

Your

Country Neighbor

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April 2005

A Monthly Magazine



YOUR WINDOW WITH A COUNTRY VIEW

CONTENTS

April is about...

This month's issue is about Spring flowers and edible greens, local photography of unusual places, country scenes, and wildlife in our area. Poems from Devon, prairie Spring memories from Karen, and reminiscences from Joe and Frieda. Your favorite 'regulars' are back with something to say,,all for your benefit.



**Color Photos
of
Rural Scenes
at
www.yourcountryneighbor.com**

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In Nebraska, we're assured that the seasons will change. As they change, we change (the way we dress, the way we eat, etc.). Please consider letting the staff at Colonial Acres of Humboldt assist you meet the day-to-day challenges by letting them do many of the daily chores and assisting you enjoy this season of your life.

Questions? Please call Doug Williams (Administrator)
or Beverly Stake (Assisted Living Coordinator) at 1-402-862-3123

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In Missouri: Rock Port, and Tarkio.

In Iowa: Emerson, Essex, Farragut, Hamburg, Malvern, Red Oak, Riverton, Shenandoah, Sidney, and Tabor.

Your

COUNTRY NEIGHBOR

Editor and Publisher: Stephen Hassler

The following people helped make this issue possible:

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Frieda Burston
Robert Lowrey
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Thank you!

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Plan to attend the session that pertains to your business!

Retail Sales Tax

Wednesday, April 20, 2005 • 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM

One Hour Lunch Break

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including:

- When you are supposed to collect sales tax.
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- How to complete your sales and use tax return.

Seminar will be held at the 4-H building on the Fairgrounds in Auburn, Nebraska, hosted by the Nemaha County Business Assistance Team (NCBAT). A \$10 registration fee will be charged. Pre-registration is recommended so enough materials will be available.

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Canada Goose photographed at Squaw Creek National Refuge.



Snow Geese

Color Photos of "Wildlife Along Our Rivers"
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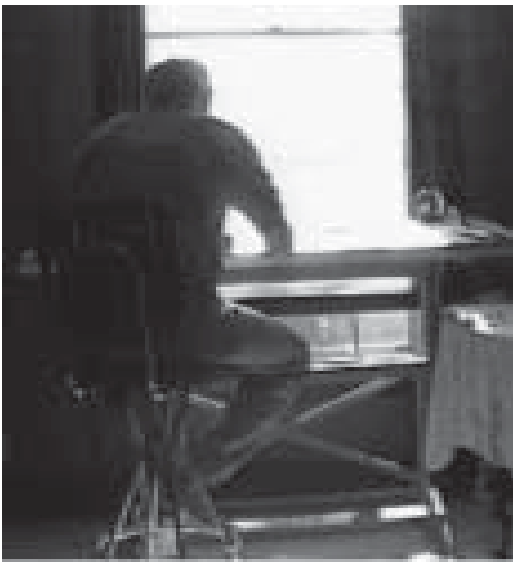


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Window on Fifth Street

Already three months of 2005 have gone by and I feel as if the year has barely begun. I want to try several new ideas this year. You will see more wildlife photography in the coming months here in *Your Country Neighbor* as well as in the colorful new photo galleries online at www.yourcountryneighbor.com. I call my newest gallery "Wildlife Along Our Rivers".

This month's lesson seems to be that if you get out and look around, you will see more than simply that which you went looking for. I photographed wild geese twice in March at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge, and spent part of a weekend in and around Kearney photographing the Sandhill Cranes. Since these wonderful experiences are part of my extended view from Fifth Street, I am including some of the pictures on this page. But visit my website and you will see some of these scenes in color.



A fallen log reaches into the marsh.
A good place to sun yourself if you're a turtle.



The Sandhill Cranes fly from field to field along the Platte River, feeding on waste grain left by the last corn harvest. This month most will leave the Platte River Valley in central Nebraska for Canada, Alaska, and Siberia.



Snow Geese and Canada Geese (and probably others) leaving the marsh at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in March.



