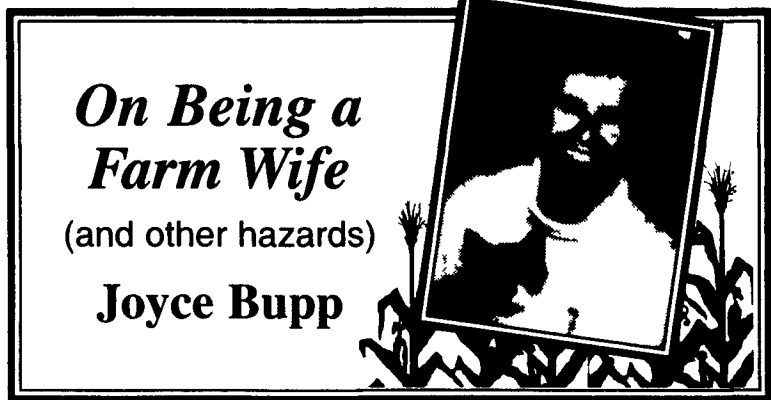


Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower Harvest



We're rounding up the leftovers.

Leftovers account for most of the odd assortment of foods currently hovering around the house. Like the two orange-red peppers cooling their heels on the back porch, lingering in the outdoor temperatures to which they've grown accustomed. A handful of volunteer potatoes, small container of yellow-skinned onions, and a lush planter full of pretty, green parsley seedlings, from seed produced by a plant carried over the winter, also add to our leftovers of the fading season.

Cylindrical-shaped red beets wait to become a tasty addition to an upcoming menu. Red beet seed I planted in spring never germinated well in the dry conditions. But we have the good fortune to trade excess leftovers with the keepers of the next-generation family garden across the meadow. In fact, most of the peppers we've enjoyed this summer originated there, since our three plants turned out to be pretty poor performers.

Tomatoes, on the other hand, yielded bushels, and we spent weeks shuffling them around from garden to porch, to kitchen to canned goods shelves, to foisting them off onto friends. We've enjoyed plump, juicy ones that filled the palm of my hand, super-sweet cherry minis, plum types shaped pudgy and bell-like and a long, skinny variety which clung to the vines for weeks, just getting redder. As chilly weather closes their harvest, those leftovers become increasingly prized.

Actually, we hope to enjoy leftover tomatoes for many weeks, with a bounty of Long Keepers tucked into storage in flats ahead of the cold front which arrived early in the week. Though overrun with an infestation of morning glories gone wild, the corner of garden devoted to these long-hold tomatoes yielded well. With these treasures carefully squirreled away, we hope to enjoy fresh tomatoes in salads and sandwiches long after frost blackens the rest.

Dry, brown, crackly string bean pods swing from the yard fence in the breeze, leftovers of this year, resulting from leftovers from last year. The volunteer pole beans dropped into the soil last fall as season tail-enders, then germinated unnoticed in spring at the foot of a row of sunflowers. Under thick leaf cover, they stealthily wove their way up through the tall "stakes," which provided perfect support and dappled shade for the beans to thrive.

By the time the sunflowers were fading, and the long, fat pods became more visible, they were well on their way to the leftover stage. So the mature, dry shelled out bean seeds will spend the winter where other leftovers get forgotten: refrigerated. Maybe a note on the calendar for next spring-will-jog

my memory to plant them. Leftovers stuff the greenhouse, where several dozen assorted houseplants and potted greenery were quickly stashed ahead of frost threats. Pots of leafy ferns battle for space with planters of geranium and marigolds, still colorful wax begonias, impatiens and the Norfolk Island Pine, now topping six feet and poking up against the plastic inner-liner of the ceiling.

Moving the houseplants inside is always one of those jobs that is put off until the very last moment. It seems so unfair to move them in when days are bright and sunshiny and they add their cheery colors to the porches and deck. So, I inevitably find myself, year after year, lugging dusty, spider-web-decorated pots into safekeeping decked out in hat, gloves, sweatshirt, and winter vest.

Sometimes darkness arrives before the last are moved in, leaving me trudging around in the dark, maybe with a flashlight or by moonlight, as stars snicker down from overhead at us procrastinators.

Somewhere in the past, the image of leftovers took on a somewhat negative connotation. Leftovers are often thought of as lower in quality than the original, less desirable, something to store and maybe eventually pitch out, offal that those of higher taste might not want to have anything to do with.

And the green, fuzzy stuff growing on who knows what buried somewhere in the backs of many of our refrigerators tends to leave that impression.

But leftovers mean that we have more abundance of something than we can use, more than we can wear, more that we can eat. And so we save it for another day, share it with someone else, or make it into something completely new and useful. Hopefully before it grows green fuzz.

Maybe we need to put a new spin on our image of leftovers.

After we clean this unknown stuff out of the refrigerator.

The cool fall weather is the ideal climate for broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, collards and kale. Growers are just starting to harvest the fall crop of broccoli and cauliflower while the cabbage harvest is continuing since it began in July. The harvest will continue throughout the fall.

