

Recently, I looked through our pictures from the last couple of decades. Mostly, I was looking at gardening, meadow, and livestock photos. As a second goal, I tried to find the earliest picture of Muzzy the cat, wondering just how old he is. He posed in a basket in 2012, so I know he is more than ten years old.

I am struck, when I look back at photos I have taken, how pretty the country is. We don't often really look at our surroundings in the same way we peruse a photo. I suppose we are so busy accomplishing some task, or avoiding doing the same, that we function without really appreciating what we see every day.

I have taken a lot of pictures of livestock. I suppose that looking through any person's collection of self-taken photographs reveals something about their priorities and interests. It is obvious that little lambs and calves are high on my list, as well as kittens, dogs, and horses. And our immersion in Mother Nature's world is also clear from the trees, beaver cuttings, insects, frogs, toads, turtles, wild flowers, grasses, and wetlands that I photographed. Winter pictures, too, show our devotion to the cold season that seems to endure. Why I need to take a picture of every snow scene I do not know. The same could be said for the many pictures of the maple tree that gives the Maple Tree Field its name. I think I have aimed a camera at that tree during the fall color season every year since I was old enough to use a camera.

All of these pictures are still fun to look at again and again. I realize over and over what a beautiful world we occupy. Its splendor isn't dimmed as the years pass; every spring still showcases that sheer, new green of emerging life. Each summer brings glorious abundance from the garden and greenhouse. The falls continue to color the landscape with indescribable hues. And the clean white of a snowy day is as lovely as it was when I was little, waiting for that first storm.

Then, though, I look out the window and see March. I see ice, mud, remnants of snow, deep tracks made by the tractor doing necessary feeding work, more mud, melting ice that is still slippery, mud where the horses have come through the gate on the way to the barn, and more mud. I don't seem to have many pictures of March.