Sandhill Cranes about to land and feed in corn stubble.



In Color on the web at www.yourcountryneighbor.com

Can you recognize these locations from Your Country Neighborhood?

These locations will be revealed in the May issue.

Last month's locations are at the bottom of this page.



Most of the Courthouses in Your Country Neighborhood are picturesque, this one especially.



Not a courthouse.



Not the covered bridge at Coryell Park. You can drive through this one.



This statue's location is in Nebraska.



This courthouse is in Iowa.

Last month's 'answers' to where the (page 5) photos were taken.

First column: Top, downtown Shenandoah; middle, Delsel Hall at PSC; bottom, by the depot in Brownville. Second column: Top, the New Lewis & Clark Visitor Center just east of Nebraska City; next, Rock Port; then, Cook; bottom, looking at Elk Creek from the RR Crossing.

The Face of

A Report from Western Nebraska
by Karen Ott,
March, 2005



Drought

No moisture this week... but we had a close call: a twenty percent chance on Saturday materialized into a hit-and-run snow, the flakes coming in hard and fast at the beginning but tapering off to nothingness fifteen minutes later.

On Thursday a west wind roared into the panhandle bringing along Wyoming's dirt, cornhusks and tumbleweeds; if every farmer and rancher in the Cowboy State had turned on their pivots Nebraska would have gotten three inches of rain. The pivots would have been our only hope. A look at the March fifteenth drought monitor map shows drought pouring over the states in the disorderly manner of spilled paint; the panhandle never stays the same color for long, vacillating between the extreme and exceptional categories it's like indecisive woman who can't decide what color she wants to paint her kitchen.

A calf was born dead this week. The mother took one look at the lifeless little body and walked off as if nothing had happened. Some cows are like that while others under similar circumstances are grief stricken for days. Dale hauled her home and put her in the back corral with a surrogate baby, a situation she obviously didn't plan on....she's letting the baby eat, but only if Dale stands in front of her with a big stick and a threatening look. The transplanted baby comes from a set of twins we christened 'the odd couple'; one calf is a very large gangly-looking red-white face while the second is a tiny Black Angus. They're like a pair of test-tube twins gone wrong.

The new pivot is up. The men, of course, see this aluminum and steel monster as a Godsend: less work, less water, better crops. But when I look out the upstairs window I can't help but sigh with disappointment. Until this week the view was somewhere I could go without ever taking a step outside the house, a place where childhood play and adulthood responsibilities merged with the sweeping vista of fields and bottomland. Now the view is violated by the harsh design of progress. I'll never become accustomed to the ugly thing.

As far back as I can remember our upstairs north window has been the prairie counterpart of an eastern seaboard 'widow's walk', a place a woman could stand watch, waiting for her man to come home. Sea captain's wives looked towards the ocean; here on the plains women look to the fields.

"See if your father's lights are moving." my mother would command. And I would climb the stairs as quickly as my eight year old legs could carry me and search through the darkened pane for the yellow glow of tractor lights crawling through the night. As a young married woman I stood at the window following the tractor up and down the fields, checking Dale's progress, timing supper with each pass. Years later, with a mother's worried eyes, I watched my sons; always from the same window, always looking north.

The view has changed but little in the hundred years which separate me from that first farm wife who made this house a home. She would have seen a wider and shallower Platte, and watched the Kiowa, as well as Horse creek, braiding itself through the cattails and shimmering slough grasses; but the fields are the same, and the worry she felt when her husband didn't come home from them on time would have prompted the same questions. Where is he? Did he have a heart attack or is pinned under a piece of equipment? Did a cow take him down? Is he bleeding to death and calling my name?

Any woman who has ever married a farmer or rancher knows the feeling. We stare out windows and down roads and try cell-phones which have been turned off or left at home—and we pray, please God....let him be all right. Then... miracle of miracles he'll be home; dismissing our fears with a trite and aggravating, "Don't worry about me. I can take care of myself."

