

Thursday, 07/29/10 Pickled-Swelting in this hot and humid summer's day.

Well I'm feeling a little like a pickle on this hot and humid day. Almost like a pressure cooker with very high humidity and temperatures soaring into the 90's this morning. And I have been pickling. I put up 21 quarts of hot dill pickles last week and my sister came up to town and made another 7 quarts from my cukes on Friday. And I have another refrigerator drawer practically full ready to make another batch. My 60x50 foot garden is at my mom's a mile down the road. She watches over and waters the garden and coaches the whole process of planting and tending the garden and most importantly guides the multi-generation learned process of making hot dill pickles. The ancient recipe on a stained index card is pulled out annually and mom has things ready for the day. Last week was one of those hot swelting days that give you extra satisfaction when the job of canning is done. I couldn't help but line some of the jars on my truck tailgate for a shot of them as I took them home to store in my basement. There just is such satisfaction in growing and canning your own vegetables. No doubt these dill pickles will make a bold appearance for our fall and winter family gatherings. And I have already given away a few jars to family and special friends.

And yes it has been hot and dry. Our drought continues. The front that swept through the state last night dumped its rain north of us again. Hardly a drop dripped from my rain gauge this morning when I checked it. Although my mom has been watering our garden the local farmer's corn is not as fortunate. Although it is maturing and is tassling-up it sure looks stunted to me. Some afternoons the corn leaves look all curled. And the corn is not even as tall as me. By now it should be over my head high. Gee last summer it was too much rain that caused the corn to be stunted and the Yeaton's reported chopping half the normal amount of corn in September. And this year it will be the drought that curses them. I am so worried about them hanging on with low milk prices, flooded field to dried up fields in a year's time. Their farm is such a terrific piece of Epsom and our culture that I worry how these weather extremes may drive them out of business.

Last weekend it was "hot, hot, hot and terribly, terribly humid" as my mother put it when I called home from my camp in Downeast Maine Saturday. But it was rainy and cool there all day Saturday and we were all wearing long sleeve shirts. The drive up to Owls Head for the air show at the museum on Saturday had to be postponed until Sunday. But Sunday was a picture perfect day. My wife and I, my daughter and two grand kids Katie 6 and Erin 4 had a wonderful day at the Transportation Museum. A ride in the Model-T Ford started our day which ended mid afternoon with a great air show.

One thing I did want to mention, well actually a couple. At camp two weekends ago, that would be on July 17, to my surprise Erin and I spotted a cluster of newly laid frog eggs out at the beaver pond. I have never seen frog eggs mid summer before. And just yesterday my daughter Amy found a tomato horned worm on her plants. She put it in a dish and had it tucked away. When I arrived I showed it to Erin and we quickly headed out to her garden where we spotted three more. Erin deftly plucked them from the plants. These are four-inch long fat as cigar plump green monsters. But Erin spent the rest of the evening playing with them. I couldn't help but notice at one point as she headed off the playhouse that she had the container of ugly green monster worms in one hand and a bag with little dolls in the other as she headed out. And me without a camera. But my mind's eye has captured it well. Have you just sat back and watched life unfold around you lately? You really should.