

**On Being a Farm Wife**  
(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



The phrase sounded a bit odd.

"It's too green," The Farmer had just said.

Too green? After the latest monsoon week in which more than five inches of rain—nearly an inch a day—had fallen?

Too green? Imagine.

That observation momentarily sounded hilarious, especially hard on the heels of last year's drought when we prayed almost non-stop for green, green green.

But, in this case, the "too green" description was assessed over a couple of would-be soybean fields, located on north-sloped ground and blanketed end-to-end with the thickest, lushest growth of chickweed one could ever want to find. Drive across a field thick with such chickweed and it turns into

Mother Nature's instant version of an oil-slick. The virtually unpenetrable layer of thick, gooey, vegetative material is also well-nigh-impossible to run planting equipment through with any hope of seeding success.

If the beans were ever to be tucked into the waiting soil in a proper manner to take root and grow, the chickweed growth had go. So, in this case, those fields surely were "too green." The Farmer merely plotted the field strategy flexibility, which crop producers have had to exercise in this thus-far soggy, swampy spring.

Just minutes before, I'd squished through the asparagus bed, snapping off the latest growth of fat, thick, tasty spears we've been enjoying for the past

several weeks. The asparagus patch has thrived in the moisture, but in retrospect, promises to be a candidate for the "too green" category.

Because, poking up all around the asparagus growth were vibrant, healthy clumps of "too green" weed cover. A lush growth of unwanted, waving their still-small, lush leaves in the light evening breeze, mocking me to come and get 'em. Between digging up and moving red raspberry roots which had also laid claim over into the neighboring asparagus patch, I did yank at some of the clumps of "too green."

And everytime I pulled one handful of the fledgling greenery, two more popped up to in its place.

Or at least it looked that way in the next morning's bright sunshine.

With the abundance of wonderful moisture, nudged by balmy temperatures and strengthening sunshine, even grass pulled up and left lay in piles two weeks ago have undergone resurrection and are attempting to shoot fat, white roots back into the ground. Every nook and cranny, every crack between sidewalk or patio blocks, every corner where soil meets pavement, wall or build-

ing block is sprouting clumps of greenery.

In fact, the tufts of grass poking out and around the walks around the house have proven handy for another lawn problem, not of "too green," but of "no green." Spot excavations for a water line replacement resulted in several bare sections of grass in the yard. So the volunteer turf growing in all sorts of unwanted places is being yanked up and plugged into a patchwork effect in those bare patches, to hopefully grow together and fill in the blanks.

Our own little, self-contained, mini-turf farm for growing lawn sod. Sort of.

Now, if we could generate

some demand for chickweed, we could do the same thing on a larger (more-profitable?) scale, with the "too green" growth that needs to be eliminated ahead of the soybeans.

Anyone out there interested in planting a chickweed lawn? It would grow lush and thick in the spring, then dry up and not need to be mowed, trimmed, aerated, thatched or fed over the summer when folks would rather do beach, vacation and picnic-like stuff. In fact, we'll sell the chickweed sod very reasonably. And even label it authentically "organic."

Now there's a niche market possibility.

**Website Links School Gardeners**

NEWARK, Del. - Which elementary schools have butterfly gardens? Who has tried making bird nest boxes with second-graders? Anybody have tips on starting a school wildflower meadow?

Educators interested in learning more about school-based garden sites have a new, Web-based resource to turn to: the Delaware Cooperative Extension School Wildlife Habitat Directory.

"We are striving to be a central information point for educa-

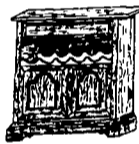
tors," says Jo Mercer, New Castle County Extension educator for ornamental horticulture. "This is a place where teachers can discover others involved in gardening projects, make contact with them and learn from their experiences."

The Web Site contains detailed information about gardens at approximately 50 New Castle County schools. Sites include public, private, and parochial elementary, middle and high schools, as well as preschool gardens.

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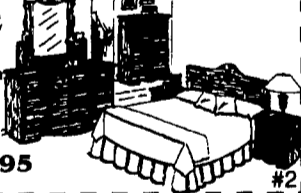
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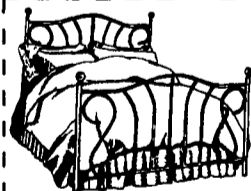
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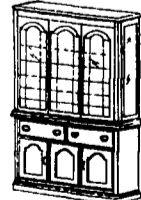
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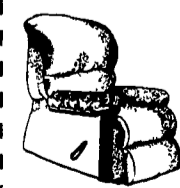
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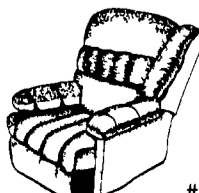
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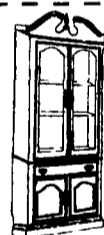
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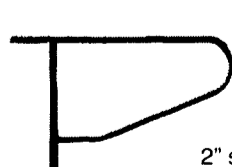
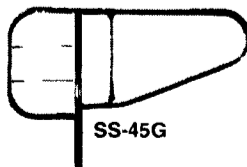
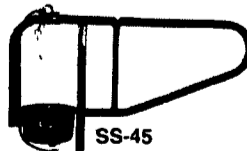
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