

The Gardener

By Kay Melia

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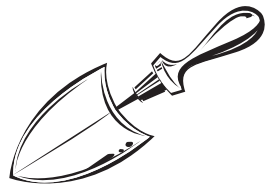
Let's see now.....so far this gardening year, I've had visits of excessive heat, strong winds, light hail, 3 cloudbursts, heavy frost, grasshoppers, amaranth-type pig weeds, puncture vines, hen-bit, zucchini, leafy spurge, deer, and aphids. And now comes those delightful little dudes known as tomato hornworms.

Sounds like a pretty normal summer, doesn't it? I would bet that every gardener reading this, and some who aren't, have experienced many of the same calamities. That's just the way it is when you choose to commune with nature by dropping seeds and plants in the ground with the intention of harvesting lots of good stuff.

Most of us old-timers understand that many of those

things will actually happen during the course of a normal gardening season, but we are quick to remind newcomers and non-gardeners that there are a lot more victories than there are losses. When we dig that first potato or pull that first onion; when we pick those first green beans or cut those first spinach leaves; or when we sample that first head of cabbage and harvest that first ripe tomato....only then does our heart beat with joy and our taste buds go nuts! Just getting to that point makes it all worthwhile.

But tomato hornworms!! Is there anything in the garden as ugly? Squash bugs, perhaps. But hornworms will desecrate a tomato vine quicker than you can say New York Yankees. And many times they can be difficult to locate because they are the



exact same color as what they eat, which happens to be just about every leaf on the vine. When you see a tomato plant branch that has had it's leaves eaten off, just follow the trail. You'll always find that big fat sucker. I dispose of them by carefully plucking them from the vine. (very carefully or you'll squish yourself with a bit of green slime, which actually won't hurt you). I then dig a small hole in the ground, deposit that bad boy, and cover with several inches of your best garden soil. I then proceed to tromp on the soil a few times. You'll never see him again, but there may be better methods of disposal.

Tomato hornworms are native to the United States, and are common throughout the northern states. They feed only on solanaceous plants, members of the nightshade family, which includes potatoes, egg plant, peppers, and of course tomatoes. The adult stage of the varmint is the "sphinx" or "hummingbird" moth, a large heavy-bodied moth with a four or five inch wingspan that lays eggs on the underside of leaves. The resulting green caterpillar gets it's name from a black projection, or horn, on the last abdominal section of it's body.

I suppose there are sprays or dusts that will rid your plants of these little beauties, but there are never very many around at a time. But you absolutely must check your plants daily to determine if they are there, and believe me when I say you'll spot the damage very quickly because an entire branch will likely be devoid of leaves. Just follow the trail to locate the beast, and then do whatever you think is the best way to dispose of him.

Then, go out again tomorrow, and the next day, and everyday until the first frost to see if there are others hanging around. If you find others, consider wearing gloves and a long sleeve shirt when you pluck them from the vine!

Poetry Winners

Jacy Hilt was among the poetry winners in the freshman class. She will have this poem published.

Joy
Jacy Hilt
Freshman

Joy seems lime green
Like the bright colors usually bring
I see myself standing in a big,
beautiful meadow

I hear the soft rustle of the tree leaves and the chirping of the birds

It's as if they are talking to me
I smell the fresh air and wildflowers
I touch the cool water as it flows down the long stream
I taste the sweet apples on my tongue

Win or lose we're still a team.
We came together with one dream.

Through the practices running very late
All our hard work became our fate.

Some play for fun,
Some play for no reason,
But every year during this season...
I play for passion.

I see the moon fade away into the night sky

I hear animals restlessly awake from their nightly slumber

I smell the morning dew resting upon my surroundings
I touch my skin and feel my warmth, for I know this is real
I taste the new day that is thrust upon me

Bailey Merklin was among the poetry winners in the freshman class. She will have this poem published.

Passion
Bailey Merklin
Freshman

I gave my heart to the game.
Blood, sweat, tears, and pain.
Now, we have our chance of fame.
If we win we'll have everything to gain.

Aly Schlepp was among the poetry winners in the freshman class. She will have this poem published.

