

Up front/ commentary Kathy Hedberg

Winter weariness can drive gardeners a little seed crazy

Kathy Hedberg/Lewiston Tribune They say that you shouldn't go shopping on an empty stomach. Otherwise because of your yawning appetite, you're likely to pick up a bunch of stuff that you don't really need or even like, such as pickled frog's tongues or calves' eyeballs.

Hard to find a casserole recipe for those two ingredients.

In the same way, a person should not look at seed catalogs this time of year. Many of us have had enough of winter - snow collapsing our roofs; ice freezing our pipes, sidewalks and streets; bad weather causing us to be so homebound that Facebook is our only social life.

And yet, this is the time of year when seed catalogs are delivered to our mailboxes, promising to transport us to a Shangri-la in the coming months.

I am a person particularly susceptible to seed catalogs. First of all, I'm never satisfied with the garden of last summer and I begin making plans on how to improve it the minute the last radish is harvested.

Maybe I shouldn't have planted those carrots so close together, I tell myself. Perhaps it was a mistake to put in 25 zucchini plants. And the tomatoes - if I hadn't been such a sinful person in my youth, possibly I would be favored by the garden gods and allowed to get a few fruits to ripen.

But, alas, I was a sinful person in my youth and I haven't improved a whole lot since. I don't think the garden gods necessarily target bad people for rotten harvests, but it is a good place to start. Kinda knocks the wind out of your sails.

Second of all, thumbing through seed catalogs when you're sick of winter and desperate for a diversion prompts you to order a whole lot more than you really need. It's a clever marketing strategy but in reality most of us who order garden seeds in the dead of winter would probably need to own a several-thousand-acre wheat farm if we ever were to use them all.

My little backyard plot is hardly big enough to handle a full packet of lettuce seeds, let alone all the beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, greens, squash and other things I order. Every year I plant a little bit out of each seed envelope and end up with three-quarters of the seeds left over for the next year, which I won't need because the following winter I will be under duress once again and order another huge bundle.

Last year I had an idea. After I'd filled out my order form for all the garden seeds and sent it in, and after I woke up like a repentant drunk on the morning after a binge and wondered what I'd done, I decided to go around to the neighbors and offered to donate some of my largesse. It seemed like a generous thing to do, I thought, and perhaps could put me on a little better footing with the garden gods.

But person after person shook their heads sadly and turned me down. Every one of them, like me, had lost control of reality and over-ordered their garden seeds. We were all looking for that mythical wheat farm to buy.

Looks like the start of another abundant year.

Hedberg may be contacted at kathyhedberg@gmail.com or (208) 983-2326.

