

Nothing Like A Garden In The Spring

By Grace S. Carraway

My husband and I have been vegetable gardeners for a number of years. Well, I guess you could say, we started raising vegetables in earnest during World War II.

While we were living on the base at Camp Lejeune, vegetable gardening was one of our recreational activities. Miss Ronnie Sheffield, of Raleigh, who is now head of the Woman's division at State Prison, and who previously was North Carolina's Recreational Director, was our recreational director at that time.

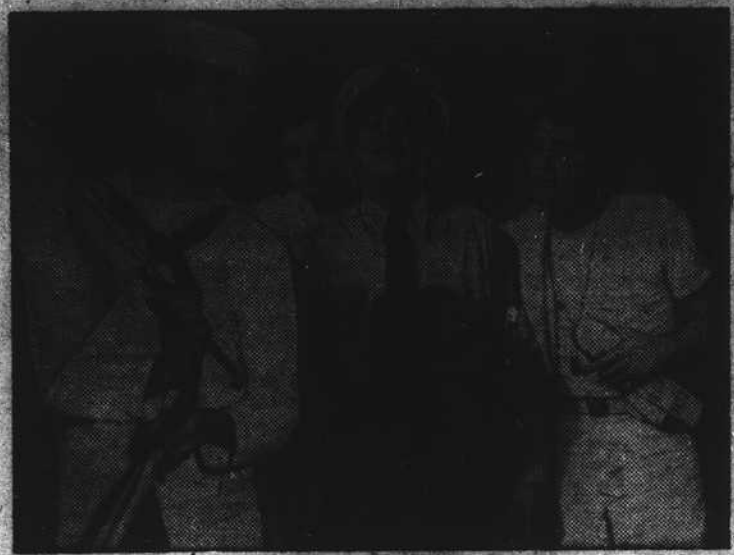
I was plenty dumb about gardening, and the situation was embarrassing to me, coming, as I did, from a rural community and having been a small town girl all my life, especially so, because there were big city gardeners next to my plot who could do a good job of gardening.

Miss Sheffield had a soil testing kit, and most of us tested our soil to determine what plants would grow best and what fertilizers and plant supplements we should use.

As inexperienced as I was, it didn't take much observing for me to know that the soil was right for growing nut grass. My husband and I battled with it all that summer. We got on our knees and pulled the grass out nut and all. We put it carefully in a basket and took it down the road several miles. A few days later when we were approaching the plot we noticed that it had an all-over green look. We both said, "Oh, No!"—but oh-yes! It was nut grass. We reacted our denuding episode several times that summer.

I bought a book, Vegetable Gardening, by Charles H. Nissiey, Extension professor of vegetable gardening, New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, and would chop with one hand and hold the book in my other hand so I could read it. I have never been able to accomplish anything with directions unless I could apply them at the same time that I was reading them.

Our gardening project was worthwhile. We didn't harvest many vegetables, but we found a plum tree, a black walnut and a green apple tree on the six mile journey from our home to the plot. We cooked some good pies, made with those green apples. Our daughter was about ten years old at the time, and we would take her and a half dozen children on our hikes to the garden. They found the rabbit tobacco in the adjacent fields to our plots excellent for smoking purposes, so I found out several years later. And also, we almost trained a bird dog on our trips back



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and forth.

My husband and I are still gardening. He has learned much since our nut grass episode at Camp Lejeune. And I am experienced in harvesting, canning, freezing and preserving. Every year I learn something new about gardening. Last year I found out that it is possible to have spring and fall collards. My husband planted some collards early and I was saving them until the frost struck them. My mother always said collards weren't fit to eat until the frost struck them. The collards had been in full leaf for some time, but I wouldn't be tempted. I was going to save them. One day I noticed that some small green worms had moved in and the collards looked like a swarm of locusts had passed over. I was complaining to a neighbor and he said I should have eaten all those Spring collards long ago.

I was determined to have some of those collards, so I cut some of the best and took them into the kitchen for washing. My husband saw the leaves in a pan in the sink and quickly volunteered to wash them. I found out later that he didn't trust me with

that wormy situation. I will admit that I do not think it too repulsive to eat a small little green cooked worm. I hardly think a person would notice a few cooked worms. They are the same color green and look like vegetable matter.

But my husband held a different opinion. He went after those little leaves and worms, like they were his worst enemy. After about ten washings, each leaf washed and scrubbed separately, he finally gave me permission to cook those battered collard leaves. They resembled a wet blanket that had been hanging on a line in a windstorm of several days duration.

At dinner time my husband came into the kitchen, sniffed about and asked what on earth smelled so bad. I assured him it was the collards. He replied that anything that smelled that bad wasn't fit to eat and was about to take them outside to the garbage disposal. I wasn't going to be outdone at this point in the game, and dared him, over my dead body to touch the collards. I softened the sting of my words by opening the oven door and letting the aroma of peach cobbler drift up to his nose. He

smiled and sat down at the dining table. It was a good dinner, country ham, collards, potato salad, sliced tomatoes, iced tea and peach cobbler. And I was thinking that if diplomats would serve collards instead of cocktails there might be better understanding all the way around.

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County Tourney Starts Monday

Pitt County Tournament basketball games will be played on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday nights next week in the gymnasium at East Carolina College in Greenville.

Both Farmville teams, boys and girls, are seeded in 7th place in the

tourney. Both teams have won 3 and lost 5 games in the conference set-up. The boys have won from Grifton, Stokes and Chicod. The girls have defeated Grimesland, Chicod and Stokes.

The Farmville Boys meet Chicod Monday night at 9:45. The Farmville girls appear in the Tournament Wednesday night against Bethel. Both Farmville teams will probably

make a better showing in the tournament than their records indicate, since both teams began with much new material this year and have made decisive improvements as they gained experience.

Tournament games are scheduled for 6:30, 7:45, 8:45 and 9:45. Ten teams will compete.

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