

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Orange eggs just don't cut it.

Orange is for heat, for shock value, for alert. Orange works for pumpkins and stunning vistas of October-frosted leaves. Orange is the juice many of us sip with breakfast or snacks. Orange is for safety, like life jackets and slow-moving-vehicle signs and traffic cones.

Orange is not for eggs.

Orange stirs alarms. It's near the top of the Homeland Security terror alert color-code alert system. Remember the notorious Agent Orange, linked to the Vietnam War and mysterious ailments lingering in the health of many veterans?

Orange turning up in those ubiquitous plastic eggs of the season just always seems strangely

out of place. Orange has its own celebration at Halloween. This is Easter, we're talking tradition. So, bring on the soft, delicate, genteel pastels and the cherry, happy primary colors.

Like, yellow. What's more "Easter'y" than the hue of bright sunshine?

Yellow speckles the season, with daffodils dotting flowerbeds, brightening shady, shrubby nooks, and smiling from bouquets. Yellow are the flowers of forsythia, incredibly durable shrubs which tolerate just about any indignity of weather or pruning.

Yellow is cuddly baby chicks and baby ducklings, classic symbols of springtime and new life. Fortunately these fragile poultry infants are no longer handed out

as freebies and souvenirs, but recognized for their unique need for specialized feed, housing and classic Tender Loving Care.

Yellow is a cluster of early tulips, nodding their heads on sturdy stems waving above waxy, elongated foliage. Yellow — sort of — is the color of Derra Dog's big, enthusiastic tail, wagging back and forth in happiness and whacking the dickens out of clusters of yellow daffodils and tulips.

Yellow — in its brightest, most stunning shade — is the color of dandelions. Even as the lingering snow was clinging to cool, shaded corners, dandelions were poking their sunshine blooms up between straggly, clumps of grass on the lawn.

Not to forget pink, not quite as abundant as yellow, but stunningly beautiful in fat heads of fragrant hyacinths. Pink is a classic color for little girls to dress up in for their Easter finery, with shiny sashes, perky bows, lots of lace, and a stylish hat for the holiday.

Easter blues are clear and sharp, or toned with hints of lavender. Blue hyacinths are the perfect foil for their pink kin. Bluebells or "bluebottles" as some folks call them are equally happy in neat clusters or scattered in a naturalized setting. A

handful of tiny bulbs I planted probably three decades ago have repopulated themselves dozens of times over on a gentle slope behind the house. These four-inch-high scilla, or Siberian squills, are one of the earliest things to bloom in our yard. Their tiny, deep-blue blossoms on threadlike stems make a diminutive bouquet to tuck in a tiny vase on the kitchen counter.

Some Easter weekends, gentle weather has coaxed out the early red tulips, to add their bold primary punch to the delicate pastels, all set against a background of lush green. A treasured photo of our two grandsons harkens to an Easter weekend a few years back. Just a few moments of roaming the yard, they had created bouquets, consisting of every tulip bloom on the place. We captured the moment on film and divided up the bouquets between two households to enjoy.

Though we don't usually associate brown with Easter, it plays a pivotal role in the season. Brown is the color of our rich soils, source of life and food, sponge to soak up and hold our precious resource of water. Soil is such a basic we rarely give it thought, but critical to our world's survival.

Brown is also the color of chocolate. Easter wouldn't be the same without a taste of brown, lusciously-sweet, chocolate rabbits.

We may have to rethink our Easter color priorities here.

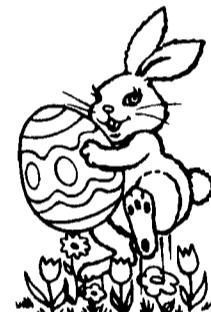
Free Pa. Guide To Unique Lodging

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Tourism and Lodging Association (PTLA) has just released the new 2003 Pennsylvania Guide to Unique Lodging. This 44-page booklet is a directory of bed and breakfasts, country inns and farm vacations located throughout Pennsylvania. Every listing provides the property's name, address, e-mail and Web address (if available), number of rooms, number of private baths and a brief description.

This unique type of accommodation, familiar to European travelers for decades, has been growing in popularity in the United States, and Pennsylvania is no exception. Each property listed is as unique as its innkeeper(s).

The Pennsylvania Guide to Unique Lodging provides information on over 200 inns throughout PA, listing them alphabetically by region. Map coordinates make it easy to find in which area of the state an inn is located. Brief descriptions of the facilities available at each property are provided, along with rates and credit card acceptance.

To obtain a free copy of the 2003 Pennsylvania Guide to Unique Lodging, visit the PTLA's website at <http://www.patourism.org> or write to PA Tourism & Lodging Association, Dept. PGUL-PR1, 902 N. Second Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102.



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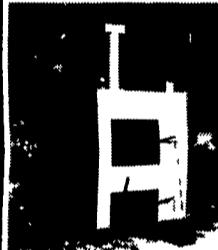
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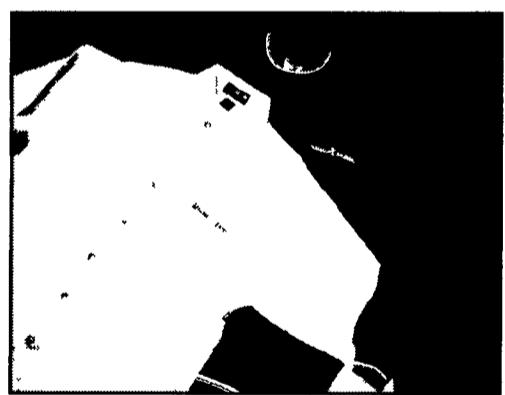


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