



On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp

There's long been a theory that the longer a man and wife are married, the more they resemble one another. A group of researchers recently issued a news release disagreeing with that widespread belief.

Well, I'm not so sure. Fact is, the farmer and I seem to be growing more alike with the rapidly passing years.

Once, I would have fallen into despair over the manure-caked jeans and piles of boots that seemed to materialize whenever he passed near the house.

Now, my denims lay in piles at the foot of the washing machine with the same crusty buildup and clinging barn odor. And I confess to having two pairs of shoes — all falling apart rapidly — gracing the basement porch.

Our hands constitute a manicurist's nightmare. Gates, nails, splinters, grease, detergents, mechanical upkeep and daily work with cows take

their toll, leaving us with similarly battered mitts.

An identical note of aggravation flows from our voiceboxes simultaneously when Janet slips back out of her stall for the third time or the heifers clear the fence again.

His eyes are blue and mine are greenish, but they turn the same shade of streaked bloodshot pink after late night meetings, seemingly endless bookwork or a difficult midnight calf delivery.

The same look of despair crosses both our faces when we try to reckon the monthly milk check to the towering stack of bills wanting paid.

Look-alike grins of satisfaction and thankfulness appear, too, when we've safely delivered a healthy, heifer calf.

And, to top it off, I'm learning to copy his snore. Or so he says. You couldn't prove it by me.

But if so, at least I have the very best, most expert teacher around.

Don't bury your onions

LITITZ — Gardeners often regard the onion as a root crop. Actually, the onion bulb is 95% leaf tissue. The bulb has a water-thin stem, referred to as a "stem plate" because it is flat, much like a dinner plate. Roots grow downward from this compressed stem. The rest of the onion bulb is composed of the thickened bases of the leaves.

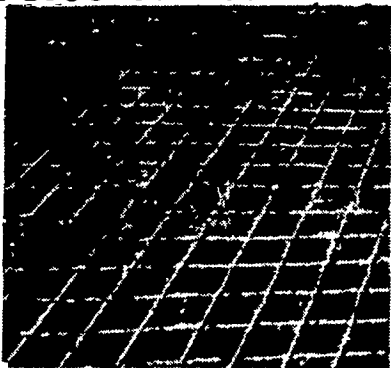
Gardeners frequently make the

mistake of mounding soil over the onion bulb. When this is done, the bulb stops enlarging and decay organisms often invade the bulb tissue.

The bulb must continue to be exposed to the sun; gardeners are advised to leave about two-thirds of the bulb exposed. For true root crops, such as carrots, the tops should be covered with soil.

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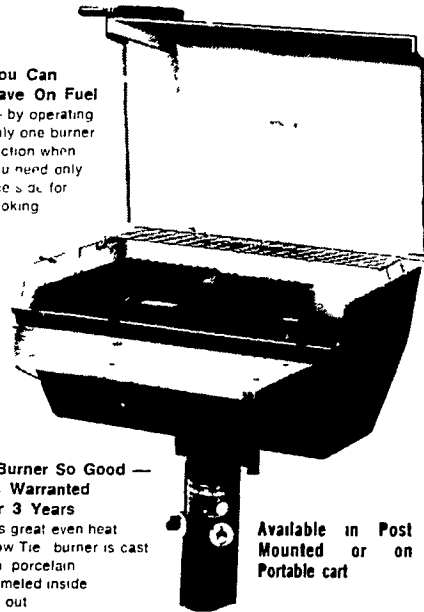
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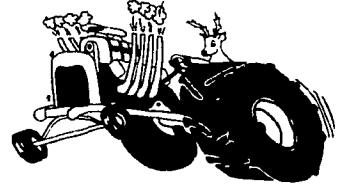
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