



“Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays
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Lemons Don't Always Produce Lemonade

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Suspecting its demise might be imminent, I feel it time to revisit my lemon plant. (Do I call it a tree? Or a bush? Or, simply, more accurately, a nuisance?)

In spite of my usual superb record-keeping, I was unable to find anything on its origins. Oh, just looking in the wrong book: April 24, 2004, *Wayside Gardens*, \$29.95. The first picture I have is dated March first, 2005, and shows what I presume is the first fruit on a pretty full grown (for it) plant.



I've already toyed with ordering a new one once the new catalogues arrive for I have enjoyed its products. The blossoms are beautiful and smell heavenly and the lemons – once there – are sweet and superb (even if I only harvest one or two a year – and that's if I'm lucky).

The plant I live with now is scrawny and certainly nothing to look at with admiration. The highest branch (45”) is totally denuded and probably has been for a while. (Things got out of hand in December. I'm sure you understand.) Leaves of varying sizes cover the rest of the branches, hanging on for what I'm

guessing is dear life.

Its problem? Besides me, it's suffering from aphids. I did write about them on May 23, 2020, and can't say I see any now. Oh – all I need is to get up from the table and walk to the darned thing and look. I've tried spraying it with aphid killer and then, when that failed, wiping each leaf (I think they said detergent) which cleaned them up beautifully if hardly permanently. I will give the little bugs credit for not seeking further homes. Perhaps African violets don't want them (fortunately) and nothing wants to get close to my cactus (just one tall threatening spike). I avoid it too.



The aphids have created such a sticky mess that a white sheet is spread around on the floor making it appear like a misplaced Christmas tree. And, no, decorating it with pretty little bulbs has not occurred to me – till now. Bad idea.

Somewhere I have a Readers Digest article (proving as well I must be spending a lot of time in waiting rooms – too much else to read here at home) – anyway, the article explains how easy it is for a wayward lemon to lose its heredity. They can very easily cross-pollinate with any other kind of citrus with no promise of what might result. Besides being sticky and half-bare, mine had always had very sharp thorns. I imagine they're a throwback to something. I wonder what, certainly not lemon trees.

When I lived in the Bay Area, I had my own lemon tree in the backyard. Talk about a touch of Eden! I was always running out to pick one – only how many lemons can one truly enjoy? I see Harry and David are still advertising boxes of oranges or grapefruits but never lemons. That hardly surprises me. On, fish, I want lots. I'll take that anytime over tartar sauce. I'm sure I made lemonade until we were all tired of the drink. I've hardly touched it since. But sweet memories of childhood when I was given a peppermint stick with which to suck a lemon. It's a slow job. Wonder if I was being treated for a sore throat or if its purpose was just to keep "Little Susan" occupied and out of the way.

California also had artichokes just sitting there waiting to be picked. That was something new but I learned to enjoy (with all that melted butter). Can't say I appreciated much else from any of those gardens (my babies were just that with more coming) – well, yes, the roses which remain favorites (but not when they are under a foot and a half of snow).

Looking back now I wish I'd taken more time to enjoy those gardens – between student riots and local shootings. Looking now, I'm very happy to be just where I am.

I can buy a new lemon plant.



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