



Orto Lessons Learned

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It started out as a strange season and it stayed that way. A cold wet spring, followed by a few short weeks of blasting heat, then cool and wet again.

To be honest, I thought it was something we did; but we heard from others in Umbria that they had the same problems. Tomatoes stopped tomato-ing, zucchinis would bud but never grow, the eggplants rotted before they were ready to be picked.

It is a lesson in humility. The ground around here is very fertile, everything grows, but not this year. The old timers talk about a time of famine in the area in the 1960's and I could never understand why. These are careful farmers, they know the ways of the land, so how could there have been famine? Now I have a glimpse of what may have happened.

Aside from humility, we also learned the following:

- 1) Carrots need much sandier, looser soil. We grew carrot knots.
- 2) Zucchini: next year they are going on the bern by the wall. I've never, ever seen such huge zucchini leaves. They grow ?em big in Italy!
- 3) Cucumbers can?t be planted anywhere near those cross pollenating zukes.
- 4) I want to grow ginger and garlic next year. And a bay tree.
- 5) I still have no idea what to do with the massive amount of grapes we have!
- 6) Anyone who sends me stinging nettle recipes *again* is going to get a gift of stinging nettles.

Our bitter greens are coming in, the leeks are nearly ready, there?s been a last burst of fruit from the tomato plants, so I can?t complain too much.

I?m already looking forward to next year?s garden.

Image (optional):

