

After looking back through some of my daily journal entries, I noticed that scarcely a day has gone by without some remarkable happening or observance, even during the most routine times. Sometimes, it is a new insight involving a familiar sight, but it isn't unusual to find something that is completely new to me.

A few days ago, I was looking at the blossoms on one of the day lilies, and I saw something white moving under a leaf. I tipped the leaf up so that I could see the underside, and there was a large white spider with pink markings. I watched it for a long time, wondering if it were some manifestation of albinism in a spider that otherwise would be the usual brown or black. Finally, I took a picture of the spider. It wasn't a very good picture, but I could discern the markings and the color.

When I next was connected to the internet, I did a bit of research and found the spider. It is called a Goldenrod Crab Spider. It is often spotted on goldenrod flowers or milkweeds. When found on a goldenrod, the spider is bright yellow. There were several pictures, and the white spider was exactly the kind I had seen. I read that they are found in at least fourteen states, one of which is our state of Michigan.

This week, too, we began again an activity that is usual for us during the summer, but delayed this year because our milk cow had to be sold last fall. But now, Black Effie, daughter of Red Effie, is standing in a barn stall each morning and submitting to Runo's hand milking. In the meantime, I put together the cream separator and milk strainer and do the chicken chores. Then, when he has finished milking, I turn the handle of the separator and see the reward—one spout of foamy skim milk flowing into a pan, and another smaller spout from which a thin stream of rich yellow cream runs into a quart mason jar. Black Effie gives us a pint or more of thick cream each morning. And every other day, I combine the cream from two milkings and churn butter. Having our own homemade butter is just one of the rewards of our lifestyle. The two pigs are just as happy with the skim milk.

This past week, too, marked the first harvest of the apples on our little Yellow Transparent tree. The thirteen apples made a pie and a dish of applesauce. Fresh apple pie and the rye flat breads I had baked earlier in the day gave the cabin the aroma of abundance.

This evening, we walked up across the horse pasture to look at the cattle. On the way, we took note of the various wild flowers that are blooming during the late summer and early fall. Our walk led through the area that is particularly convenient for the workers in the bee yard. Some of the flowers produce nectar for the bees, some are not very useful for honey-making. But, it was interesting to just take note of what we saw on our way to the cow pasture. The goldenrods are beginning to bloom now, and the bees make a tasty honey from that nectar, plus producing a bright yellow wax. In our area, we have three kinds of goldenrod plants—but, mostly Canada Goldenrod and Stiff Goldenrod—both perennial native plants. The white Boneset flowers are beginning to bloom now, too. Meadowsweet spikes brighten the swamp, and Blue Vervain attracts bees to the Apple Tree Pond. I saw Sulphur Cinquefoil,

Birdsfoot Trefoil, white and red clovers, Heal-All, Queen Anne's Lace, Square-Stemmed Monkeyflower, hairy alyssum, spotted knapweed, Swamp Milkweed and Common Milkweed, tiny white asters, wild mint, peppermint, and many more. Just looking at the August flowers and noticing a little more than usual what we saw made this trip to check on cattle a pleasant interlude in another busy day. And, it occurred to me after I came back into the cabin how very valuable our plants are, both the natives that originated here and the "introduced" immigrants from other parts of the world that we have come to depend on—just like our human population. We are all in this together.