

# On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

## Joyce Bupp



A battleground. That's what it is. A battleground.

Signs of destruction, everywhere. Piles of residual trash. Fallen comrades. Even walking through is hazardous, requiring careful steps and a sharp eye to avoid dangerous obstacles.

And that's just the backyard. Mother Nature fired her first shots months ago, with early December's preview of the winter to come. Ice storms are generally more a March phenomenon around here than a post-Thanksgiving happening. It was our first introduction to the good, old-fashioned winter to follow.

And what a mess it's made. Fallen trees and limbs. Raw,

Which was actually the case for most of the fallout around the yard. All of which became laden with more snow, more rain, more ice, and finally, the Big Snow. That swirled around into impressive dunes in the backyard, requiring pass-throughs with the big tractor and its heavy blade just to clear a space through which to walk to scatter birdseed for our hungry regulars.

In the process, the blade gouged out chunks of ground and the wheel carved deep tracks in the glacial pack. Somewhat uneven to start with, the lawn now mostly resembles the pothole-strewn interstate between the state line. Cascades of snowmelt runoff, detoured from their usual engineered flow around the yard by frozen flotsam and jetsam, took a meandering path instead through the lawn, adding ice slicks to the rough and tumble effect.

You don't want to go there. Especially in the dark, when you chance tripping on a frozen-fast branch and falling on your face onto a sharply-jagged stick protruding out of the glacial residue.

While most of the region was buried beneath the wintry snow-pack, the mess could be ignored as an out-of-sight, out-of-mind

issue. Goodness knows, just keeping up with the outside chores most of the last three months has kept us plenty occupied.

And, the stuff was all frozen fast to the ground, anyway.

So when the lawn-care publication turned up on the kitchen table a few days ago, I just looked at it and sighed. The picture of plush, perfect green grass on the cover is a shocking contrast to the reality of our backyard. To use a popular, politically-correct description, the yard is a "challenge."

Still, as I scattered a bucketful of dirt and debris under the old pine tree, sweepings from around our diminishing woodpile, a tiny finger of hope and optimism waved at me. It was the slender shoot of a small bulb, yellow-green and healthy, poking up through the rough, ragged residue.

That — and the flock of robins cavorting in the grass on a sunny road bank earlier this week — have finally convinced me that spring is truly on the way.

The snow shovel can just stay parked by the back door a bit longer. But I might prop a lawn rake there beside it.

Maybe I can scuff loose some worms from under the leaves for those hungry robins.

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For a free copy, send a self-addressed, stamped number 10 business-size envelope to New York Beef Industry Council, P.O. Box 250, Westmoreland, N.Y. 13490. One brochure per envelope.

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## Juice Abuse

Fruit juice tastes good, children love it, and parents are happy because their children are drinking something healthy.

So, what is the problem?

Children may be drinking too much of a good thing.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says adults need to cut back on the amount of fruit juice infants, toddlers, and young children are consuming. Adults must also distinguish between 100 percent fruit juice and juice drinks that can contain as little as 10 percent fruit juice. Even though many fruit juices contain potassium, as well as Vitamins A and C that are beneficial, the Academy believes that drinking excessive amounts of fruit juice is associated with diarrhea, stomach problems, malnutrition, and tooth decay.

Before six months of age, infants should not drink juice. When a child is between one and six years of age, the amount of fruit juice consumed should be limited daily to four to six ounces.

Once a child is over seven, juice intakes should be limited to eight to 12 ounces a day. This is because many fruit juices contain carbohydrates in the form of sugars. Juice contains no fiber unless pulp is included and contains only a small amount of protein and minerals. It is healthier for children to eat whole fruits as part of the recommended daily fruit intake. As an alternative to juice, don't forget water.

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