“In Nature, all things are in mutual interaction; the one is always working on the other. We must take the finer interactions into account. Otherwise we shall make no progress in certain domains of our farm work. Notably, we must observe those more intimate relationships of Nature when we are dealing with the life, together on the farm, of plant and animal. We must observe with intelligence the many-colored world of insects, hovering around the plant world during a certain season of the year. Moreover, we must learn to look with understanding at the birds. Remove these winged creatures and you would soon detect a kind of stunting of the vegetation.
The two things belong together; the winged animals and that which grows out of the Earth and into the air. Fundamentally, the one is unthinkable without the other. For in great Nature, everything is connected.
We discover that the bird world becomes harmful if it has not the coniferous forest, beside it. There upon our vision is still further sharpened, and a fresh relationship emerges. I mean the inner kinship of the mammals to the shrubs and bushes. By their mere presence they have a beneficial effect. See how the mammals love the shrubs and bushes. They soon begin to take what they need, which has a wonderfully regulating effect on their remaining fodder.
If there is near the farm and meadow rich in mushrooms it need not be vary large- the mushrooms begin akin to the bacteria and other parasitic creatures, will keep them away from the rest. So we must look for a due distribution of woof and forest, orchard and shrubbery, and meadowlands with their natural growth of mushrooms. This is the very essence of good farming. It is no true economy to exploit the surface of the earth to such an extent as to rid ourselves of all the things I have here mentioned in the hopes of increasing our crops.”
Insects, birds and mammals not only have positive effects on the farm. They can be a real nuisance. The point is to observe them carefully protect insects, birds and mammals, their ultimate contribution to the farm far exceeds their destructiveness. Their interaction mutually regulates one another. Nature balances it out.
I am part of Nature, and it’s natural for me to set a trap to catch a pesky groundhog, to put up a scarecrow, or to mow old bean plants to get rid of beetle larvae. But I realize that groundhogs, crows, and beetles are necessary and valuable in some way, even if I don’t know how. The gardens grow because of, not in spite of, mammals, birds and bugs. My job is to make sure the farm has a good balance of cropland, meadow/forest, and plenty of edges for everybody to hang out in.