Cabbage by itself ranks as the sixth most important Pennsylvania vegetable crop in terms of acreage. More than 1,700 acres are grown each year and are usually harvested from late June into December. Pennsylvania ranks 12th in the nation in the production of cabbage.

About 400 acres each of collards and kale are grown along with roughly 350 acres of broccoli and 230 acres of cauliflower. While many growers across the state grow broccoli and cauliflower in small acreages, the production of collards and kale is concentrated among a few growers with large acreages in southeast Pennsylvania.

The cabbage family is also known as the Cruciferae family because their flowers are shaped like a cross. According to the Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition of the University of California at Berkeley, cruciferous vegetables contain indoles — nitrogen compounds — that seem to protect against cancers of the stomach and large intestine. They also are generally high in fiber and antioxidants like vitamin C and carotenoids. Antioxidants neutralize the action of free radicals — unstable oxygen molecules — which promote cancer. Cruciferous vegetables also contain compounds that stimulate the release of anticancer enzymes.

Some people object to the odor produced by cooking cruciferous vegetables. The odor is caused by the release of sulfur compounds as these vegetables cook. While boiling cruciferous vegetables in large amounts of water in an open pot will minimize the characteristic strong cabbage taste, it maximizes the loss of nutrients. Steaming, microwaving or quick cooking in small amounts of water minimizes nutrient loss in the cooking process. Of course, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower can all be enjoyed raw by themselves or in salads.

Dietary experts recommend including cruciferous vegetables in the diet regularly, at least several times a week. They also recom-

mend a daily serving of a vegetable (or fruit) high in vitamin A, one high in vitamin C and one high in fiber. Broccoli fulfills all three requirements while cabbage and cauliflower fulfill the vitamin C and fiber requirement. Noted Lancaster County cookbook author Betty Groff offers the following recipes to help you enjoy Pennsylvania cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower.

Baked Cabbage

1 medium head cabbage
2 Tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground pepper
½ teaspoon chives
1 teaspoon chervil
2 Tablespoons sugar
3 Tablespoons butter
1 cup hot milk
½ cup grated cheese
Cut cabbage in wedges ¼ inch thick and boil in water for 10 minutes. Drain well and place in a buttered casserole. Sprinkle with the flour, salt, pepper, chives, chervil and sugar. Dot with butter. Pour the hot milk over the cabbage and top with the grated cheese. Bake in preheated 350°F. oven for 35 minutes.

Ham-Stuffed Cabbage Rolls

Serves 6 to 8
2½ pound head of cabbage
2 pounds smoked ham, ground
1 cup cooked rice
1 cup dried bread crumbs
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup onion, preferably 6 or 7 green (spring) onions
½ cup crushed pineapple
Salt and pepper to taste
Orange-pineapple sauce, see below

Rinse cabbage. Cut out the core and remove the outer two or three leaves from the head. Save them and any other leaves that are torn or too small and cover the bottom of a large saucepan or Dutch oven. This will help prevent the cabbage rolls from sticking while cooking. Place the cabbage in a casserole dish and microwave on high for 8 minutes in ½ inch of water, covered with wax paper. Drain. When cool enough, remove the outer 12 to 16 leaves and cut off the thick rib at the back of each leaf. Combine the meat, rice, crumbs, eggs, onions, pineapple, salt and pepper and mix well with your hands. Divide into 12 to 16 equal balls and flatten them slightly in the center of each leaf. Fold the sides in and overlap the top and bot-

tom securely, then place seam side down in the saucepan. Top with orange-pineapple sauce and simmer, covered, for an hour or longer. Serve with additional rice on the side if desired.

Orange-Pineapple Sauce

4 Tablespoons sugar
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
1½ cups orange juice
1½ cups pineapple juice
1 cup pineapple tidbits
Few drops of red food coloring (optional)

Mix sugar and cornstarch together and stir into the juices. Heat, stirring constantly until clear and thickened, then add coloring, if desired, and fruit. Add more of either juice if extra liquid is needed.

Betty's Baked Corn And Broccoli Pudding

Serves 6
This is easy, delicious, and pretty served in the baking dish. The first evening we served it, our guests all asked for seconds. The recipe has a custard-like consistency. It is quite different from the better-known baked corn. It can also be prepared in an electric skillet for an outdoor party.

4 Tablespoons butter
4 cups broccoli buds
4 cups corn kernels
Grated zest of 1 lemon (yellow part only)
Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup flour
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon sugar
4 eggs
1 cup milk

Use 1 Tablespoon of the butter to butter a 9-inch by 13-inch baking dish. Arrange the broccoli buds at each end of the dish. Put the corn in the center. Sprinkle the lemon zest over the broccoli, and grind pepper over the corn.

In a bowl, combine the flour, salt, sugar, and remaining butter. Gradually add the eggs and mix well. Stir in the milk to make a thin batter. Pour over the vegetables. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 1 hour until the egg mixture is set and firm. Bake longer, if needed. To test the pudding, insert a silver knife in the center. It is ready when the knife comes out clean. We used to test this recipe with a broom straw, but who has a broom anymore?

Microwave: Following this recipe through the entire prepara-

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