

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



January was just too early to worry about it.

February would have been ideal. But the string of snowy weekends and continuing cold weather just didn't set the mood for getting the job done. A couple of comparative lists compiled while snuggled in a sleeping bag on an easy chair next to the woodstove at the mountain cabin was as close as it got.

And then the lists laid here, forgotten.

It took a balmy day in early March to jolt the attention. Spring was a mere few days away — and not one seed catalog order had gone into the mail.

True, a whole plastic container of assorted seed packet leftovers from prior seasons waits in cold storage in a corner of the base-

ment. But not a single Early Girl tomato seed could be found in the collection.

Tomatoes are a backbone staple of our summertime diet, the earlier in the season, the better. And the point of growing an early tomato variety is to have early eating - not likely when the seeds aren't even ordered by mid-March.

I hustled off to the neighborhood garden center that afternoon, by-passing the catalogs to carry home a pack of Early Girl seeds. Along with a length of lovely lavender-colored paper twist, destined to replace the Christmas red on the front door grapevine wreath with something more Easter-like.

Atmosphere of the garden center triggered a megacase of spring-fever. The rest of the afternoon was spent in the greenhouse, re-

potting young geraniums already opening cheery red and pink blooms and calendulas sporting bright orange daisy-blossoms.

Milking time arrived before cuttings had been made from last year's snapdragon plants wintered over, or the budding forget-me-nots moved into larger pots. And there was still that potting soil to sterilize for those tomato seeds. Tomorrow.

Then Mother Nature smacked us procrastinators with the Blizzard of '93.

Plans to sterilize soil got buried under 18 inches of snow blown around by 50 mph. winds, cows calving at the peak of the blizzard, and ongoing concerns that the electricity continue flowing and the milk truck make it through.

(A heartfelt personal thanks to everyone, everywhere, who helped keep milk trucks moving, electricity flowing, and plowed open drifted rural roads.)

Anyway, the snow piled around the greenhouse helped insulate it against the bitter weather while we tackled farm chores made more complicated by the storm. No use to dig it out.

Days later, when sunshine and balmy breezes turned drifts to slush, a phone conversation with a friend jolted my memory. All her garden seedlings already had several leaves.

That did it.

Minutes later, pots filled with

potting soil went into the microwave. And after milking, the cooled, sterilized, mini-seedbeds were planted with two varieties each of tomatoes and marigolds and moved onto the top of the water heater to germinate in the gently-warm location.

By morning, a seed catalog order was tallied and ready for mailing. The immediate urgency, however, had diminished, since the bulk of the order was for seeds,

plants, bulbs and supplies not needed until outside planting time.

Since a foot of compacting snow covered the garden — and a small spring has been known to gurgle through the garden during really wet years anyway — my procrastination guilt has resided a bit.

But, there may be no Early Girls this year.

Just Slightly Late Girls.

## Lancaster Foundation Scholarships Available

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — One of the objectives of the Lancaster County Farm and Home Foundation is to encourage the higher education of the youth of Lancaster County. In this respect, the Foundation is announcing the offering of scholarship awards in 1993 in the fields of agriculture and home economics.

Each scholarship award will be in the amount of \$1,000 and may be used to help defray tuition, fees, or room and board expenses at any accredited educational institution, which offers a course of study in Agriculture or Home Economics.

The Farm and Home Foundation Scholarships are made available through the earnings of an Irrevocable Trust Fund set up by the late Elmer L. Esbenshade, one of the founders of the Lancaster County Farm and Home Founda-

tion. The income from this trust fund will be offered annually in the form of educational scholarships through the Farm and Home Foundation.

Scholarship applications are available from senior guidance counselors, vocational agriculture and home economics teachers in all school districts in Lancaster County.

Interested youth are urged to contact either their senior guidance counselor, vocational agriculture or home economics teacher for details and an application blank. Additional information is also available from John H. Schwartz, chairman of the Scholarship Committee, 1383 Arcadia Road, Room 1, Lancaster, PA 17601 (phone 394-6851). Application forms are due to Schwartz by April 15, 1993.

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