

Long live the farmers and their manure piles

A Christmas story by: Carolyn j Morris

Have you ever had to purchase something for the very first time when it was always readily available to you in the past? My friend and her family had a beautiful large property in the country. As you turned in their driveway, several trees lined the path. The house stood in a clearing with gardens welcoming you. The land surrounding the house had rolling hills, a pond, and many mature trees. There were deciduous trees and bushes that shed their leaves in the fall. Then there were the coniferous trees that had needles and produced cones. They had many types of these trees such as pines, firs, and spruce.

My friend's family sold their spectacular property this past year and moved to Toronto. The Advent season had arrived and decorations were to be displayed at an upcoming event. My friend was in charge of decorations. For the first time in her life, she had to purchase evergreen boughs; and it was disconcerting!

I, of course, could easily relate to her devastating dilemma. I grew up on our family farm where we raised purebred beef cattle. Planting and managing a vegetable garden, gathering and freezing the produce was a way of life. In early spring, we tilled the land, spread manure from the manure

pile and mixed the soil with great dedication. The garden produced many vegetables for the summer and autumn months.

As a teenager I moved to Toronto to further my education. A few years later, my husband and I purchased our first house in Toronto. We had a small backyard, but I thought I could always make room for lettuce and a few tomato plants. Our front yard had lush green grass but again; I felt, there was enough room for a flower garden. This was our very own garden so I was excited! I lifted the sod and tilled the soil with great pleasure. I wasn't prepared however for the next step. I had to purchase manure!

I went to the garden shop and mulled around the fertilizer for quite some time. The staff offered to assist me, but of course, I knew everything there was to know about manure. I had been forking it out of cattle barns since I could hold a pitchfork! Eventually, I needed to buy something or leave; I was starting to get looks. This was ridiculous; I couldn't bring myself to buy cow manure so I finally decided on the sheep manure!

Twenty-five years later, it's still hard to purchase manure so I compromise and buy the triple mix. Long live the farmers and their manure piles!