I was hoping a long day of spraying would give me one or two great ideas to share with everyone this month; but, alas, not a thought! Hopefully everyone is too busy on their own sprayers to read further.

This past week was heavily spent on netting the berries. We have recently started using white netting that is common in vineyards and have found it to be quite an improvement over the black extruded plastic. It even cleans up the language coming from the crew who are installing the netting! Although most birds are a nuisance, I get a lot of joy from observing the killdeer nests. We had a ‘hatching’ on the farm this week with three new replicas of mom. If you don’t know of these birds, they build their nests on the ground and protect it by faking a broken wing and flying away from the nest. After five years our German Shepherd is onto the game. The nests are invariably in line with the tree row although this one was in the grass, so we mowed around it for several weeks. The young mobilize quickly and never go through the ugly featherless stage. The best thing about them? They don’t eat berries!

It is this time of the year that I realize I may grow fruit because I like it, not necessarily to make a living from it. How cool is it to get to eat the first berries, apricots, peaches, apples, etc. of the season and to enjoy handful after handful and not have to hand over any cash? I can bake pies and cobblers to my heart’s content with barely a thought toward what it costs. Tomorrow’s goal is a ten-inch Transparent apple pie and I might as well make a black raspberry pie while I am at it. On top of it all, there are great health benefits to be had (think Cheerios with fresh fruit instead of the pie)!

I am pretty sure I should share new ideas and inventions we have discovered on our farm. A few days ago as my granddaughter and I were turning the trickle irrigation valves on, she stepped into some mud and her Dora flipflops were a mess. I quickly took her to the end of the row and opened the trickle line and before long everything was clean again and she had a nice cool drink-we irrigate from a well, of course! It was good news for agriculture when the child labor law reforms were withdrawn, but I still can’t figure out how those growers last season got children that young to work! I don’t think any of my children who were under twelve got past the two dollar mark when picking blueberries when I offered to pay them 25 cents a pint. They often remind me now that they felt I was paying under market rates at the time.

Well, you were warned at the beginning that this was going to be light on substance, so if you have made it this far, consider that you should work a one grower who may put in too many hours in the coming months to another, take time to refresh your soul this season and appreciate the blessings we have been given. As I was weed spraying with a backpack last Saturday, I briefly envied my daughter who was on vacation at the beach, but then I realized that if I looked at the beautiful sky instead of the ground as I walked to and from the fill station, then I had the same perspective that she had at the beach. My steps were no harder than walking through sand, so, when the days are long, look toward the sky!

Good growing,

***Carolyn***