



DORY’S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Homely pieces that make a true home

There is a set of disreputable pieces of furniture beside my easy chair where I spend a great deal of my leisure time. Normally I think nothing about it as they sit there quietly answering to my utilitarian needs, but this morning I noticed it as a visitor might see it. “Why don’t you get new side-tables?” they might wonder. “Or, at least, just paint them?”

The latter question has occurred to me but, like so many other undone things, I just haven’t gotten past the recognition of need. The pieces of furniture of which I speak are just two pieces of four drawers each, painted white and gilded with a strip of gold paint and a marble look-alike top of contact paper. They really are quite homely, quickly made with hardly any redeeming features except that they hold things. I have to admit that my George, whom I proudly praise in many ways, built these stands not up to his usual standards. For now they stand side by side, functional but not handsome.

To an outsider, it might be an embarrassment in their home, but in mine I know the story behind it and therein makes the difference. Back in 1963 we purchased and moved into a house perched on the crest of a hill overlooking the valley from where we had left behind the home formerly owned by George’s folks on Watson Street.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

With plant hardiness, consider heat as well as cold

Today, April 22, 2019, is Earth Day — an annual event celebrated worldwide as a conservation effort for the planet on which we live. Take a moment today to relish the wonder that is our Earth.

Most gardeners are familiar with the USDA’s plant hardiness zone map. By using the map to find the zone in which you live, you will be able to determine which plants will “winter over” in your garden and survive for many years. The USDA map was first published in 1960, then updated in 1990 and 2012.

Today nearly all American references books, nursery catalogs, and gardening magazines describe plants using the USDA zones.

But cold isn’t the only factor determining whether our plants will survive and thrive. Particularly during seasons of drought, we are all aware of the impact that heat has on our plants. Based on numerous studies, the consensus of scientists is that our planet’s climate is warming because of changes in its atmosphere.

The effects of heat damage are more subtle than those of extreme cold, which will kill a plant instantly.

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A Most Versatile Vegetable



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Roasted cauliflower

CAULIFLOWERING

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Cauliflower’s moment in the sun as a food fad came to an abrupt halt a few years ago when someone sliced it crosswise and called it a cauliflower steak.

Cauliflower is not a steak. There is nothing steaklike about cauliflower. And while we’re at it, you know those cauliflower-based pizza crusts that they say don’t taste like cauliflower? They taste like cauliflower.

That said, I love cauliflower, except in its steak and pizza applications.

One friend of mine calls cauliflower the tofu of vegetables, because it soaks up and takes on the flavor of anything it is with. And that is true when it is served with a cheesy or spicy sauce. But when it is served by itself, unadorned, it has a mildly nutty flavor all its own.

To sample the many different aspects of cauliflower, I made it four ways. One was in a highly flavorful chilled salad, one was a traditional Indian presentation and one was in an amazing savory pie.

All three of those took some time and effort to make, with terrific results. But the fourth way could not have been simpler; it is the method that, to me, allows the pure, warm flavor of cauliflower to come through.

I roasted it. All I needed was a little olive oil, a sprinkling of salt, a dash of pepper and an oven.



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Marinated chickpea and cauliflower salad

The result was basic, elemental cauliflower, cauliflower at its most essential. It was perfection, and you can’t improve on perfection.

But I tried. And if anything can be more perfect than perfect, it is a savory Cauliflower Cheese Pie with grated potato crust. This dish is absolutely stellar.

The recipe comes from the “Moosewood Cookbook,” which is sort of the bible for vegetarians. As in, “In the beginning, there was the ‘Moosewood Cookbook.’”

I have made many dishes from this book over the years, but the Cauliflower Cheese Pie may be my new favorite.

The crust is basically a potato pancake baked in a pie pan: grated potatoes, grated onions and an egg white.

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