And so we'll breathe a sigh of relief, put supper on the table and sit down to talk about the day...and somewhere in the warm jumble of conversation he'll make it clear he's sorry we were so worried and the toll his absence exacted on our hearts will be paid in full...until the next time.

Working the land is an inherently dangerous profession; the men know it.....and so do we.

Karen

Bob Lowrey's Commodities Report



Fund Trading, Volatility, and Opportunity – What is Driving the Soybean Market?

by Robert Lowrey 3/24/05

Investor money has been pouring into the commodity trading market, people are pulling out of the stock market. During the month of Feb., commodity funds have liquidated 74,000 short positions of beans and 117,000 short corn positions, taking profit on a massive down move since last fall. Fears of Asian Rust coming into the US and a shortened South American crop has drove the bean market \$1.90 a bushel higher, generating excellent first quarter gains for investors. A \$1500 investment had the potential of a \$9500 gain. Fund traders are now 10,000 net long beans and 50,000 net long positions on corn.

Volatility has begun to play a part in the bean market as investors begin to take profit, as the week of March 14 for a .65 correction. Corn has retraced near .15. When the market becomes volatile, this usually indicates a top or bottom is near. The bean market could be a ball of fire if acres are reduced as expected and if Asian Rust hits the US this season. Market timing will be everything to produce a profitable year.

What's wrong with this market? The fundamentals are still very bearish for soybeans and corn. The wrong things are chasing the markets. The money managers have pushed the market \$.80 to \$1.00 over where the market should have gone. Soybean stocks are 27 to 1, the 3rd largest in history, while corn ending stocks are the second largest in history. Corn remains piled up across the US with reports of transportation problems across the country.

This rally has offered opportunities for producers to take advantage of forward marketing for this fall for \$6.00+ with their government payments as a bonus. No one knows what the effects of Asian Rust could have even if it gets here. A normal crop could be under \$5.00 futures this fall. If the market turns down, the fund managers will produce short sellers, then hang on. Corn acres are expected to increase 1.5 to 2 million acres this spring. With the large supply of corn on hand and a normal growing season, Dec. corn futures could work under the \$2.00 level, possibly by Aug. – Sept. when producers will be forced to dump their bins.

We have been advising producers to price and defend their positions. The run up to \$2.49 ¾ Dec. futures in March may have been this year's opportunity. Don't let last year's mistake happen all over again, when corn hit \$3.00 in the spring and farmers' sold for \$1.80 last fall. This year, corn prices could get ugly this summer into fall.

Precision Marketing has worked with hundreds of producers and investors building a solid portfolio or marketing plan. It is not too late to get started.

Futures and options do involve a degree of risk and are not suitable for everyone. For help with your marketing, call Precision Marketing in Auburn, NE 1-800-327-5410 or check us out on the web at www.precisionmarketing.us.

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Country

Scenes



I saw this attractive farmstead on a road less traveled.



Two barn styles seen through much of Nebraska.
These are east of Pawnee City.



A big white barn looks nice under a blue sky and white, puffy clouds.



I am looking forward to returning here, south of Stella,
to photograph this stately plant once it is dressed in leaves.



Notice those farm ponds when the air is still and the sun is low.



If there ever was an antique windmill, this is it.
West and north of Pawnee City.



Looking north on Highway 34, this red barn got my attention.

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View Your Country Neighbor's new series of photographs.

Wildlife Along Our Rivers

online at

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To go to the photos, click on "Photo Galleries," and select an option from the list. There's Country Scenes, Farmsteads, Wildflowers, Autumn Leaves, and Winter Snow, as well as Wild Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and Eagles. This is a start. I will spend more time using my new telephoto lens to bring you pictures of wildlife that you may not have seen in your back yard. And you can refer your relatives and friends to my online edition of *Your Country Neighbor*. Just let them know the web address above.



