## My Thoughts And welcome to them

By JOANNE SPAHR
Associate Editor

Some people have ceramic elephants, marble balls on pedestals, or even fancy lamp posts decked out in flowers to accent their well manicured lawns, but on the farm, we have grape arbors adorning the yard (which I sometimes mow, so at those times it's more scraggly than well manicured).

Personally, I like our choice of paraphenalia

When I was a small child, all three of the rather large pole supports were dressed to the hilt with grape vines. And, every Fall they dangled the luscious, juicy purple grapes, which I used to squeeze between my thumb and forefinger to propel the gelled green, sweet interior into my mouth. There's nothing that can spoil an appetite better than sweet purple grapes just before dinner.

The time did come, however, when the stalks got just too old to keep producing the lavender scrumptious jewels, and the arbors slowly defoliated to show the heavy wire supports underneath. But, that didn't daunt my spirits any. Just like a child who finds her dream castle in a deserted, run down old "ghost house," I made the culinary misfortune into a rare find.

Although I never had all the gymnastic equipment like my town friends, I made up for it with the arbors, on which I learned to "skin the cat" and climb around. It was great - when it came to the parallel bars in gym class, I led the way.

Then came my downfall. Mother decided that she was going to have "something just for pretty" growing on the arbor, and planted a wisteria stalk. At first, it only kept me from climbing around on one end, but then it started to take over, and eventually pushed me right off the arbor. Fortunately, my interest in skinning the cat waned at the same time the wisteria got greedy for the whole structure so we were all happy.

And today, as I look at the peaceful, grapelike bunches of flowers, and smell their sweet calming scent, I'm more than glad that I had to give up the grape arbor to the wisteria. Each May, their beauty signals the coming of a lovely summer-something a ceramic elephant could never do.

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