

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



"Thanks for lunch," The Farmer called over his shoulder as he left for the field one day last week. And his added afterthought: "I know. You slaved over it for hours."

That's one of those family jokes.

"I've slaved over it for hours" is usually attached, with a dramatic, tired sigh, to the serving of some meal I've quickly yanked from the refrigerator and heated in the microwave (one of mankind's most wonderful electrical inventions.)

"But I did slave over this for hours," I called back out through the front screen door. "I grew it."

What had begun as an innocent summer lunch had somewhere along the way developed into an orgy of vegetarian gluttony. The array that eventually graced our lunch table that noon would have sent shock waves through the hearts of all those who believe that vegetables, after all, have rights, too.

Just a month ago, who would've ever guessed it?

This "feast" started with a quick pass through the sweet corn, from a tall stand of our favorite Silver Queen variety. Early June's intense heat and dryness had caused rather sporadic germination of the seed. Now the stalks rival the height of field corn, with fat ears of kernels filled out to the very end of the cobs. We can easily make a meal of corn-on-the-cob, lathered with butter and sprinkled with a little salt.

Passing by the melon patch with the corn, I spied the telltale yellowish hue of a ripe cantaloupe. And another. And another. Like the corn, the cantaloupe stalks had languished through the heat. Then, boosted by showers, heat, humidity and a little weak liquid manure, the vines went crawling around your ankles if you stood still very long.

And when hills of cantaloupe and watermelon seeded to the gar-

den had seemed they would never germinate, I'd purchased additional started plants of whatever I could find, including a couple of honeydew and watermelon plants. Now, several large greenish honeydews peaked from under the foliage. One fat honeydew, a small, neighboring watermelon ready to join the pick, and the first three cucumbers from the third seed batch planted before any finally "took" joined the growing produce pile in the kitchen.

While the corn boiled, cucumbers and tomatoes were sliced and readied. The Farmer, in the rare instance of arriving early for lunch, began "butchering" melons, piling containers full of green and gold slices of fruit.

"What's this?" was his astonished reaction when he sliced through the small, round, striped-skin watermelon - with bright-yellow flesh. Gosh, I'd forgotten the stalk of yellow watermelon planted to help fill the early-garden germination gaps. That did explain, though, why there are striped melons growing along with the expected green-skinned ones. And, a tasty surprise, too.

The promise of August gluttony of such lush, delicious, fresh goodies is what keeps die-hard gardeners dreaming over garden catalogs in February and sweating over weeds on hot, humid, hundred-degree days.

I did slave over that meal for hours. And, it was worth every minute of it.

Farm Women Societies

Berks Society 3

Group 3 of the Berks County Society of Farm Women held a family picnic at the home of Jeanette Miller, Barto. Approximately 32 people were present to enjoy an evening of food and games.

The business meeting was conducted by vice president Regina Moyer. Berks County Farm Women will assist at the hamburger stands at the Berks Heim Fest

on September 10. Quilt raffle tickets are being sold to benefit Berks Heim.

Group 3 will meet at the home of Lillian Bucks, Indian Lane, Boyertown, on Wednesday, August 24, to carpool to the Reading Museum. Picnicking and swimming at Blue Marsh Lake will conclude the activities for the day. Families are welcome to participate.

York Society 26

Farm Women Group 26 met at Alice's Restaurant for lunch and the July monthly meeting.

16 members were in attendance.

The County Fair will be July 27 at the 4-H Center at Bair.

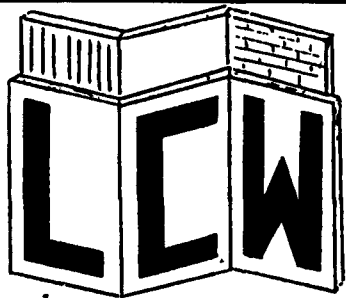
Group 26 will entertain Group

25 on October 11 at Ruth Sweitzer's farm for a demonstration on gourds.

This was patriotic month and the "History of the Flag" and the "Gettysburg Address" was read.

The next meeting will be the annual picnic in August.

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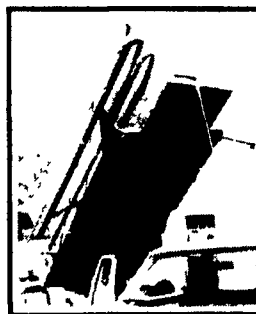
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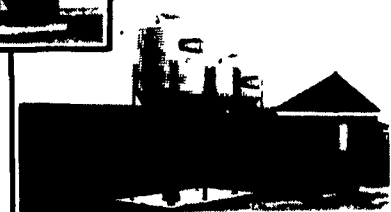


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