Whisler's

Hunting

&

Fishing

Report



by Josh Whisler
Photos Provided by Author

Fishing:

The Missouri River is now allowing some fishing but not much is being caught. Local fishermen report a lot of action but not many being landed. This time of year the channel cats will peck at your bait while the big ones just ignore it. It can be aggravating but it is challenging to catch a few small channels for a taste of what's to come. The river is really low which could be good and bad. The good part is that when you're fishing off the bank, you're down out of the wind. And boy has the wind been blowing! The bad part is that you can't get a boat in when the wind has the water chopping like it has been. The bait of choice has been dough baits and night crawlers.

Area ponds are clear and are providing some action with the majority of the panfish caught being crappie and bluegills. But some bass are hitting also. They seem to be relatively hungry and action is steady. The bait of choice has been night crawler and small minnows.

Hunting:

The warmer days have put some buds on the trees, which seem to bring the animals out of winter hiding. I have seen a lot of wild life out nosing around. A couple of times I've seen deer standing out where they haven't been seen for months and some to my surprise with horns. During the late winter months the bucks loose their horns. It's said that the more healthy bucks will retain them into the spring prior to dropping them. It always seems like during spring turkey season or mushroom season when you find the deer sheds on the forest floor. You would think you could find all kinds of them as many deer that there are around, but it's been told that the mice, squirrels, and other critters devourer them for their mineral make up. I've found several half eaten shed racks.

Spring Turkey Seasons will soon be here. Our unit (East Missouri) has unlimited permits this year. This means: "If you want a Turkey Permit – Buy one." But there is an early and a late season so plan accordingly. Again, new for this year is the Youth Season. Youth Season shotgun season starts one week prior to the regular shotgun season and is statewide. Youth can also obtain a bow permit that is the same term as the regular bow season. Youth is considered 15 years old and younger. The Spring Turkey Seasons are as

follows:

Note - When applying for permits in the East Missouri Unit, hunters must specify "Early" or "Late" on their application or it will be returned.

Units

Youth Shotgun Statewide	April 9-May 22
East Missouri Early	April 16-April 24
East Missouri Late	April 25-May 22
West	April 16-May 22
Archery Statewide	March 25-May 22

This month's pictures are of a lone hen turkey on the Missouri River Bottom and a flock of turkeys north of Auburn on the Nemaha River Bottom.



That does it for me this month. Spring is here and all of the good hunting and fishing to go with it. So send in for a Spring Turkey Permit or stock up on your fishing tackle, because the spring fishing and hunting aren't going to wait for you. The time is now so go get you some. Remember I'm not an expert but I have my share of luck. I wonder if the experts are having any luck today? So until next time "Happy Hunting & Fishing."

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Recipe of the Month



Wild Thing, I Think I Love You

Find out for sure The Wild Edibles

by Ann Yates

If you haven't sprayed your yard this year, don't. You will find a whole new palette of flavors and colors for your dinner menu, but make sure there are no sprays present where you collect your wild things. My own personal observation (I have never read this) is that when I eat enough of the early spring greens, it gets my blood ready for summer and the summer heat does not bother me as much. Let me know if it works for you also.

Pot Herbs – These are the plants you need to cook (like cooked spinach).

Sour Dock is the first wild green in spring. To prepare the leaves for cooking, wash and cut center vein out, use the leaf portion. Dock is a little coarser than some of the other greens so you need to bring the water to a boil, drain, then add more water and bring to a boil again until tender.

Dandelion leaves are next. Make sure you use these **before** they bloom as they become very bitter when they begin to bloom. Just pick, wash and cook in boiling water till tender. They do not need to be cooked in two changes of water.

Nettles (yes the stinging variety) are very tasty and tender. Heat takes the sting out of nettle. Pick leaves off stem (please wear gloves till they are put into the boiling pot), wash, place into boiling water till tender. Nettles have been used the world over from the beginning of time as the foremost hair rinse, so reserve the cooking water for a final rinse the next time you shampoo.

Lamb's-quarters are my personal favorite for the pot herbs. Pinch off the tender tops of the plants. You can do this nearly the entire summer, until the plants get ragged from the rigors of summer. Pinching makes it branch so you end up with more tops to pinch. Now just wash and place in boiling water just till tender. Watch carefully as they do not need to cook long.

