



# Farm Tales

*A Little Corner  
of the Garden*

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# Dear Reader

I got up awfully early this morning. The sky was just getting light. As I watched the sun rising over the hill to the east, I realized how far north its path was starting on the eastern ridge.

Of course, everybody knows the sun rises in the east every day. But exactly where on the eastern horizon the sun peeps over the ridge changes depending on what season we are in. In the spring, we go from the short days in the winter (where the sun rises in the southern part of the eastern sky) to longer days of the summer (where the sun rises in the northern part of the eastern sky).

In the spring, a little every day, the path of the sun in the sky moves a little further north. Although the movement is the same, I don't notice it in the same way every day... Maybe because it has been cloudy for several days, or maybe I've just been busy, it can sometimes look like the position of the sunrise just jumps to the north.

This morning, as the sun rose, the sky was full of bright pinky-red light shining on a few wispy clouds. You never know what the weather may be from one day to the next, especially this time of the year. Sometimes the weather forecast predicts exactly what the weather will be, and other times it is way off. Here at the farm, we had a lovely warming-up kind of day yesterday, and the forecast for today was that it would be the same kind of day.

This morning, however, it was surprisingly chilly.

Every season comes with its own unique changes to the weather. And whether it's cold and getting warm, warm and getting hotter, hot and getting cooler, or cool and getting cold, the changes give everyone something to talk about. When I was growing up, and the conversation turned to what the weather was, my dad's tried and true expression would be:

**“Whether it's cold or whether it's hot, we're going to have weather, whether or not!”**

The memory makes me smile. Especially when I remember how we would roll our eyes at what would come next:

**“Chili today and hot tamale!”**

My dad and his silly sayings had the wonderful effect of taking worries and turning them into something not to worry over.

I certainly wasn't going to worry over the weather this morning. Today should be a day of scheming and planning.

The scheming had to do with figuring out what I was going to plant in my garden, and the planning was about where my garden would actually be.

Over the last few years, I have tried several different places for my garden. Living on a farm, I guess it's an advantage that I have plenty of room and different locations to choose from. But sometimes I feel like it's a disadvantage because there are so many options. It's very hard to decide just where it should go.

So after a couple of days of thinking about it, I felt ready to decide! I grabbed a cup of coffee and headed down to look, one more time, at all of the possible choices for my garden location this year.

Halfway down the path, I just stopped to listen to all the spring sounds. The birds sound so different this morning. Their busy songs and chirps ring out happily. Even the cardinals, who have been here all year round, sound excited for the nest building to come.

On the breeze coming from the east, in the direction of town, I could hear very, very faintly the sound of the church bells. I heard the gong of the bell nine times. Well, in truth, I only heard the last seven gongs, but I knew it was 9 o'clock.

I also heard, thanks to the dry leaves on the path, something skittering up right behind me. It wasn't a surprise at all to see my friend, the little red-tailed squirrel.

"Whatcha doing?" He asked, coming along beside me.

Now, for those of you who read Farm Tales every month, you know about my friend, the little red-tailed squirrel. As a baby squirrel, he fell from his nest in the eaves of the barn and hit his sweet head. Although the fall didn't hurt him, it changed everything in his world and mine. From then on, he could talk to me. Since then, we have become very good friends, and he tells me all the news from the other critters on our farm. His best friend on the farm is Ink, the little black cat that lives in the shed. And recently, he made friends with the beaver family that built their lodge in the stream.

"I'm about to plan out my garden," I said. "I have to decide where I am planting what vegetables, and where my flowers are going to go. There's a lot to figure out. And then I need to decide when I start my seeds in the greenhouse. This time of year is very exciting!"

