

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



When it comes to being cheerful-looking, few things can beat the sunflower.

Over the years, plant breeders have developed mammoth sunflowers that stretch eight feet tall, grow heads a foot across, and — in our garden, anyway — act like radar beams for every finch in the neighborhood.

Hybridists have also bred sunflowers in the more-decorative direction, which develop a much more bushy style of lots of smaller, cutting-type flowers. We'll list that as a possible experiment on next year's list already started of "garden - '94."

Then there are sunflowers that just do their own thing. Thanks to the messy eating habits of our birdfeeder regulars, volunteer sunflower plants pop up in all sorts of interesting spots around the farm — the garden, the flower beds, the road bank, the middle of the dirt lane to the meadow.

This year's Sunflower Volunteer of the Year award goes to a determined little seed that somehow wedged itself into a tiny crack between the concrete-block outside wall of the dairy barn and the asphalt pavement that runs against the edge of the wall at the front entrance. How it ever got there is a mystery, though some bird may have poked it in the crack for storage.

Not only did it germinate there, this feisty plant has grown a slender stem about 18 inches tall, which does a sort of curve out toward the sunlight from the shade of the barn wall. And then it opened a three-inch flower head with a row of single, brilliant yellow petals around the outside of the small seed-producing center.

It just looks like a bright-yellow Smiley Face growing outside the dairy barn. I may take to watering

it because its cheerful sunniness in such an unlikely spot is such an "upper."

Ten feet or so away, in the flower border, a small army of plant volunteers were commanded several weeks ago and marched into a row along the border way on the opposite side of the lawn. Though I haven't started calendula seed for several years, bright yellow and orange descendants of the originals reseed each season.

This year's crop of calendula volunteers was a bumper one; I transplanted nearly 80 seedlings to edge the rose bed. A soaking rain for a few days set'em off on a growth spurt and nearly every seedling "took." Though there was no way to tell which were yellow and which were orange, random planting spaced the colors fairly well. Now full, bushy and covered with continuous blooms, the bright "accidental" border is as colorful than any I've ever purposely planned.

Sometimes even the planned plantings turn into surprises.

Though I've not grown lima beans for about 10 years, it seemed a good way to utilize a spare, empty row left when most of the vegetable garden had been planted. Stopping by a local garden center, I picked up a pack of the only variety of lima bean seed had on hand. Fordhood 242 sounded like a winner when I looked it up in the Burpee catalog, a heavy yielder, bush lima.

"Are these what I think they are?" I asked The Farmer recently, pointing out the lima beans, unexpected growth pattern. His conclusion agreed with mine about the long, vining tendrils these bean plants were sending out.

Pole lima beans were not on the

planned garden agenda. Then I remembered the metal fence stakes and recycled plastic net wrap from hay bales that our son had erected in the garden last year for the climbing Sugar Snap peas.

Those posts were stored only a few feet from the garden, and two lengths of net wrap which had discouraged the robins from stealing all our strawberries were currently unused. With The Farmer's help

to pound in the stakes, the pole lima trellis was in place in just a few minutes.

If you planted pole limas that aren't, guess where your seed got to....



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Central Region Fashion

(Continued from Page B2) and sharpening decision-making, and testing their knowledge of equipment and notions." She said, "The most important knowledge is how to purchase things," adding "what it is made from determines how you will take care of it."

Jesse Kogler, 14, from Centre Hall, Centre Co., was the only male winner with his flannel-lined, oversized, drawstring jacket. Made from dockcloth and cordu-

nour, Bedford, Co.; Doris Krumenacker, Blair Co., the registration chairman; Melissa Zimmerman, extension summer assistant in Elk Co.; Beth Van Horn, Centre Co., assistant to the regional director and chairman of the judging committee, and Sandy Hall, Centre Co.; Norma Lash, Fulton Co.; Debra Gregory, Huntingdon Co.; Jane Beightol, Mifflin Co., tally chairman and Jane Mecum, Perry Co.

roy, with big patch pockets, the jacket was of level 7 construction.

Kogler said that last year he couldn't go to states because he was a junior. He very much wanted a chance to go to the state fashion revue. Kogler says he plans to become a corporate lawyer one day.

Besides Kieffer and Covert, other extension agents working to make the central 4-H Fashion Revue a success were Janice Stoud-



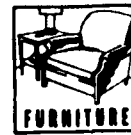
Standing on the dais at the Altoona Ramada Inn's large meeting room is the group of junior winners in the central-region 4-H Fashion Revue. Eleven counties of the 17, had 4-H'ers participating.

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