

8-16-19 Ordinary and Extraordinary

While the extraordinary occurrence of Eastern Equine encephalitis (EEE), so-called rare, but deadly disease, haunts our lives more frequently than it used to, the ordinary continues to happen as well. And ordinary can be exceptional, extraordinary and wonderful.

It is the season of ripe blueberries. Way back in the spring, my photos of an abundance of blueberry buds, and later, the abundance of young berries, were accompanied by captions predicting a bumper crop this year. My prediction came to “fruition”. Apparently, they loved the rainy spring and were charged to handle the summer’s heat.

I have loved hearing family’s stories of very successful blueberry picking events. They exhibited valuable priorities of quality time together with family, resulting in laughter, blueberry cake, blueberry pies, and, of course, some smiling blue mouths along the way.

Last week, as I munched on wild high bush blueberries while out walking around a pond, memories of blueberry picking while raising my children surfaced. One memory was the day I made my children pick more. That’s right, I made them! Our Plympton home was loaded with both the low growing and high bush wild berries. One summer day, when I knew there were lots of berries to harvest, I sent out all six to gather some so that I could make pancakes for them or maybe a cake.

They were young but still, their offering was pitiful, and they had only been out there for a few minutes! Each child was then handed a measuring cup and told not to return until it was full. They grumbled and groaned. I was not their friend, or so they thought.

Those cups were filled. It cost nothing but some time outdoors with siblings and nature. I was able to make pancakes and a cake.

Their young viewpoint was that of Maynard G. Krebs shuddering and exclaiming with fear and trepidation, “Work?!!”

Those same children who grumbled about how tough I was on them, later in life discovered they had learned valuable life skills, while their mother was not their best friend. Just the other day, my son was telling me how shocked he was when he went to college and discovered some students had no idea how to do their

own laundry. They looked with wonder and dismay at the washing machine and had to ask for help.

I also am reminded of my son who married a woman with a child. He loved the child like his own but had to counsel his wife, “Stop worrying if your daughter is your best friend. Be her mother. The rest will follow.” Words of wisdom.

Yes, picking blueberries can be a valuable life lesson. It may not seem extraordinary at that time but looking back on it and recalling the albeit smaller in size berry that was packed with extra flavor of wild berries, my mouth waters and I smile knowing my children learned the value of work and of nature’s gifts.

Please enjoy nature and all her extraordinary and wonderful experiences she offers. At the same time, it is always wise to stay informed of risks and take the appropriate precautions to prevent sun burns, tick borne disease and now, mosquito borne disease.

Those precautions are ordinary and well-known and yet so necessary during these extraordinary times.

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