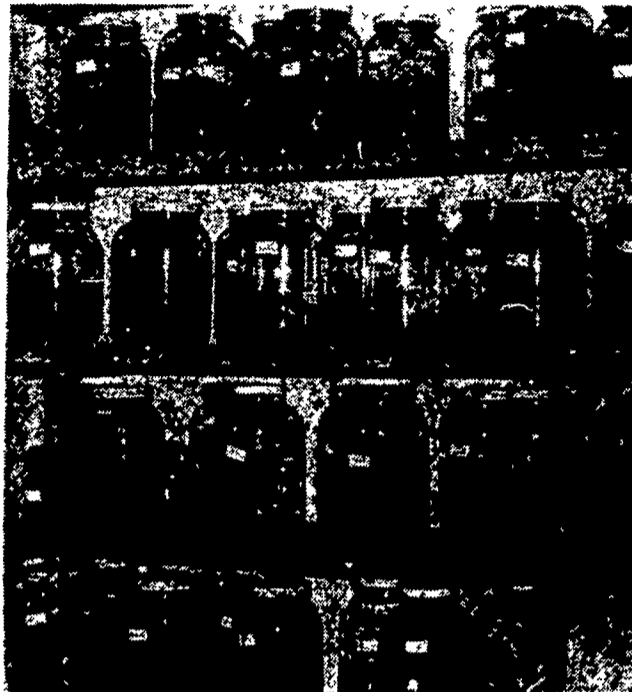




Things are just starting to turn green from Winter's dormancy, and most plants will be transplanted in the next few weeks. Mrs. Buckwalter and her whole family get involved with this project. Her sons built the stone wall in the background.

Homestead Notes



Mrs. Buckwalter scoops lavender into a glass decanter at the counter in her shop (above). Behind her are the packages of dried herbs she sells. She also keeps her herbs in view of the customers by putting them in gallon-sized jars (left).

Herbs are her business

By SUSAN KAUFFMAN
Feature Writer

Warm weather this week has brought many gardeners out of their homes and into the sunshine to plant peas, potatoes, spinach and lettuce.

Rebecca Buckwalter, Quarryville R 4, however, is busy with chives, dill, and sage as she continues to establish the working herb garden at her family's new homestead, having moved there last year from Eden Road, Lancaster. An avid herb enthusiast for many years, Mrs. Buckwalter had to leave many of her plants behind and is now energetically engaged in planting the new garden which will provide plants and many dried herbs she uses in her shop called Herb Craft.

Typical of the family's cooperative lifestyle, her sons, Marc, 6, and Timothy, 10, were busy this last weekend helping with their mother's enterprise by building a stone wall along the back of the herb garden. At the same time her husband, Willard, was doing carpentry work in the new shop in the basement of their home.

"My husband always does the heavy work in the garden like digging and roto-tilling and putting in the topsoil," Mrs. Buckwalter explains.

"I do the planting. We mulch with fine wood chips to reduce weeding, then I care for the plants. You really have to work with them through all the seasons because they are used at different growing stages for different things," she notes.

"This is really a family project," Mrs. Buckwalter continues. "Last year we went to Long Park during the Bicentennial exhibition of crafts. The boys dressed in colonial costumes just as I did. They take a lot of interest in the herbs and my husband really helps out a lot. Sometimes in the Summer I am so busy with the shop, the mail orders, and the garden that I haven't even thought of what I'm going to have for supper when he arrives home. He steps right in and gets something started anyway."

What attraction is there about these herbs that keeps the Willard Buckwalter family so well occupied?

In answer to this query, this herb enthusiast said she became interested in working with them when a neighbor gave her plant slips several years ago.

"It really grows on you!" she says by way of explaining her pursuit with these innocent looking plants.

"I grew tired of sending so far away for supplies that I decided to establish a wholesale and retail business at our home. I had the shop at Eden Road for eight years. When we moved here last year we had so much to do with moving into our newly built home that we didn't know where to begin," she noted.

"It takes at least two years to establish an herb garden," she explained.

