

The Urban Gardener

The Urban Gardener's Thanksgiving Day Schedule

(Editor's Note: Due to popular demand, we are pleased to reprint Mary Casey Forry's classic column about her schedule of activities around the house for Thanksgiving Day. This article first appeared in the Dorchester Reporter in November 1986.)

BY MARY CASEY FORRY

6:15 a.m. - Rise and attempt to shine. Find way to kitchen without falling over sleeping animals on the dark, narrow, back stairs. Remove cold, dead fowl from refrigerator and give it a sponge bath, remembering to remove innards in little plastic bags which butcher hides in any number of cavities throughout carcass. Preheat oven.

6:30 a.m. - Remove celery and onions from refrigerator; cut them into small pieces and saute them in pan while attempting to keep stomach under control. Add bread and spices and prepare to insert them into fowl. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to cut corners by stuffing the fowl the night before, or everyone at table will die of food poisoning before sundown.



6:35 a.m. - Rummage through dark house looking for needle and thread with which to sew fowl back together again. Contort the fowl

to fit into roasting pan by bending its little wings behind its back. If this does not work, cut them off (he's finished using them).

6:45 a.m. - Massage fowl liberally with butter or some other lubricant (other than motor oil) to keep it moist while cooking. This procedure never works, but it makes us feel like Julia Child.

6:50 a.m. - Put fowl in oven and check cooking chart for time. Figure anywhere between five and 36 hours until fowl is done. If anyone asks later what time dinner is, be optimistic and say, "Sometime today."

7:00 a.m. - Remove bakery pies from trunk of car and line them up where everyone can see them. Throw boxes away and when family asks if you made them, look offended, lie and say, "Of course."

7:05 a.m. - Sit down and have morning beverage of your choice.

7:10 a.m. - Remove appropriate vegetables from refrigerator and peel or otherwise ready them for cooking. It is best to do this early because some juggling for burner space on stove is in order since there are only four burners and 17 side dishes. Neighbors are of no help at this time, since they are in same boat.

8:00 a.m. - First family member appears in kitchen demanding bacon and eggs for breakfast. Give them a dollar and point them in the general direction of the nearest McDonald's.

8:15 a.m. - Husband suggests that you accompany him to a football stadium where you can sit in 20 degree weather watching high school students maul and maim one another. Tell him you are much too

busy, but to go and have a wonderful time and don't forget to take the children with him. Use next several hours attempting to make up lost sleep.

10:30 a.m. - Catch glimpse of Thanksgiving Day parade on television. Notice how spectators are smiling and waving at the camera. That's because they're having dinner at someone else's house and don't have to cook.

11:00 a.m. - Set dinner table with best linen, china, crystal and silverware and candles. Stop and admire it, because now is the best it's going to look all day.

12:45 p.m. - Husband and children arrive home and want to know when dinner will be ready. Smile and try to contain yourself.

1:00 p.m. - Set cooked fowl on platter. Assemble various vegetables, sauces, gravies, condiments, etc.

1:30 p.m. - Announce that dinner is ready. Husband will want to know if you can hold everything for 10 more minutes until halftime in the Stuffing Bowl. Tell him if he's not at the table in 20 seconds, he'll be the first casualty of the holiday weekend.

1:32 p.m. - Family assembles at table. Say Grace. At this point some family member, usually the youngest, announces how bad they feel for the turkey, spoiling everyone's appetite.

1:50 p.m. - Dinner and halftime over. Remove dishes and food from table. Wash dishes, pots, pans, silver and crystal. Attempt to remove gravy and candle wax stains from linen.

2:30 p.m. - Set out desserts and beverages.

2:40 p.m. - Remove dessert plates and silverware, cups and saucers, and wash same.

3:30 p.m. - Finish removing debris from kitchen and dining areas. At this point, husband usually saunters into kitchen and asks what he can do to help. This way you know that the Stuffing Bowl is over and the Squash Bowl has not yet begun. Tell him thanks a lot, but his concern and good wishes are more than enough.

6:00 p.m. - Finish last chore and sit down with youngest child to watch "Santa and the Million Dollar Parents" on television.

6:30 p.m. - Husband and children want to know what's for supper. Tell them the kitchen is closed for repairs.

7:00 p.m. - Tell children for the last time that under no circumstances are there any Christmas decorations going up in this house tonight!

8:00 p.m. - Sit down to relax with newspaper. Realize from the ads that there are only 26 shopping days left until Christmas. Take a Prozac, wish one and all a Happy Thanksgiving, go to bed and cry self to sleep.

Mary Casey Forry co-founded the Reporter in 1983. She passed away in December 2004.

