



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

Everyone needs a change of scenery now and then.

Get out. Get away. Get rested. Get a new perspective on life.

Great advice from stress specialists. But hardly "do-able" on a farm in May.

While we are never at a loss for work, no month poses a greater "so much to do, so little time" challenge than this one. May is back-to-back, early mornings and late nights, corn planting and soybean planting, weed control application, chopping rye, chopping forage wheat and barley, chopping alfalfa haylage, sometimes trying to do a couple of those at the same time, while keeping up with all the usual barn chores.

Improved cold-tolerance in corn seems to allow that foremost grain crop around here to be

planted earlier and earlier. Lots of corn acres, though, still are being planted in early May. We promptly followed ours with the soybean seeding, coupled with the inevitable all-out effort to get weed control applied before any of these seeds germinated and poked their little green sprouts up out of the ground. Because April's heat flashes helped warm the ground, our last acres of those little beige beans were sprouting almost before they hit the dirt.

So, while May's planting and harvest deadlines make a change-of-scenery getaways nearly impossible for most farmers, so much happens in such a short time outside in the fields that the scenery changes before our eyes. In fact, the view alters itself almost as fast as channel-switching when

The Farmer gets to surfing with the TV remote.

Our large field adjoining the lawn, especially visible because it's the view from the kitchen window and porch, has already sported several face-lifts in recent weeks. Grazing cover regrowing from last fall turned a brilliant green early on, then one day sported uniform stripes as tillage, and then planting, equipment moved through.

Not too many days later, the green began fading to brown, with the grass cover dying down to form a mulch cover for the corn seedlings. Welcome showers and bursts of sunshine coaxed the corn babies to stretch and grow enough that almost overnight they went from scattered, germinating plants to distinctive stripes of green rows.

Farm scenery is big on stripes. Nearly everything we grow is in neat rows, of some size or shape, at least during some point in its cultivation lifespan. And, on our curving, hilly ground, even the fields of the area are laid off in contoured, conservation strips — or stripes.

Up the hill, in the other direction, contoured strips of alfalfa had no stripes, just a lush velvety carpeting of a deep green. Then, one day last week, the hillside of alfalfa green scenery sud-

denly sprouted stripes, too. Each pass of the windrower converted the leafy carpet into neat rows of forage laid out to dry. Within hours, our scenery had switched to a view of curving stripes of mown hay curing in the sunshine.

Another pass a day later with harvesting equipment and the hillside scenery went to a bland-blah-brown shade. All the neat stripes disappeared into the gobbling front end of the chopper, leaving behind clipped fields in the somber shade of bare stems. With the frequent of a uniformity of frequent showers (even brief ones are better than none) the beige-hued stems should quickly revert back to leafy green.

One of my favorite bits of scenery lies in the direction of the

meadow, where the heifers graze the pasture hillside, dotting the green grass with their stark contrast of black and white, framed by fencerows. And, scattered across the view are iris blooming in pastel shades of pink, yellow, and blue, cheerful small yellow and white wildflowers dotting the roadsides, and pink waterlilies blooming on the sparkling pond surface.

But no scenery accent is more welcome than a pair of newcomers flitting across the lawn. A bluebird couple has laid claim to a birdhouse on the border fence, their blue and pink presence a delightful, first-ever surprise of the season.

If you can't get away for a change of scenery, having it right outside the window is a pleasurable alternative.

Quilt Auction Helps Hospital

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — A Quilt Auction is scheduled for the 49th Annual Ephrata Community Hospital Day in the Park at the Grater Memorial Park (formerly Ephrata Park), Rt. 322 West on Saturday, June 1 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The quilt auction features more than 30 quilts and wall hangings created by many local women. Guest auctioneer, Audrey Weaver, will start the bidding at 3 p.m.

A blue-appliqued quilt, "Emma's Wreath of Roses," is this year's raffle quilt. Tickets cost \$1 or six for \$5.

Other highlights for the day include Duane Slaymaker, acoustical entertainer, on stage at Noon, Moonlighters (Big Band Music)

from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. Entertainment is sponsored by Weaver Masonry, Inc. Meet and greet Tug McGraw, retired player for the Philadelphia Phillies, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., sponsored by Blue Ridge Communications and New Holland Ford Lincoln-Mercury, Toyota.

Proceeds from the event will be used to purchase a cardiology ultrasound imaging upgrade, which is part of a two-year pledge by the Auxiliary. For more information or directions, call the public relations department of the Hospital at (717) 738-3556.

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