

The Early Bird

There are some absolutes that I have learned over the years. You don't tug on superman's cape, you don't pull the mask off the ole Lone Ranger, and you don't mess with Karen's Garden!

Years ago my adversary took the form of 4-legged veggie vacuum cleaners known as deer. I took the advice of those who had never been engaged in Bambi battles. I half-heartedly tried all the remedies that didn't work, thus appeasing the wife and keeping my place in the food chain, right below the dog. Then the deer destroyed the status quo. They broke through the barrier of soap hanging from plants, the pepper spray, the strategically placed lion scat, and destroyed my pumpkins, the future jack-o-lanterns promised to the grandkids. Now it was personal. Immediately a ten foot wire mesh fence was erected around the back yard. End of problem, Deer Problem, that is.

Now some wild beast is pulling the onion sets out of the ground. The onions are not bitten into or damaged. Just pulled up. This unknown critter has attacked nightly for a week. It has maneuvered through plastic seed trays stacked two deep with bird mesh piled on top. It was time for superior intelligence to stop the nonsense.

A trip to the Big "R" produced the material for a 15 foot long, 1 foot wide, 1 1/2 foot high wire cover for the onion row. This invincible cage had only 1/2 inch square holes to allow air, sunshine and water to enter the onion stronghold.

That night I felt secure in the knowledge that no squirrel, quail, vampire bat, or inferior beast would play onion games in the dark. The next morning I found my cage intact and all the onion sets pulled from the ground.

I could handle loosing the first battle of the war, but my wife's laughter was intolerable. Fine!! Time for the Big Guns. I replanted the sets, replaced the wire barrier with one change. Nestled in the dirt beside the onions I place 3 mouse traps baited with Skippy Peanut Butter, my favorite.

I glanced over at the digital clock on the night stand, 2:30 AM. I was wide awake. What the Hell I thought as I grabbed my sweats and quietly exited the bedroom. I dressed and put on the coffee. I would want a drink to celebrate my victory. I headed for the garden, flashlight in hand. The cage was in place, the traps were unsprung, and my onions were uprooted and laying on their sides. Then as I looked closer I saw movement in the soil. Two huge nightcrawlers were hooked together in an unnatural position and writhing around in the dirt. I was a victim of submarine warfare. I had been defeated by frisky worms!!

I guess it's true: The early worm gets the bird.