

ANIMALS, ANIMALS, ANIMALS

By Bill Brearley

Last summer we had a cute little brown bunny living somewhere back among the trees on our property. To our delight we saw him in the spring eating, would you believe, dandelions. He'd hold the flower stems in his mouth like a cigarette, munching it from the bottom up. When he reached the seedhead he'd spit it out. On this diet and who knows what else, he had grown up. Well this evening I saw him out front and remarked to my wife how he'd matured. Having just pointed out our matured bunny he was being followed by a second bunny. Oh, oh! Rabbit arithmetic is about to commence; so much for the cuteness of bunny maturity. Hopefully they train the offspring to eat the dandelions and not the swisschard or worse the flower bulbs.



Thank goodness the mole from last year is gone! He liked bulbs. On the advice of Dianne Walker, I supplemented his diet with chewing gum. The gum gums up his intestinal track and he passes on to a less destructive role in our garden. Juicy Fruit was my weapon of choice and it appeared to work.

If the rabbits get into Mr. McGregor's garden I don't know what I'll do. I must admit, I like them better than the flowers or the swisschard. The poor old mole just never got my affection, only my bulbs.

So, what next? Well it sure would be nice to see some deer in the yard, but it's a good half mile I'd guess to Ackerman's woods with only one small bit of swamp for cover. They could have, of course, come from Hallowell Township down to the millpond; well, maybe next year.

Meanwhile up in the hydro meter we have a nervous female robin with four eggs. When she first built the nest, by the front door, I removed it. However before I knew it she had a second nest 'avec les oeufes' which I hadn't the heart to zap. Now every time we come in or out of the drive she leaves her offspring to be, and raises a fuss. My wife has convinced me to use the side or back door whenever possible to assist this delicate situation. Meanwhile in the crabapple tree sits another mother robin on her eggs. She never seems to be in flap, unlike the metermaid on the other nest. I guess birds are like people, some calm planners, some spontaneous, emotional types.

I was going to recount some Mirror turtle adventures on site but my colleague Mr. Underhill has already examined the turtle market so I shall leave it alone.



Snakes? Ah, yes! A friend is sending her little girl to stay with us next week. I am most curious of how she will view our collection of garter snakes at the back door. One is quite large at 18" or so. I know she'll love the rabbits but the snakes? Well... Anyway, the snakes are at least as timid as the rabbits. With the few toads we have, the snakes keep down the insects.

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