All the pot herbs can be used like cooked spinach. Serve as is with a little butter and lemon juice or vinegar or salt and pepper if you prefer. I like to add them to Quiche or egg noodles (see March issue).

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Salad additions – spice up your lettuce salads with flavor and color.

Violets – Oh I do love my violets. Use both leaves and flowers. Just wash and add them to lettuce for a gorgeous salad. When I am feeling blue I pick a whole bowl of the flowers alone for a salad. They make me feel pampered. A light olive oil and balsamic vinegarett dressing is best for this.

Corn Lily Flowers, yes the common orange flower you see growing everywhere around here. Just pick the flowers, wash and add to your salads. The flavor is reminiscent of carrots, and the color tells you they are loaded with vitamin A.

Flowers of the native columbine, roses, nasturtium and fruit trees are all good in salads.

Very young, tender dandelion greens can also be added to salads.

Now for the Dandelion Flower. If you want to pick a bushel of them (and take all the green parts off each flower) you can make wine. Or you can pick a few of them just before the flower opens. Wash and dip into your favorite fish batter and fry. While they are frying they “bloom”, opening up into the whole flower, and the batter spreads with it. They taste good and are lots of fun.

Don't forget to dry greens for next winter. Simply wash, drain well, and place in a shallow layer on a dryer shelf, or in a shallow baking dish and place in the oven set to about 100°. Place a table knife in the door to hold it ajar so moisture can escape. Watch the oven method carefully so you don't burn your greens.

Have a wonderful Springtime

Editor's note: You can visit Ann weekdays 6:00 to 9:00 in the morning, and afternoons 4:30 to 7:00 at **Honey Creek Vineyards Bakery** at 1705 Park Avenue in Peru. Call 872-4865 for favorites or specialty orders. Decorated cakes are now available upon request.

Poetry, etc.

SATURDAY NIGHT

by Devon Adams

She was a young girl before the world grew old
from fighting wars that should have ended wars.
Following the path that led to having children,
with grandchildren waiting in the mist,
was something that she never did.
Her childhood friends walked with her
to the intersection of their lives,
and then they moved toward families of their own
while she stayed single.
Intelligence could have been her blessing or her problem
because it seemed to come between herself and men.
She went to school and learned to teach
and spent her energy on helping others
how to find their brains and use them.
Her family tree was tough and healthy
and she lived so long that time forgot her.
As her birthdays neared one hundred
the calendar fell off the wall,
and every day was Saturday to her.
Each evening friends would gather
for a card game at the table.
She would always ask about the boys.
“Where do you suppose the boys are tonight?
Do you think they went to town?”
She’d say that with a smile.
Her friends would all agree
that surely the boys did go to town,
because that’s what they always did,
on Saturday nights.

WATERCOLOR SKY

by Devon Adams

The thirsty soil is tired from being frozen for so long.
It waits for warmth that comes according to the calendar.
Days of frost diminish, and early mornings sing
as roots awaken and send shoots exploring for the light.
The sun is stingy on some days as it hides behind dull clouds.
Brighter days usurp the moisture in the ground
and manufacture dust that waits to hitch a ride
on winds that sweep across the plains
like phantom brooms wielded by mad ghosts
of women pioneers who lost their minds.
The patterns change from arctic clippers that blow ice
to spiral lows that suck up moisture from the gulf
and make it into water hanging in the sky.
On some spring days rain falls from juicy clouds
that seem ominous and promise storms.
The sky is swept with skirts of rain
that swirl downward from dark thunder;
they dip and sway to silent music
in a teasing waltz above the trees.
But the promises aren’t kept and the lying lover
throws kisses that never reach the earth.
The rain is all for show and not for dust.
It is a watercolor sky
that might as well be framed and hanging
on the wall.



Roadside Poetry

The Meadowlark sings,
“When are you going to plant the wheat?”

THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

by Lila Meyerkorth

There were times when loving and giving brought pain
To parents while our choices suffered loss.
But by loving, along with heartache, they always forgave
As Jesus did on that Old Rugged Cross.

A child growing up has many obstacles to face
As the adult who’s span of life is almost done.
Early, we don’t have the choice of home and environment
But down the road, we do decide the course we will run.

Somewhere, there is faithful guidance through life
Or we can find fault with mistakes at every turn
Secretly, even unknowingly harbor bitterness, revenge
While others use unwise and painful years to learn.

Let us give until there’s no more to give
To the world, to kith, and to kin.
Let us love till there’s no more to love
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Searching for Soda Biscuits

by Frieda Burston
Israel

Does anybody out there have a no-fail recipe for yeast-raised soda biscuits?

When we lived in the house with the big yard in Missouri, I first ate them at Piggy Stewart's house. (Her real name was Peggy, but after sitting at her supper table, I could see why they changed it. I didn't blame her. Her mom was a REAL cook.)

I didn't come across yeast-raised soda biscuits until years later in Texas, when we were crossing the state line on our way to Kansas. The waitress and the cook were both happy to give me the recipe, but got so confused on how much a handful of this or a pinch of that, would be in cups or teaspoons, that we all gave up.

It was an old recipe, the cook said, and she had never known anyone to measure.

I could believe it. Mrs. Stewart was not a book-learned woman. She cooked from instinct, and Piggy probably grew up just like her, but somewhere along the line, somebody must have written it down somewhere. If it had disappeared into history without a trace, my heart would be broken.

I ate at Piggy's house a lot, because we had a big garden in that yard. All the others on our end of the street had a few flowers in the front yard, mostly Railroad Lilies, because cannas grew themselves once you put a bulb in the ground. But the back yard? Everybody had chickens in the back yard, and of course you can't grow anything around chickens— an apple tree, maybe, or a peach tree, if you put wire around it until it was thick enough to defend itself from the probing beaks.. So nobody raised a garden but us.

We had it because it was our living. My grandfather, back in Europe, had signed up for free land in Canada, and all his papers were in order, and the acres waited for him.. But a British ship ran into his ship three days out of Germany, and the British ship picked up everybody and took them in to where it was going— Galveston, Texas. Not Canada.

So my grandfather landed in Texas with a wife and eight children, with nothing but the clothes they were wearing on that day in the fog. His papers were all for Canada, and all the baggage (with his savings sewed into the linings of his best coat), all the baggage was at the bottom of the Atlantic.

The immigration people in Texas didn't know what to do with him. When he said he was a farmer, they passed the hat and put the family on a train to Missouri because it was farming country.

The train fare lasted until St. Joe. No one there knew what to do with him either. Someone remembered an abandoned farm on the edge of town, passed the hat again, and took them out to the empty barn, because it was built better than the little house. The bigger boys salvaged apples from the old orchard and peddled them house to house, and so they managed to survive until spring, when Grandpa planted a garden— Grandma pulling the plow because they had no horse, and the children trotting behind to drop in the seeds and cover them up carefully.

That was in 1900. Grandpa got older and the children grew up and went their own ways. By 1926 my father was huckstering fruits and vegetables from a wagon, while my mother and brothers worked the garden from which he sold.

We always planted more than we needed. When the garden produced more than enough, Mama packed up baskets to send the neighbors, with a bouquet from our front yard. And when there was a good run of fish in the Missouri River, somebody would come over with some fat fish. Somebody would bring over a jar of dandelion wine that had been overlooked by the Prohibition Agents because it was "medicinal". Someone would send a bag of fresh eggs.

This was not the barter system that the books talk about in small towns. Barter is commerce. This wasn't Commerce. This was Sharing. Everybody did a little more of what they did best, so that they would have enough over to give to someone else.

Piggy's mother did nothing best but cook, so that was what she shared. Her house was a mess, but her husband and sons never noticed that the house was a mess. Their dirty socks stayed on the floor where they took them off. Until they were out of socks, they just walked around them. As long as food was on the table when they came in hungry, everything was fine. And food was ALWAYS ready. To have me eating at their table was a tribute to Piggy's mother and a vindication of their own judgement. The whole family rejoiced to see me putting away those yeast-raised soda biscuits.

