

Seed catalogs have begun to come, and our favorite—and the company from which we buy all of our seeds—makes me inclined to think ahead, skipping the whole winter season, even though winter is probably my favorite time of year.

In fact, it is partly because winter is a little slower-paced that I have time to look ahead to the needs of the garden. And that is a factor in my fondness for the months of November through February. March is a little more problematic, though. “Breakup” time is not nice. Snow, rain, slush, mud, and back to snow again. Now, however, with the heavy covering of white blanketing the landscape, my thoughts are divided between skiing through the woods and digging in the spring garden.

I was busy yesterday and did not take time to look at the Fedco seed catalog for 2017. Today is a different matter. It has lain on the desk over the weekend, and now, in spite of many tasks that await my attention, it is luring me.

I don’t even have to open the catalog to be intrigued. Fedco doesn’t use glossy paper and color pictures to draw us in to unrealistic dreams of the vegetables and flowers we could raise. The copy is always interesting and informative, but one must actually *read* the catalog to get the full impact of the descriptions.

The cover, though, is an attraction all by itself. Still black and white newsprint, it is filled with meaning expressed through art work that we Fedcoenthusiasts anticipate every year.

I have kept the Fedco catalogs for several years, and I took a look at the covers again today. I have my favorites. 2009 featured a drawing of a sturdy gardener’s hand, holding a tremendous leek. We love leeks, and there is a perfect example, rendered not in “living color,” but in an even more evocative black and white.

2012 shows a woman with her arms full of Mason jars of canned goods with more on shelves behind her. In bold black and white letters, we read the inspiration we need now in such troubling times: “Together We Can!” The double meaning of that slogan is not incidental, as making this world a better place involves both opposing the rightwing oligarchs that are now on the brink of governing our country and in also taking

responsibility for our food security—by growing as much as possible ourselves.

Last year's catalog cover was a wonderful depiction of the earth we cannot see. The gardener's foot plunges the fork into the fertile soil, and small pictures within the picture show us the microbes, the tremendous life that is too small for our eyes to discern. And "out of sight" should not mean "out of mind," as they far outnumber and outweigh us, and they are necessary for our very survival.

And then, there is this season's cover. A gorgeous superhero—Magic Molly—is sailing through the cosmos, a trowel in one hand and a weeder in the other. Swirling around her are vegetables, plant-planets, insects and stars. To quote the catalog's own description, she "roams the cosmos rooting out corporate tyranny and planting the seeds of freedom."

As I make out our seed order this winter and set forth on another season of growing food, I am going to channel Molly, and with every plant I nurture, I am going to plant a seed of freedom. For every Colorado potato beetle I pick from the plants, and for every tomato hornworm I give to the hens, I am going to think of how I can oppose that oligarchy that strives to ever increasingly take and consume more than its share.