Besides working on her own garden she is presently creating one at Rockford. Visitors there this Summer will see the garden developing in front of the stone wall of the

barn. Trying to recreate the garden of years ago, Mrs. Buckwalter plans to establish three sections according to use: fragrance and beauty, medicinal, and culinary.

In addition to actually growing many herbal plants, Mrs. Buckwalter finds time and energy to share her knowledge of herbs and their uses to PTA's, women's groups, schools, and at various community activities such as the Bicentennial celebration at Long Park and the Holly Trail crafts display at Linden Hall last December.

Remembering an all-day project at Elizabeth Martin Elementary School last year during the school's "Culture Corner" program, Mrs. Buckwalter said, "The kids were fantastic. They were so interested in the herbs I had on display and the information I had to tell them about Pioneer's use of herbs. The children were really curious and appreciative."

Mrs. Buckwalter's extensive knowledge of herbs ranges from the interesting history of many herbs, herbs mentioned in the Bible, herbs used in teas, herbs used specifically for dyeing materials, pioneers' uses of herbs, culinary uses, growing of herbs, and the making of potpourri from dried herbs.

"Just this last year I had slides made from pictures I had taken over the last few years. In Winter, I can now show slides much more effectively than carry potted plants back and forth," she explained. "During our vacations we travel and of course stop at many sites which have herb gardens! There is always so much more for me to learn about them. There is no end to it!" she continued.

Recipe themes for 'Home on the Range'

APRIL	
23	"Italian Week" Deadline April 13
30	"Crock Pot Cookery" Deadline April 20
MAY	
7	"Low Cal Meats" Deadline April 27
14	"Easy on the Waistline Desserts" Deadline May 4
21	"Conscience - easing Vegetables" Deadline May 11
28	"Berry Desserts" Deadline May 18

Samples of her beautifully handmade wares are strawberry and linen closet sachets. A strawberry sachet is a rose-lavendar scented potpourri fashioned into a strawberry shape and made from red polka-dot material trimmed with green felt leaves. The linen closet sachet is an eight-inch-by 11 inch sachet complete with wide, white eyellet trim. It has an inner lining with pockets to keep the contents from falling into the bottom when hung upright.

She also creates moth chasers. A moth chaser is a four-inch round sachet from a small print cotton material with rickrack trim and a loop for hanging. It contains a potpourri which repels moths.

Well aware of the fun one has making something by oneself, Mrs. Buckwalter offers a number of craft kits using herbs. One is a holiday spice cone kit which contains everything needed to make a Christmas tree ornament or a table favor - a five to seven inch pine cone and lots of different spices which are to be glued onto the scales. The crafts person must supply the glue.

Mrs. Buckwalter also stocks oils which she purchases to resell. "It takes 125 pounds of leaves to make one ounce of oil," she explains. "It would be impossible for me to grow the quantities necessary for that!" The herbal oils are used as fixitives in potpourri, as scents in wax for candle making, and as a bath oils.

Just a sample of the many herbs and their interesting histories, uses, and names are shared here from a publication by Mrs. Buckwalter with her permission. She cautions that medicinal prescription of herbs is illegal and she simply relates the traditional use rather than actually prescribing something in particular.

Angelica - a member of the parsley family. Stems are candied for confectionery. Powdered seeds may be used as vanilla substitute.

Basil - plant with tomatoes to enhance their taste and deter tomato worms and flies.

Bay leaves - used by Greeks in making wreaths to crown Olympic heroes, Repels silverfish in books.

Caraway seeds - reputed to strengthen memory. Cloves-from Madagascar-used in spiced drinks, pickled fruits.

Coriander seeds - ingredient in a love potion. Savory - slightly peppery taste; excellent seasoning for people on a salt-free diet.

Southern Wood - nicknamed "Lad's Love"-promotes growth of beards in youth. Used to repel moths. Also burned as incense to destroy cooking odors in the house.

Tansy - slightly bitter taste. Ant repellent. Costmary - mainly to scent linens. Called Bible-leaf, was used as page markers.

Santolina - (Lavendar-cotton) deters moths. Burnet - brings taste of cucumber to salads or wine cup. Nasturtiums - flower, buds, stems and young leaves - eaten in salads.

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