When I grew up and took Domestic Science courses at Missouri University, I asked my professors where I could find the recipe for that happily remembered treat. They were shocked at the idea of using yeast and soda both to raise the biscuit dough. I would be mixing two different systems, chemical and bacterial, and they would cancel each other out. It would taste awful, they told me, I wouldn't like it at all.

I said, "Oh!" and backed off. I felt they wouldn't have approved of Piggy's Mom and her messy house. They might even have wiped the plates surreptitiously with their handkerchiefs if they had found themselves at her table.

But I'm still looking for that recipe. Do any of you out there have it?????

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Bea's Flower "Buzz"

"I Yearn for Yarrow"

by Bea Patterson

Welcome, again, country gardeners, to #5 in this series.

Spring has sprung! We are suddenly reminded how hungry we are for lush green grass, blooming trees, colorful spring flowers, and opportunities to get out into God's rich soil with rake and hoe.

Most gardeners have spent the winter months making plans. How early can I get in those radishes, peas, and potatoes? What new things are in that seed catalogue that just came? Remember Mom's white iris with its flags and falls trimmed in white? Wonder if I could find that in the heirloom garden catalogue? Wouldn't some of those iris look really great mixed in among those yellow plants that come up in the corner garden? What do you think of putting in a water feature next to the iris? How much do you think a fountain would cost?

We all know the dreaming that takes place between gardening seasons.

If you are a seasoned gardener, you have been investing in perennials over the years. When spring comes, you don't have as much work ahead of you. If you are new or novice gardener, you are in the building mode – worlds of choices and ideas from which to choose.

Whichever category you fall into, YARROW has already been featured in your garden or should be.

Yarrow belongs to the aster family, in the genus *Achillea* L., and species of *Achillea millefolium* L. or common yarrow, with many additional varieties associated in that species.

Native to Europe and Asia, yarrow was introduced to North America by English soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Then it spread quickly across America as people moved west.

Once one gets past the scientific stuff, yarrow are perennials that can produce gold, white, yellow, red, or pink flower clusters, thrive in full sun, are drought resistant, can grow in any soil type if well-drained, propagate by seeds and root division, can reach heights of 6" to 4', thrive in zones 3 – 10 (our area of Nebraska is zone 5 – 5A). They have delicate fernlike green-gray foliage which also adds to the look of a garden.

Not only are they attractive, they bloom abundantly in late spring through June, and bloom moderately well throughout the summer if spent blooms are deadheaded.

If you want to start yarrow from seed indoors, germination time can be from 6 to 8 days when abundant light is available. If dividing existing plants, do it in mid-spring when temperatures are fairly warm, say above 70 degrees. However, plants takes two years to become established, so be patient.

But their usefulness does not end there. The blossom heads on their long stems add punch to floral arrangements and as dried flowers, they are super for use in autumn decorations.

Yarrow can be mowed to form a highly competitive ground cover to control soil erosion.

Historically, yarrow is known by many names, many of which allude to its scientific names or ways it has been used. "Milfoil" comes from its species name, which means "thousand leafed." Even its generic name of *Achillea* is either linked to the



Trojan wars leader Achilles, who treated his wounded soldiers with yarrow, or linked to an individual named "Achilles," who has been credited as the "discoverer" of the plant.

Yarrow reduced inflammation and helped to stop bleeding, hence more names like "Soldier's Herb," "Soldier's Wound Wort" (from the Crusades), "Knight's Milfoil" (used for wounds incurred during jousting bouts), "Nosebleed" (leaves used as a nosebleed treatment), and "Carpenter's Herb" (a handy natural bandage).

In Sweden, yarrow is called "Field Hop" and has been used in the manufacture of beer (hence "hop").

Because of its fragrant aroma when the leaves are crushed, yarrow has been called "Old Man's Pepper" and used as snuff.