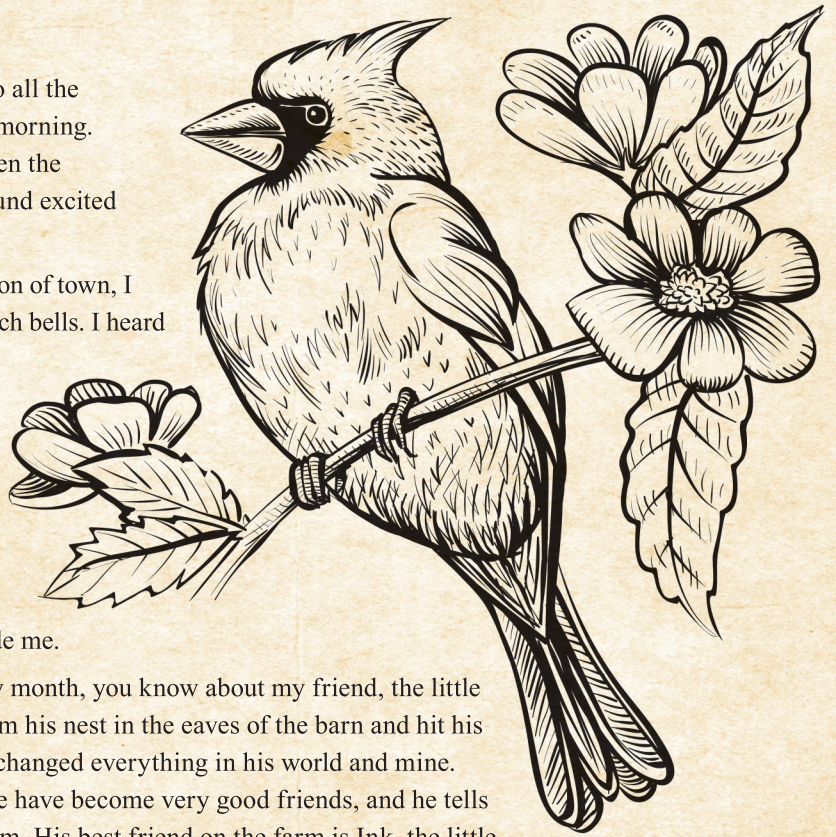
He gave me the look he usually does when he doesn't understand why I can be so excited. If you can, imagine a little squirrel, looking a little confused, a little concerned, all the while smiling a very sweet squirrel smile.

"You plan where you plant things?" he asked with that look on his face.

"Well... yes," I said.

"That seems like a whole lot of trouble!" he said.

"When I find a nut, I go right to a place that's easy to dig and make a hole and put it in there, and then I don't think about it again. Of course, it is a problem when I want to go eat a nut, and I can't find where I buried it! That can be a real problem, especially this time of year when there's nothing very good to eat. And it is super disappointing when you dig and dig, and you find where you put a nut, but it has a stem and roots coming out of it, and you know it's too late. It's already starting to turn into a tree!"



I chuckled. I love his perspective on just about everything.

“Well,” I said. “When you have a garden, like I want to have, you really have to think through where everything goes. Some plants need a lot of space, some plants like to climb a trellis, and I want it all to look pretty so I can enjoy being out in my garden.”

“What are you going to grow?” he asked, becoming interested.

“Well, I was thinking that I need a big space for squashes, melons, and pumpkins. I want my cucumbers to grow on a trellis this year, and of course, I need rows of greens,” I said. As I said this out loud, I started to imagine what it would look like and began to see right where I wanted the rows of my garden.

“Are you going to grow any green beans again or maybe some peas?” he asked.

And the way he asked it, I could tell that he was way more interested in green beans and peas than anything else I had mentioned.

“Wait a minute,” I said. “Did you eat any green beans or peas last year out of the garden?”

“I might have...,” he said, looking down. Then he looked up at me and saw that I was smiling. “... maybe just a couple. OK, yeah, I ate as many as I could pick without you noticing too much. You have no idea how much I love green beans and peas!”

“Hmmm,” I said, thinking. “Maybe this year that needs to be part of my plan... I can get a few more seed packets. What would you think if I planted a row or two just for you?”

“Oh boy, would you?” He looked so happy that I wished I were planting seeds instead of just planning where the seeds would go.

“OK, and maybe I will plant some catnip for Ink. I can give you both just a little corner of my garden.” As I said this, I started to measure off where his little corner of the garden would be.

When I turned around, he was gone, and all I saw was the flash of his little red tail darting down to the shed. I knew he couldn't wait to tell Ink about their garden!

Well, I'd better get back to my measuring.

Have a day full of blessings,

Bron

