

Hello Friends, Wade McSpade here.

As the fall days quickly grow shorter, I decided that I better fill you in on the happenings in Goneaway. Babe & I have been really busy. Well, let's be honest. A truism in the north is that most men including myself aren't busy. Babe with her part time job which is turning out to be almost full time, is busy.

As I may have mentioned, last years fruit harvest consisted of 0-apples, 2-cherries, and 1-blueberry. Now these numbers are not bushels or quarts, but actual fruit counts. Pretty slim pickings considering the time Babe & I put in. The birds & rabbits are the main culprits, so this year I took drastic measures to counter the critters. I bought bird netting and put on all the cherry trees & over the ground plants. Now for those of you that have never worked with bird netting, think fly-paper. Think 3' by 20' fly-paper. Now think "windy day with 3' by 20' fly-paper. This stuff is down right evil. Most women would have been upset by coming up to the orchard to cut me out of the netting. God Bless my Babe, she didn't loose patience with me until the third time she had to come up and cut me out. Uncharacteristically she mumbled something about "less difficulty giving birth....." I chose not to listen to the rest.

My hard work paid off though. This year we did manage to pick some cherries. To show Babe how much I appreciated her cutting me out of the bird netting , for our anniversary I bought her a cherry pitter. Not the cheapo kind that does one cherry at a time, but the expensive kind that is semi-automatic and does a cup at a time. Babe was thrilled. I was going to get her a cherry picker to help her harvest the cherries, but they were pretty expensive. Well, really expensive. I did come up with a great plan though. I built my own cherry picker for Babe. It was really clever & quite simple. I put a step ladder in the bucket of my John Deere tractor. Then Babe would get on the first step of the ladder and I would hoist the bucket up into the cherry tree and Babe would climb the step ladder into the tree. She kept worrying about falling, but I told her to just lean into the tree, that way if she should fall, the tree would catch her. The system worked pretty well, if I do say so myself. The apple trees may be a different story. The step ladder isn't tall enough to reach into the larger apple trees, even with the bucket at its highest elevation. I'm thinking instead of the step ladder, if I put my 16' extension ladder in the bucket maybe that would allow Babe to reach the top of the apple tree. We will probably give this a trial run when the cast is removed from Babe's arm. It seems that there are still bugs to be worked out of my cherry picker.