Obviously, yarrow is considered a medicinal herb and therefore has been used in astringents, as a stimulant or tonic (in herbal teas), in hair shampoos (even credited to prevent baldness through regular washings), to treat burns, for toothaches (fresh leaves chewed), cramps, fevers, kidney disorders, skin irritations, snakebites, cold remedies, just to mention a few. Even a 1st century A.D. Greek physician is said to have crushed the leaves and used the poultice for skin ulcers.

Not that I have had any experience with any of these remedies, but yarrow at least has an extensive history as a natural cure-all. However, I'll leave that to the pharmacists.

So, what more could one ask of a plant? Yarrow is easy to grow in almost any sunny spot, has attractive foliage and blooms during most or all of the summer, can be used as dried flower in decorations or used as ground cover, and could even be considered a medical marvel grown in the garden.

Yarrow seed packets are available in almost any store that sells seeds, but easy on-line shopping can be done at thegardenhelper.com or herbfresh.com or earlmay.com

Come on now, fellow gardeners, the fun begins, let's go for it! Garden lovers rock!

How's your garden growing?

Bea Patterson bp15624@alltel.net

Minimum Maintenance Country Roads

I can still remember the feeling of cool, soft dirt between my toes when I walked barefoot down the country road to the farm creek. These days, as I drive around the tri-state area, I occasionally take one of these "minimum maintenance" roads. Frequently, I discover some nostalgic scene to photograph, or to just appreciate. The dirt road is the last place you want to be on a rainy day, but for me, on a dusty summer day, it's a road back in time.



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More on last month's *The Ranch*

by Joe Smith

The Dooley's had a cistern down in the cow lot, water off the barn roofs no pump of any kind. Just a couple of buckets. It was probably 75 feet from the house. They had a Kerosene fridge. That was the later years. For a long time they only had an ice box, and they hauled ice from Roswell, 40 miles south. Their lighting was a Carbide system. Carbide mixed with water makes a gas. The house had a carbide generator on the north side. It was piped into the house in small pipes. The lights were carbide. The iron had a rubber hose to it and sat in a holder 'til it got hot. They killed a lot of moths every year that way. In the morning, Aunt Laura would sweep out all the moths off the floor. She had a big quilting frame and she and the neighbors would make quilts in the living room.

We slept out on the front porch, which was only screened in except for the north wall and a little of the east wall. I would sleep in a small hall room, and listen to the winds blow an eerie sound at night. With the coyotes howling, it was at times a spooky place for a young boy. The Dooley's never had kids of their own. The bathroom consisted of an out-house, and a Sears catalog. Friday night was bath night as they took eggs to town on Saturday, and bought groceries and ice. They raised probably 100 Rhode Island chickens, mostly for the eggs. But we ate chicken on Sunday. Aunt Laura would wring their necks and then when they stopped flopping around, she put them very hot water. It was my job to pluck all the feathers off, but she helped because I wasn't too good at it. I can smell those wet feathers now. The hen house had nests on both sides of a wall and of course small, two-inch holes ever so often. Bull snakes would come in and swallow the eggs, but Aunt Laura would put glass eggs in the nest so when the snake swallowed a glass egg and then went through the hole and swallowed another one he was then trapped and she killed him. Smart huh? Necessity is the mother of invention.

The Dooleys lived out their life on that ranch for close to 50 years. Aunt Laura died there; Harv died in Oklahoma on his nephew's place when he was around 87. If you can picture that painting where the farmer had a pitch fork and the lady a long dress with her hair in a bun, that's what they looked like, except for the bib overalls. Aunt Laura's hair was probably six feet long when she took it down at night to brush it. The next day it would be in a tight bun again. If it wasn't for the '38 Plymouth they had, it could have been in the 1800's era. Simple people, making a living the best way they could, hard work and pinching pennies.

Harv was a water dowser. I know that he found wells for people all around, some as deep as 300 feet or more, as water was scarce out in the ranch country. I never saw him do it myself. Joe



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