

Country philosopher

Masochist

by Amos Arthur Holmes

I do not put my hand in a burning fire.

I do not jump out of airplanes without a parachute.

I do not leap in front of moving trains and I do not try swimming in septic tanks.

My vast intellect keeps me from partaking of those dubious adventures.

An yet, with this same intellect, I have the audacity and stupidity to plant a garden each year.

I started out this spring with great energy. I planted lettuce, radishes, peas, and spinach. Just as everything was popping from the ground in excellent shape, a thunderstorm came along and sank the entire experiment.

Every single plant died in screaming agony, drowned in over three feet of water. I sat down in one of the lesser puddles and started to cry. The only thing that saved me was the fact that I hate lettuce, radishes, peas, and spinach.

Did I give up? Did I have sense enough to put away my hoe and spade? No sir, I called on my fantastic intellect and planted Brussels

sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and eggplant.

I watched those little buggers pop out of the ground, I saw them become healthy and green, and I shook my fist at the heavens in grand defiance. Ah! I shouldn't have done that.

I had no sooner lowered my fist when a soft rumble was heard in the west. No! Not another rain storm! Please Lord, I was only fooling.

And then...CRACK...a bolt of lightning, a terrible clap of thunder, and twenty-two thousand tons of water fell in seven seconds. I could hear my eggplants screeching, "HELP! I'M GOING DOWN FOR THE THIRD TIME."

The cauliflower was trying to swim and I threw a life jacket to three struggling Brussels sprouts. And then it was all over.

The sun came out bright and smiling and the air was fresh and invigorating. It would have been a perfect day but for the fact that my plants had perished.

I took off my hat and said a small prayer for my leafy departed friends. A small tremor of optimism assailed me as I remembered how

much I hate Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and eggplant.

I had, up to this time, spent over \$100 on topsoil, seeds, tools, and fertilizer. My wife reminded me constantly that we could have bought one hell-of-a-lot of vegetables for one hundred dollars. She advised me to give up gardening and made some nasty remark about my ability.

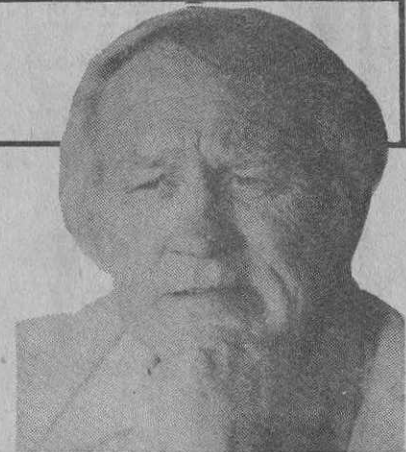
That did it! I would show her, I would show the world, that I had the greenest thumb in the county. I got out the Rototiller and plowed my garden.

I fertilized and worked the soil into a nice, light loam. I got down on my knees and planted my seeds in perfect order.

A week later the beans were up. The tomatoes looked absolutely gorgeous and the squash plants were luxurious. The cantaloupes had begun to flower and the pepper plants had set their fruits.

I worked the garden each day from dawn to late evening. I sweltered in the hot sun and was eaten alive by mosquitoes.

I fought potato bugs and cucumber beetles and obnoxious aphids. I



bought more fertilizer and hoes and cultivated until my back screamed in protest. But, by golly, my garden was growing.

But today, when I was weeding the beans I heard a most distressing sound coming out of the west. I looked up and the skies had turned dark and foreboding.

A flash of lightning tore through the sky and a horrendous clap of thunder shook the earth. Then, in ten seconds, forty thousand tons of water sank my garden. Killed it! Destroyed it! Devastated it!

And to add a little whip cream to my torment, my wife made her usual snotty remark.

"Congratulations, Luther Burbank, you've done it again."