baskets and take them to the kitchen, putting them in the refrigerator and moving the previously stored produce so that it gets processed first.

The incredible volume of food grown in the garden is served to the sisters and staff each day in the kitchen, which greatly reduces the food the kitchen has to buy.

"The food bill goes down substantially in the summer months," said Melody Payne, food service manager.

The spring garden produced romaine lettuce, radishes and green onions. The summer garden has exhausted its supply of cabbage and beets, has produced some green beans along with all that Dant is collecting, and has green peppers and eggplant on the way.

"Last year we had 565 ears of corn," Payne said. "We still have three bags of farm corn

Continued



Bryan Dant puts a zucchini in his bucket on July 15. Heavy rains this summer have hurt the zucchini crop.

Right: Bryan fills three baskets of tomatoes to take to the kitchen.



Typically more than 500 ears of sweet corn are gathered from the farm and sisters at the Motherhouse help shuck it. Shucking, from left, are Sisters Clarita Browning, Ruth Gehres, Michael Ann Monaghan, Joseph Angela Boone, Alfreda Malone and Rebecca White.



Sister Joseph Angela Boone, left, says something to make Sister Susanne Bauer (center) and Sister Alfreda Malone (right) laugh as they shuck corn in the small dining room. Above right: Once corn is blanched in boiling water, kitchen staff cut it off the cob. Here, staff members Mary Lykins, left, and Tina Jackson cut corn on July 16.



Left: Sister Catherine Marie Lauterwasser takes corn cut from the cob and bags it for freezing on July 16.

from last year. I don't try to count the tomatoes. We slice them or juice them for the sisters."

The kitchen usually receives more than 20 containers of squash and what amounts to half a truckload of cabbage, Payne said.

Sweet corn usually isn't ready until August, but the crop is ready early, which caused the kitchen staff to scramble because it is their most labor-intensive job, Payne said. The corn is blanched in boiling water and put in an ice bath before being cut off the cob, bagged and frozen.

"Everyone comes in on their days off for two weeks just to cut corn," Payne said. "The day staff will work 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., to serve meals and then cut corn." Sisters help shuck the corn.

Squash started arriving the first week of May, and the kitchen staff will be working with food from the garden until September or October, when they receive butternut squash, Payne said.

The staff serves many of the fruits and vegetables from the garden fresh, but is wary of serving it so much that the sisters grow tired of it, Payne said. The kitchen staff is always working on new recipes for squash, and they tried fried cabbage for the first time this year.

"We gave 50 cucumbers to Sister Marcella Schrant to make pickles, and put the rest on the dinner line," Payne said. If anything gets close to going to waste,

Payne notifies Sister Amelia Stenger, who will donate the extra vegetables to some of the shelters in Owensboro.

"We have a lot of daily communication with the farm," Payne said. The menu is planned a week ahead, and then she and Mike Stelmach start discussing what produce will be ready for the following week.

"It's never the same day twice here," she said. ♣



Bryan finds some cucumbers hiding along the ground.