

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



Leaves around the house rarely fall much before Thanksgiving, meaning that an early snow or a sudden freeze often leaves us with a littery-looking lawn for winter's duration. At least until it gets covered with snow. But, thanks to the extended period of weather procrastination, we now have a tidy lawn for the holidays and a neater landscape to look out upon until spring.

On another September-like recent afternoon, my guilt and I lugged a spade to the garden to dig up the gladioli bulbs. The chore had been postponed earlier, when the soil was brick hard. And then, simply forgotten. Until one of those soggy, sodden days of welcome moisture, when the thought of the bulbs — still undug — popped into my mind.

No worse for their extended underground storage, the bulbs were like little treasures turning up in spadefuls of soil perfect for digging. The ground was a pleasure to work in, moist, crumbly, and smelled absolutely wonderful. Most of the bulbs had at least doubled, each reproducing two fat clones of themselves. Every couple of years, they multiply right out of our available space, until I pester friends to take the excess. What other kind of treasure can you bury that doubles itself in a couple of months time?

A day later, another planting

procrastination jogged my memory. Lugging the spade to a different corner of buried treasure yielded up dahlia roots. One was apparently growing or confused over procrastinating weather and was already pushing out little green sprouts.

Roses planted in the fall, and pruned back weeks ago in anticipation of winter, have since thumbed their thorny noses at the calendar and pushed out lush fresh foliage. Another, missed in that early round of pruning, poked up a five-foot shoot, after languishing in the summer drought. Dandelions have been happily blooming around the yard for the past few weeks, some of them even going to seed.

And, back under the big old Norway spruce, where some well-aged tomatoes apparently were pitched, at least a half-dozen stocky, sturdy tomato plants have sprouted into foot-high wannabees. Would a few potted and held over until spring give us the earliest ripe tomatoes in the

neighborhood next June? Or maybe just become straggly, stemmy, buggy plants? We may find out, if I get a few potted up, without procrastinating too long about it.

While Mother Nature has been procrastinating around about the seasons, the mail-order seed folks haven't. In the past, the spate of colorful, enticing seed catalogs usually began arriving just as the Christmas card deliveries stopped. This year, we already have at least three of them stacked and waiting on the to-read pile.

With a little more procrastination on Mother's part, despite a few frosty-white morning setbacks, we may just get caught up enough on the outside chores to start getting serious over studying those garden wishbooks.

In the meantime, its been great weather for putting up outside holiday decorations.

And...I just remembered another batch of dahlia roots still buried in the ground.

'Tis the perfect season for procrastination.

But soon there will be no more putting off 'til tomorrow what should have been done yesterday.

It will be too late.

No, this year's procrastinating hasn't been over holiday preparations.

Holiday chores — sort or, more or less, as best we can — just get wiggled in between the daily chores and all those surprise jobs that crop up and need prompt attention. Herd checks and bill paying. Freshening cows and tending new baby calves. Spending a whole afternoon upgrading The Farmer's cell phone service when his obsolete pocket-side-kick finally died. Implementation of a long-delayed conservation improvement in a pasture.

Wedge between the routine

and the not-so-routine are those fun holiday opportunities that pop up: picking up special things for the grandchildren, finding a sale on pretty, seasonal plants, dropping off a surprise for a special friend.

This year's procrastination is the doing of Mother Nature, reluctant (like us!) to let go of sun-splashed balmy days and gentle, comfy evenings. Which means outside yardwork keeps going on. And on. And on.

So here it was, mere shopping-day countdown time until the year's biggest holiday season. And I find myself bopping around the lawn on the mower, cutting lush green grass, laying low the scruffy weeds and chopping into infinite bits the maple leaves which finally departed the trees.

## Lancaster Society 18

On Nov. 17, Roberta Shepherdson, Landisville, was hostess to Lancaster Farm Women Society 18. Refreshments and social time were enjoyed as members arrived.

Mary Lou Shelton led in devotions. Members answered roll call by telling who was the inspiration for their first and middle names. Some reported they were called nicknames, others were given a family name for the first or second name or named after a relative.

After a business meeting led by Ruth Landis, president, committees presented reports.

The interesting "show and tell" program involved all members. Each showed photographs of parents and grandparents and an item received from them.

The birthday song was sung for Ella Mae Hershey who had a November birthday.

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