Desotelle, too, will load her truck and take a fresh batch to the farmers market.

Historic Supply Line

In the Town of Brighton, about half-way between Desotelle and Hastings, Steve Tucker starts his days at 4 a.m.

By noon, the tractor has hummed through acres of potatoes.

"It's just my brother and I that run the farm," he said.

The two Tuckers grow a bumper crop, including eight kinds of potatoes and enough vegetables to supply six Adirondack resort restaurants.

"We grow just about everything in the seed catalog," Tucker chuckled.

But he's not kidding. In spring, the local chefs picked their produce by seeds.

"The chefs really appreciate it. I could gain 10 or 12 restaurants if I had the help."

Ten years ago, it was hard to sell fresh produce to area chefs, Tucker said.

"They smile when they see us coming now. It makes you feel good when you leave; they appreciate what we're doing."

Tucker's farm has produced in this way for generations, since the 1860s when great-great-Uncle Benjamin Hobart helped Adirondack hotel man Paul Smith build a dam on the St. Regis River.

When the dam was done, Ben Hobart wondered what to do next, Tucker said.

"Paul Smith said he needed someone to grow vegetables for his guides and his hotel, so Benjamin got the job."

The Tuckers turn those same acres today in much the same way.

"The harvest is our income, so we try to get as much harvest as possible," Tucker said, chuckling.

As the harvest ends, supply lines dwindle but for what is stored and packed in jars.

Come January, Tucker Taters will start shipping red, white and blue seed potatoes to major seed suppliers nationwide.

Then they find other work to do.

"In winter, we plow driveways," Tucker said.

Changing Seasons

Desotelle appreciates harvest time. After 30 years, she's learned what to watch for in a wild parade of bloom.

"It is the part of my job I enjoy the most. It's like a big treasure hunt. You've got to take your baskets and brushes to dust off the mushrooms and you go out to find the plants."

Lilac blooms warn of fiddleheads; ripe apples mean the hunt for grapes begins.

The annual procession winds down through October.

"In winter, I might find time to curl up and read," Desotelle said.

At Rivermede Farm, Hastings pushes the span of growing season using high tunnels _ 50-foot-long, plastic-covered greenhouses open on both ends.

One high tunnel is striped in colors with flowers to cut and sell.

"Brides melt when they step in here," Hastings said.

At 50 cents a stem, every few inches of this harvest is worth $10.

A hedgerow of yellow goldenrod outside leans against the plastic, as if it wants in.

In the next high tunnel, named because the tractor fits under it, one-story-tall tomato plants will produce fruit into October.

Next door, a new crop of raspberries will be ripe by late September _ raspberries thick as a man's thumb.

This winter, Hastings will plant in warm greenhouses in November and December adding a harvest time to winter months.

In a word, he said, harvest is pride.

"You know you're doing something good, something basic. Everybody has to eat."

Kim Smith Dedam is a staff writer in the Lake Placid Bureau of the Press-Republican. She grew up in Vermont and is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College with a degree in both English and Philosophy. She has five wonderful children and 43 High Peaks left to climb.