



On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards) Joyce Bupp

Relentlessly it hammers away. Whistling, roaring, it sweeps down the ridge from the northwest, bending the grasses, clattering limbs overhead, tumbling a stray, empty calf-feed bag on its way toward the lower yard. End-over-end the layered paper flies, somersaulting across a barren stretch of yard, finally snagged by the ultra-thorny rose bush at the spring house.

A bit later, it shifts direction. Now it blusters up from the south, scattering cats as it topples over a sturdy plastic lawn chair on the back porch, twists towels from the wash line, knocks down the damp mop propped outside to air-dry.

Occasionally, it even bears down over the hill from the east, carrying a damp chill hinting of its origin over the ocean, almost bordering on classic, old nor'easter behavior.

But no matter which direction this spring's ever-present wind blows from lately, it brings dust. It's been some time since we had a May so dusty, so dry, so desert-like. And that, frankly, is pretty scary.

Spirals of airy beige stir daily on the field road below the house, itty-bitty twisters, "dust-devils," dancing a twirling ballet down the dirt path to disappear back stage behind the green curtain of the woods.

Each pass of a tractor, or of one of the field trucks hauling chopped forage, brings a less dainty stampede of road dust. Recurring waves of the gritty, beige cloud assault my clean laundry — what hasn't blown off the line, anyway — then silently sift in through the open kitchen windows.

Little wonder our house is end-

lessly dusty. One recent warm, sunny, wind-driven afternoon, I reluctantly yanked down all north-faced open windows of the house; every passing piece of equipment sent another dust-devil pirouetting around the living room.

One of the perpetually damp places around the farm is our low-lying back yard. Often during May, we'll have tiny springs oozing up through the grass. But, crossing the lawn with water for the asparagus patch last week — something rarely needed during its harvest season — I was astounded to notice cracks in the soil of that shaded, moisture-prone area.

The higher edge of the garden, which also squishes with miniseeps in extremely wet years, is so dry that all the soil just fell away from roots of young raspberry plants I dug last week for relocation.

I crammed them into a temporary holding container, shook soil around the roots, flooded them with water and crossed my fingers that they transplant under such dry conditions. Even the

bare-ground section of lawn undergoing renovation has remained just that. Dusty, dry, bare ground, rearranged periodically with a drag behind the lawn tractor for leveling level and to surface any large stones. Even a section hand-raked for seeding has not yet sprouted weeds, an almost unimaginable circumstance.

Stirred with the wind's frequent blusters are thousands — millions — of tiny dandelion seeds, carried on their wind-floating-fluff like so many tiny hot-air balloons. They float skywards in the breezes, colliding with maple tree droppings of immature seed pods which take refuge on chairs and pile up in porch corners. Seems the wind is stirring up everything but what we really need, which is several days worth of good, soaking, heavily-laden rainclouds.

Weeks ago, late winter probably, I penned a lament about the then-seemingly endless mud. Followed by endless wind blowing endless dust.

In a world of X-treme sports, and populated by the X-generation, I guess it's only natural to have X-cessive weather swings. And now a good, soaking stretch of rain would be X-cellent.

Let's hope we can X-pect it soon.

Awareness Day Spring Event

DAUPHIN (Dauphin Co.) — "Your Best for Your Future" is the theme for this year's Penn State Cooperative Extension of Dauphin County's Annual Awareness Day Spring Event.

The educational workshops will be conducted Tuesday, June 5, from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., at Dauphin County Agriculture and Natural Resources Center in Dauphin.

The opening workshop, "Them Bones, Them Breakable Bones" presented by Jane Trainor, D.Ed., RN and Judy Klinefelter, D.Ed, RN from Penn State University Harrisburg Campus will focus on the importance of understanding osteoporosis throughout the life cycle. Participants will learn if they are at risk and what can they do to reduce the potential of any additional bone loss.

Everyone will have an opportunity to select from two money management programs. Patricia Powley, Dauphin County Extension director and financial management agent will present "Managing Money on Your Own" while John Harris, retired extension director will present "Revocable Living Trust — The Possibilities."

Several Dauphin County Garden Clubs will display spring floral arrangements to be given as door prizes. Participants are asked to bring a non-perishable food item as a method of voting on their favorite arrangement. All food items will be presented to the South Central Food Bank.

The afternoon will be highlighted with the "Sensational Soups" workshop presented by Nancy Wiker, Lancaster County Extension family living agent, and a fashion show conducted by Fashions by Virginia's of Elizabethtown.

The preregistration cost is \$15. The fee for registrations post-marked after May 25, or for unregistered participants is \$20. For additional information, contact the Dauphin County Cooperative Extension office at 921-8803 or visit <http://dauphin.extension.psu.edu>.



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Asparagus

(Continued from Page B3)

- and seeded
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- freshly ground pepper
- 1 1/2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed bell pepper, basil, Parmesan cheese (garnish)

Coarsely chop bell peppers. Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add peppers and garlic; cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes or until peppers are softened, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Place in blender or food processor and puree until smooth; stir in vinegar, basil, salt and pepper. Cook asparagus spears in boiling water for 4 to 5 minutes until crisp-tender; drain. Spoon red pepper sauce on a platter and arrange asparagus over sauce. Garnish with thin slices of bell pepper, basil and Parmesan if desired. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrients per serving: Calories 135; Protein 5g; Fat 5g; Calories from Fat 32 percent; Carbohydrate 21g; Cholesterol 0mg; Fiber 6g; Sodium 450mg.

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