The Morning Era
Aly Schlepp
Freshman

Sorrow seems like lavender
Like the morning sky waking for another day

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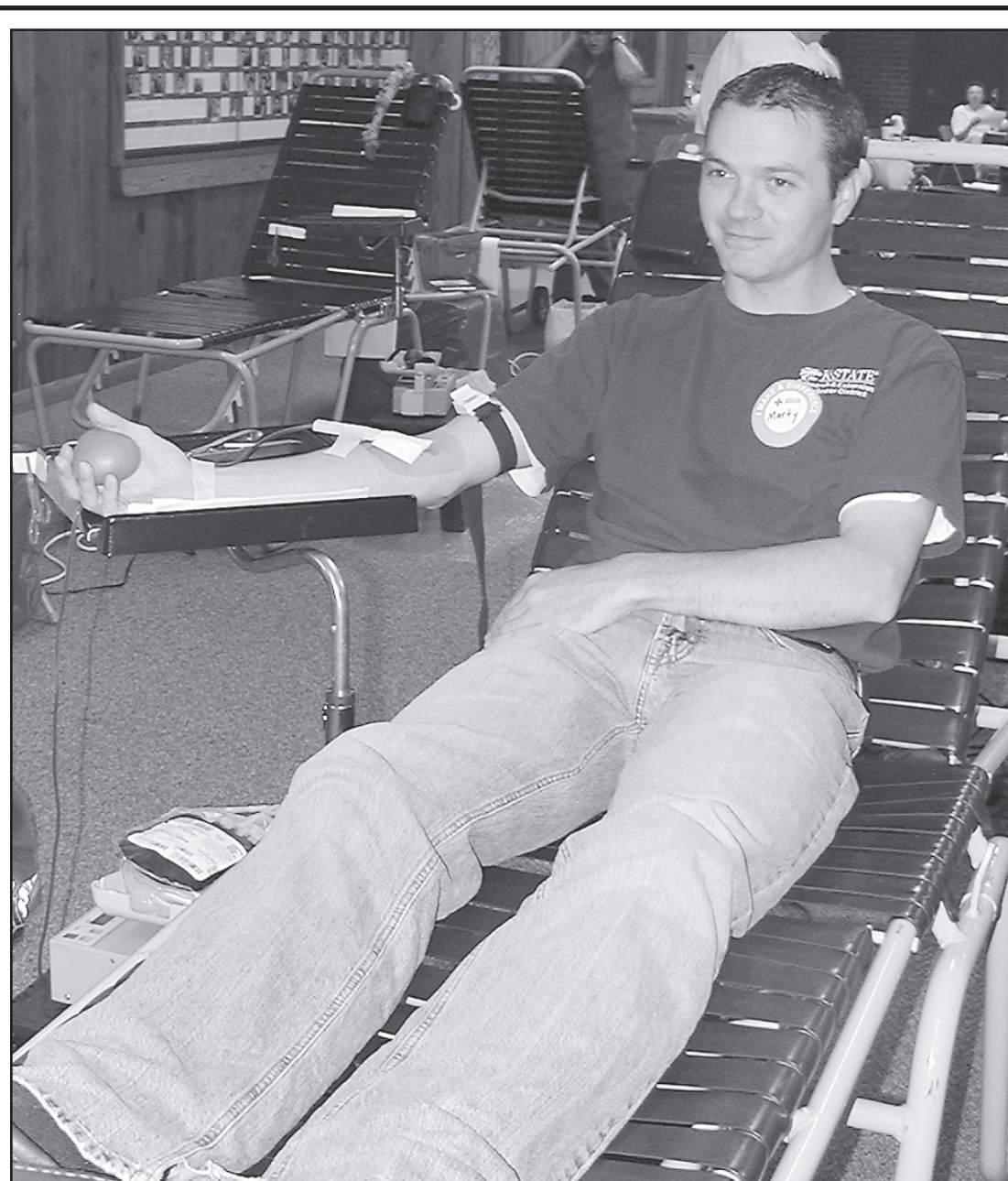
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MARTY FEAR gives blood during at the Red Cross blood drive held on June 23 at Peace Lutheran Church.
Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

The July 4th Fireworks Committee is writing this letter to express their sincere appreciation to the citizens of St. Francis and Cheyenne County for the support that you gave our group during the past 4 months.

We wish to say thank you to the St. Francis City Council for approving our celebration idea last March and allowing it to move forward. *The St. Francis Herald* did a great job giving us coverage since mid-March, you helped generate excitement and encouraged people to donate money. The coverage of July 4th day was fantastic. The colored pictures of so many smiling faces says it all. Thank you Karen.

Thanks to Kari Gilliland, Sharissa and Dustin Andrist, Lori and Reid Raile for organizing the parade and games in the park. Laura Brunk and the SFCHS Junior Class organized the All-American Hot Dog meal.

Thank you to the Lifeguards at the St. Francis Swimming Pool and Janet Carman at the Cheyenne County Museum.

Debbie Fiala, Matt Whitmore and Sherry Chaffin created the CD of patriotic music that was used during the fireworks. What a fine job.

Thank you Amy Rieger for returning from Hays to lead the Karaoke Sing-A-Long and Randy Smestead as our DJ.

Greg Walz at Walz Welding donated his time and material to construct the rocket and mortar launchers that we needed.

Elmer Kellner displayed his beautiful set of American Flags on the highway median to help draw attention to the location.

Andy and Mary Beikman made the welcome sign, thanks so much.

We appreciate the help of city employees, Glenn Schliep, Earl Hankins and Police Officer Darrel Thomas.

Thank you to Brock McAtee and Chris Bracelin of St. Francis Fire Department for manning the fire truck and giving up your evening with family and friends.

The Girl Scouts, Shrine Club and St. Francis Community Church gave of their time to provide spectators with snacks and cold drinks. We appreciate what you did.

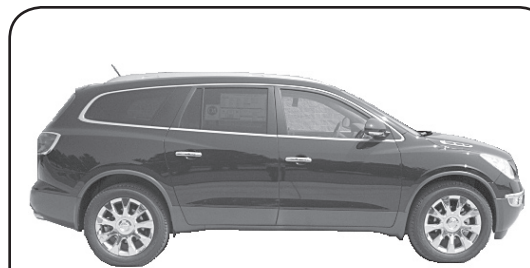
Thank you to the surrounding residential and commercial property owners that allowed people to sit and park on your lots.

Most of all, we want to thank the citizens of this county that trusted us with their money in order for such a celebration to take place.

We look forward to another celebration next year. Same time, same place.

Sincerely, Rodney Neitzel, Roger Neitzel, John and Anita Amack, Joyce Russ, St. Francis

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thought to ponder....Why are we afraid of falling?

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