



Time to Go Big

A letter from the editor of Hobby Farm Home

By Karen Keb Acevedo

With spring on the horizon, I'm thinking about all those New Year's goals I made for the farm and the house. It's time to go big--and get serious about the big spring projects: decide which to forget and which to bring to fruition.

If you're like me, the list is long and money is short, but there are so many of what we consider "big projects" that can be done quite cheaply.

For example: Deciding on and planting a ground cover (or several) around the farm; this can make such a difference in your landscape. Ground covers don't just gracefully cover the ground, they're also utilitarian in that they help control soil erosion on slopes, eliminating the need for dangerous mowing. Punch up an otherwise dreary landscape with one or more of the ground-covering plants we profile on page 54.

Another "big" project we've got in our heads is building a farm sanctuary (page 72). You could go the elaborate route (like P. Allen Smith describes on page 46) or you could simply arrange a few chairs, a flea market table and some candles—voilà! Instant "farm sanctuary" anywhere you care to put it on your property.

If you want to go all out, how about purchasing one of those gauzy gazebos and creating an outdoor room—bug free! I did this last year and even slept outside on a few nights. This arrangement wasn't posh (an air mattress and a quilt), but it was an adventure as I spied the nocturnal antics of raccoons in a tree, just outside my tent. Ah ... the simple pleasures of farm life!

Speaking of simple pleasures, what's more delightful than a farm-fresh egg? Jo Stewart's fantastic recipes always inspire me in the traditional-British-countryside kind of way and her egg-dependent recipes in this issue are no different. How about whipping up that glorious raspberry pavlova on page 24 or that easy hollandaise on page 25? Eggs can be tricky to deal with, but with the hens laying again, it's a good time to hone your skills in the kitchen.

In part one of our series on the John C. Campbell Folk School on page 84, read about how I honed some old, college-day skills in the school's metalwork studio. Being enamored with history and traditional American crafts, I enrolled in a week-long tinsmithing class. The act of creating 18th century tinware by hand put me in touch with our rural ancestors and my desire to keep our traditions alive.

I realized that the essence of a farm woman is having a multitude of skills in your repertoire from which to draw. Being adept with our hands gives us confidence and the ability to learn new skills readily.

If only I didn't have a job, I could take classes in spinning, weaving, quilting and cooking, transforming myself into Super Farmwoman in no time! And finally, don't miss our "Garden Garb" review on page 62. There's nothing like a little retail therapy to get you in the mood to take on a new task (new workout clothes in January, anyone?). Happy spring!

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