

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Ah, Spring. That glorious time of year when birds sing their hearts out, a young man's fancy turns to love, and you can tell someone to go fly a kite and not get in hot water over it.

Spring. When daffodils bloom, tadpoles come to life, and farmers plow furrows in fields and into their wives' foreheads as they try to figure out when the men might show up for a meal.

Spring. When any woman worthy of the title is supposed to swoon over thoughts of tearing into every room of the house, ripping it apart, moving it around, hanging it out, dusting it off, and maybe even painting it up.

Forget it! While this farm wife does do windows (at least once a year whether they need it or not), she doesn't Spring Houseclean. Does anyone Spring Houseclean anymore?

One part of Spring Housecleaning I do miss - it's a perfect excuse to change the

location of furniture around in a room. But, remodeling over the years has made the small-to-begin-with rooms of our farmhouse awash in doorways, windows, and electrical outlets, placed at all sorts of inconvenient spots. And there is only one way in which the present furniture can be fit - I know, because I've tried other ways.

Still, breathes there a woman anywhere who doesn't occasionally have a yen to move things around, give the place a fresh look, update and improve on the home environment? Being locked into a pattern with built-in cupboards and fits-just-so furniture, leaves only one outlet around here for creative "environmental restructuring."

Outside. Which suits the gardener in me just super. Can't move furniture? Move plants.

For years, I've coveted a spot for growing roses. One spot in the border is too wet and stands in

puddles during the spring rains. Another part is good for little more than cactus culture. And where I've been trying to grow a few of the thorny bushes, the cows occasionally sneak out of the barn and dance the tango over them.

Finally, I think I've located a suitable place for roses. If the pigs can be kept out of it when they venture out on their impromptu forays.

Of course, moving the roses leaves a bare spot. A sort of spot to "move the furniture." So to speak.

Now the iris spend half their lives gasping for air for their roots, due to springs which turned up after the hurricanes of the '70s, and invasive grass pursuing a "right to life" policy. Where it was too shallow for roses, will the iris find happiness?

And do heifers relish iris with the same lust they have for gobbling daylily tops? If daylilies were toxic, the marauding band of nibblers that spent one recent night investigating the backyard would be but a memory.

Can a forsythia be coaxed to glow yellow and hide an ugly corner between the fuel tank and old block wall? Will zebra grass survive in the shady desert of aggressive maple tops and roots? If

I dig it up and move it, then what's best to move into that vacant corner?

Where can I go with two dozen rooted pussywillow branches just pleading for the chance to become a permanent part of the landscape? Or the raspberries that will

have to relocate to make room for a sod waterway? And will the electric co-op de-energize us if I borrow a small portion of their pole for a clematis?

Spring Housecleaning? In the house?

Who needs it?

Centre County 4-H Sheep Club

Members of the Centre County 4-H Sheep Club met April 2 at the county Extension office.

Martha Hartle, chairman of cookie sales, reported that cookie orders are due April 19th and that the cookies will cost \$1.75 this year.

The group also discussed weigh-ins for the market lamb project. Lambs will be weighed May 31 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Paul Hartle Farm. Lambs may not weigh over 80 pounds at the initial weighing and must weigh at least 85 pounds to be sold at the Grange Fair.


The group elected the following officers for the coming year: Craig

Fleck, president; Martha Hartle, vice president; Cinnamon Rudy, secretary; Gary Rossman, treasurer; Kory Rudy, historian; Joyce Harpster, news reporter; and Amy Clair and Kevin Barger, game leaders.

During the election Craig Fleck and Joyce Harpster conducted a game on the breeds of sheep.

The next meeting will be held May 7 at 8 p.m. at the Centre County Extension office; the program will be a speaker on feeding market lambs.

Anyone interested in joining the club should contact Paul Hartle at 355-3149 or Shirley and Harold Harpster at 466-6669.



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