


**On being
a farm wife
- And other
hazards**



Joyce Bupp

Dead. Dull brown, the branch breaks free of the bush with a sharp snap.

It's located at an exposed corner of the house, this bush that bears the brunt of icy winter winds. They whip around the northeast corner, fierce, cold, biting. Wrapping around the bush are concrete walls, forming an extended porch and steps to the lower yard. Flanking a fourth side of the bush is a fuel tank of generic shape and color.

Trimmed? Oh, sure it gets trimmed. But not in your fancy topiary design; not even a pleasantly-rounded landscaping shape.

Uh, uh. This functional bit of foliage draws its shape from people ripping up the steps and cutting the corner, bruising the tender stems that find courage to venture out over the steps. Further shaping comes from odd bits and pieces borrowed to fill gaps in casual summertime flower arrangements. Maple trees con-

stantly steal moisture from its roots, forcing the bush to fight an ongoing battle for life-giving water.

Dead? No. And that's the amazing part.

Ignored, abused, misshapen, thirsty, it spends the winter in apparent lifelessness. Seemingly useless.

Then, one sunny day, with a hint of spring in the air, I break off a couple of brown, barren-looking whips of branch. Even the tiny bud bumps on the stem show no vigor.

And then, on a bright windowsill in an old glass jar, the magic begins to work.

As if in response to the gentle touch of caring, the buds begin overnight to swell. In a day or two, spots of yellow color begin to peek from the bud tips. Daily, they open wider, until cheery golden stars cover the length of the branch.

Eventually, the bright blooms of the forsythia will fade and tiny green leaflets begin to form. With a bit of luck, the part of the branch in

the water of the old jar will begin pushing out healthy, white roots. And new life has begun.

Thus it is with Easter. What had seemed so lifeless, so barren, so . . . dead, has been transformed. What was colorless and sad now offers a new beginning. A new life. Magic? No. Just love.

A blessed and beautiful Easter to you and yours.

Correction

Due to a typographical error, the percentage of fat in milk was listed incorrectly as 35 percent in a National Nutrition Month story on last week's


family living page. It should have read 3.5 percent. Lancaster Farming regrets this error.

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