

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



As it has for goodness knows how many years, the back basement of our old farmhouse is once again being stockpiled against impending winter.

Winter? Wiping perspiration from my hot face, steam pouring up from the bubbling kettle at my elbow, the thought of winter brings a refreshingly welcome image. Mental pictures of pine boughs sagging under a burden of fresh, white snow, of cold, crisp, moonlit nights, of little kids sledding down the hills flip through my sweaty head.

In the intense, brain-numbing humidity of late summer, it's easy to forget skidded cars, stalled motors, frozen pipes of the shivery season.

Is there some rule that decrees that the day you set out to "put up" summer produce must be one of those days that will set records for temperature and humidity highs? Or does it just feel that way as one swishes jars in hot, soapy water, sterilizes more canning lids and

wonders where to begin cleaning up the mess that encompasses all corners of the kitchen in order to get done in time for evening milking chores.

"I am NOT canning one more jar of tomatoes," I declare to The Farmer that evening. "That does it."

And then am hit smack on the conscience with a heavy-duty layer of guilt at my thankless complaining over this abundance of fresh food.

With our local abundance of retail farm outlets and supermarkets overflowing with foodstuffs from literally around the world, why go to the hassle of "putting up" your own? Often, home-preserved or home-frozen is really less cost-effective than purchasing a similar food, especially in bulk on or sale.

But, later, surveying the days accomplishment of two-dozen jars of tomatoes ready for stashing on the shelves in the basement, I am reminded of a season a few years ago when a smaller planting and

devastating drought wiped out our usual bumper crop. For the next year, canned tomatoes and tomato paste had to be bought for the many dishes in which I use it.

It just wasn't the same as having our home canned ones.

That memory renewed my enthusiasm — at least a few days later — for continuing the quest to squirrel away just a little more of the season's goodness. Summer apples on an old tree near the machine shop were falling right and left, being enjoyed by only the plentiful bees and some noisy, fruit-loving birds. All that good potential applesauce falling by the roadside nags at my thrifty nature.

In our family, preserving foods is a multi-generation tradition. Our mothers both still do some home canning, and have ever since we can remember. A delicious holiday gift last year from our daughter was homemade jelly of fruit she'd picked on Idaho trees, and hand-carried to us across the country. She lugged along several jars of my homemade applebutter along back.

Many of our recipes are hand-me-down traditions. Those for applebutter and sweet seven-day-pickles were favorites of The Farmer's grandmother. Applesauce is canned after the tradition of my Mom. Using our pink-streaked, sweet summer apples, no more "additives" than a little vanilla and cinnamon are usually necessary.

So, with renewed gratitude, I pick yet a few more of tomatoes from the tangled vines. Take note that the tiny juice grapes have turned blue. Lima beans hang fat and heavy in their leafy row. And the butternut squash promise a

plentiful yield.

On the grocery list go Sure-Jell and sugar, canning jar lids and

freezer bags.

There's a lot of "putting up" to do yet before winter.

## Hells Canyon

(Continued from Page B2) notes, pointing out some of the canyon's unique strain of six-toed cats. "They're always a favorite of the kids that come through."

A second section of the museum is restored as part of the old bunkhouse might have looked, including woodstove and old agriculture-related magazines. The museum's third display area focuses on canyon residents of an earlier time, Indian tribes who sought out the canyon's abundant wildlife and tempered winter climate.

Archeological digs have traced canyon habitation to at least 7,200 years ago. Stone tools, remains of hunting implements, and displays of native plants used by the Indians for food trace the life of these earlier inhabitants. Much of what little is known of the early tribes has been carefully gleaned from excavating the remains of a few pit houses. A short hike up into the mountains which surround Kirkwood allows visitors to view remains in the brushy grass of the shallow, bowl-shaped depressions in the ground over which pit house roofs were constructed.

Forest Service rangers and volunteers who help care for the ranch and museum live in the small frame house built early in the century. The Jordans added the present basement kitchen and dining area and an open-air sleeping porch. Len Jordan also devised for his family the canyon's first bathtub, a vessel of poured concrete still in use today.

The small bathtub, made famous in Grace Jordan's book and related daily as favorite tale of jet-

boat and raft guides, is built through a wall. Part of the tub is in the tiny bathroom, the other part projects into the adjoining porch, beneath a hand sink for washing up. That way, the plumbing pipes serve both sink and tub.

"A lot of people ask to see the tub," A.J. says of the facility in the ranch's private quarters, adding that visitors are amazed that it's still in regular use.

Among the guests the couple welcomed through the past several weeks were one of the Jordan sons, who shared fascinating stories with them of the childhood years he spent growing up in the canyon's isolation. They also hosted Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus and a party of Forest Service personnel to a casual luncheon on the ranch lawn in mid-July as a wrap-up of his tour of the recreation area.

The Bachas' summer stay at Kirkwood ended recently when they returned to Portland, Oregon; Patty is a teacher at Portland Community College and A.J. will pursue graduate studies at Multnomah Bible College. Forest Service caretakers and volunteers keep Kirkwood open year-round for visitors. Changing seasons bring hunters, anglers seeking the Snake's popular steelhead and sturgeon fishing, while snow in the higher elevations beckons cold-weather campers and cross-country skiers.

Further information on Hell's Canyon, its history and recreational offerings is available by contacting the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Headquarters, Rt. 1, Box 270A, Enterprise, Oregon. 97828.

Want to liven up your brown bag lunches? Consider the following:

- Stone ground wheat crackers, cheese, container of fruit and milk.

- Leftover pizza, apple and milk.

- Yogurt, individual container of cut-up fruit, granola. (Add fruit and granola to yogurt).

- Thermos of soup, string cheese, bagel and pear.

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