

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Giant vegetables are suddenly in vogue for any gardener eyeing York Fair's "record setting" contest for this fall. But in the world of haute cuisine, "big" is out and "small" is in.

Not just small, mind you, but baby vegetables are what have become a fad. They seem to have escaped from a long time run in popularity in French cooking to take the U.S. restaurant business by storm.

At five bucks or so per pound, don't look for them at your favorite fast food salad bar, though.

What we're talking about here are embryonic squash. Infant eggplants. Cute, it'sy-bitsy carrots.

Scalloped squash the size of a quarter, or pinky-finger sized zucchini. Tiny baby beets that could masquerade as marbles.

Frankly, I don't know where they grow these mini gourmet garnishes, but it isn't in any garden I've ever seen.

Have you, personally, ever known a zucchini that wasn't out to beat the neighborhood record for size? Those things are almost born the size of over-the-hill cucumbers, then mature in a day's time hiding under those umbrella leaves into something resembling green baseball bats.

And for all their feminine daintiness, the scalloped white

cousins are equally adept at blowing up to balloon size, generally while you're at the other side of the patch venting your rage at tomatoes that shun turning red.

Beets are another story. Those rascals have to be peeled. Show me any cook with a compulsion to stand and peel marble-sized beets and I'll show you a cook with a self-punishment complex that Freud himself couldn't explain.

I remember being astounded while visiting Europe several years ago to learn that tiny, white potatoes are viewed as a prized dish. Peeled, boiled, glazed with butter and brown sugar, common white potatoes at almost microscopic size are a true delicacy.

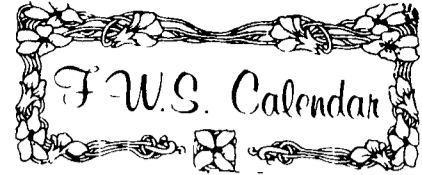
In fact, European potato growers actually spray their fields to kill the plants before the underground tubers get much size, to hit that high-bucks, tiny-potato market.

No wonder our foremothers were anxious to emigrate to the New World, I figure, poking through the potato supply for the largest spuds to peel for supper.

Think about it. In order to harvest most of these "gourmet" veggies at their cute, infant stage, it would practically take a staff of round-the-clock patrols, peeking under leaves every fifteen minutes or so, then snatching the fledgling

foods off the stalk immediately. Hence the high cost — 24-hour patrols don't come cheap.

At five bucks per pound for squash, this household will stick to eating our baseball bats.



**Saturday, July 21**  
Lancaster Society 12 meets for a program on "The Cookie Story" by Pat Grube.

**Sunday, July 22**  
Lancaster Society 3 meets for a family picnic at Sunny Craft Farm at 12:30 p.m. Bring your own place setting, salad and dessert.

**Thursday, July 26**  
Lancaster Society 11 meets for a

program on safety and the care of the sick by Mrs. Dorothy Adstitt at Calvary Independent Church.

**Saturday, July 28**  
Lancaster Society 5 takes bus trip to Totem Pole Playhouse and dinner at Hickory Bridge Farm. Husbands are invited.

Lancaster Society 4 meets at the home of Ann Nolt at 5:30 p.m. Bring covered dish, eating utensils and lawn chair.

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