

Points East

By: Ike Adams

I've known people all my life who insisted on planting stuff and running the rest of the farm according to the "signs." I know very little about the subject except that it has something to do with the zodiac and the moon and somehow winds up being translated into parts of the human body. If the signs are the arms, for example it's either a bad sign or a good time to plant whatever it is you're planting. I had aunts that set hens according to the signs so the eggs would be sure to hatch and they'd use them to can by. Kraut would keep better and stay whiter if it was prepared under a certain sign and so forth. My uncle Steve Craft would not even consider castrating a hog unless the signs were right.

My Dad, on the other hand, always professed that if it was the middle of May and the ground was dry, that was a good sign that it was time to plant corn. Except for a time or two when dry weather or a bad windstorm caused considerable damage, I don't remember him ever having a failed crop nor do I remember him ever buying a Farmer's Almanac—which contains a calendar that tells you what the sign are in every day of the year.

Mom always bought one along with red liniment and vanilla extract from Willie Whitaker who sold Baled products door to door in an old Willy's panel truck and she did some vegetable gardening and then setting by the signs. Any advice she ever gave Dad though was either laughed off or went in one ear and out the other.

Suffice it to say that I take after my Dad when planning time rolls around. But I'm beginning to wonder whether or not there's something to this sign business.

Last year I bought enough Roma I'll be seed to plant half an acre. The reason I got so many was because the boys at Bluegrass Hardware already had them bagged up in \$2.00 portions that would more than fill a pint jar. Junior and Kathy Helmer were visiting the day I planted them and Junior insisted that they wouldn't make a thing because the signs were in the neck or ears or somewhere else that spelled doom. Beans if they were planted that day.

To make a long story short, I had the prettiest bean patch you ever saw. Nice, dark and healthy, they grew and grew and grew and finally died without ever setting a bean that I saw. I wrote the experience off as a combination of bad seed and a garden soil more fitted for making clay pottery than cultivation. Even after I had worked more than two tons of manure from the Garmard County stockyards into my garden soil was definitely orange and a hand full of it balled up and squeezed a time or two and a lethal weapon.

This year I planted beans more for the exercise, force of habit and an excuse to fire up my old Troy-Bilt tiller than anything else. I still had more than two thirds of the bag of seed that I bought last year so I planted

porch and I saw the big flower bed was full of blooming plants. Yes, it was Bessie Cromer, my friend, who had worked up the bed and bought already blooming flowers to greet us when we got home. It was she who also came to our aide when I needed help taking care of Mat when trying to soothe his pain would keep me up all night. It was she who learned the technique of gently smoothing the pain away in his back when I had to take a break. Thank you once again, Bessie, I will never forget your kindness and understanding. You are the diamond in my string of jewels.

Now, back to the reason for my unexpected trip to E.L.O., the area I lived in as a child and had wanted to return to for a visit, but not for this occasion. My brother, Jim, had been trying out a motorcycle for one of his friends, not knowing it had a fault and couldn't be controlled at certain speeds or conditions. He was known as an expert on handling them so had no fear of driving it up the mountain and back to the owner. He never made it back. Somewhere in a curve on the mountain, as he was returning, something went wrong and he was thrown into a post of the guard-rail. I was called to identify him and the shock of what he saw was the reason he was so deathly pale when he met me at the station. Jim's head had been crushed by contact with the post and fence and the mortician had to repair it as best he could to allow him to be viewed through a casket covering the casket. The next day, we watched as the firestorm in our family was laid to rest.

I don't remember much about my return home except it was in a family car and by way of Cincinnati, and driven by a brother, probably Herb. What I do remember is, I was pounds lighter and tired.

Being tired and exhausted from the ordeal I had just been through was not exactly a shock on our preparation for the winter ahead and more problems we did not know we were facing.

Earlier in the fall, we had worked at the barn, grading tobacco, when we heard planes flying low overhead, not just a few, there were several squadrons we later learned, and our curiosity was aroused. What did that mean? Why so many? Where were they going? Then, all the radio news was of the war in Germany, the havoc it was wreaking in England and France. Fascist Italy had joined forces with Nazi Germany and the world was in danger. Then the news the U.S.A. was sending troops, our young men, to the aid of our neighbors in Europe and we were at war. There was turmoil everywhere and since we had no phones nor T.V. at that time, we had no way to keep up except by the faithful radio.

News travels fast, even did so before the time of T.V., and soon the word got out men were needed to fight the enemies of freedom and factories were being converted into defense plants, making war planes instead of household equipment. Help was needed in both places, war has no choice of people so anyone able and willing to fight was needed to join one of the services, the rest to apply for a job in one of the defense plants.

Then the news on Dec. 11 of Japan bombing Pearl Harbor as spread nation wide and every available person

son was asked to do his/her part in serving our country. We were now in World War II and every branch of the service had to train these new recruits in the specialty of the service he/she had joined before sending them into combat, either the European Theater where Nazi bombs were destroying who cities, and/or the Islands in the South Sea, ruled by Japan or perhaps even Japan itself. Most of us were confused by the dual war going on and did not realize at that time just how big it was. Both areas were fields of danger and our youth was up to the challenge and kept volunteering as long as there was a need to protect their country, THE USA, from the enemy.

Soon after this announcement, Mat's mind was made up quickly and, after giving me instructions to finish gathering the corn — we had already gathered it from the fields

and the last big shock was in front of the barn. I was meant pulling the corn from the stalks, tying the stalks into bundles to be later fed to the cattle, then adding the corn to the already big pile in the loft, see that the cows were attended to, milked twice a day, and take care of things until he returned, he really thought it would be, so, he packed his clothes and took off for Cincinnati and a job.

Thank goodness, there were only a few bushels of corn left on the shock for, by now, it was cold weather and pulling it from frozen stalks was a chore but getting it into the loft was the hardest part. As it was pulled from the frozen stalks, it was put into bushel baskets and I took one basket at a time, climbed the narrow steps, pushed the basket across the floor and dumped it. When it was finished, the corn was touching the roof.

Cont. to A3

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By Zi Graves

Why??

Last week I left you in East Liverpool, Ohio where I was attending my brother's funeral after a series of problems had hounded me from the time I received the message at the Billows post office until I met me at the station in Steubenville, Ohio, with only one more leg of my journey to go and that 25 miles or so, was in the car close to one who shared my grief.

And, if it hadn't been for my very dear friend, Jay Mize, the demon hounding me may have succeeded in keeping me at home. "True friends are like diamonds, precious and rare, false ones like autumn leaves, found everywhere," Jay and his wife, Betty, were those true ones rarely found in one's lifetime. God has been good to me in that area, that kind may be scarce but I have been lucky enough to have found others I can depend on in my time of need and I can truly call FRIEND. One of them, Bessie

Cromer, was here today with a mess of freshly picked green beans and new potatoes, also two pots of nasturtiums ready to be transplanted. She knows that is one of my very favorite flowers. I may as well tell of another occasion when she gave flowers to the living instead of waiting till I couldn't see them.

When Mat was in the hospital, I was staying day and night with him, she knew I did not have the time or energy to dig up the bed and plant my flowers. She also knew when they were planted in front of the porch where she had previously helped building a stone wall around the beds where flowers bloomed continuously all summer and late into autumn. Mat was finally released and we returned home, he was still weak and wobbly from his illness and I was practically in the same shape from loss of sleep, etc. It was past time to plant flowers and I had no desire nor energy to do it anyway, so had no idea I needn't worry about it till we stepped on the