

## Crop Report: **The Second Cutting**

**Dry.** August. Our dryland alfalfa, cut first a month ago, surrounds our house. It's now a dry foot short and already busting purple blooms. Swather engines thud and dust miles away. Hot. Dry. Rain? *Rain?*

**Wet.** But here, for the irrigable half-acre around the house, there's water down the well and a pump to lift it -- legal for something like 12,000 gallons per day. A wet redoubt:

Willows -- cloned in a bucket -- nipped from Mike McGonigal's Spring of Gladness farm 20 miles away.

The slim 20-year-old aspens from the Arbor Day Foundation -- sprouted in Nebraska and shipped to Idaho as mini-whips -- now higher than the house.

Fat Idaho-born aspens I got as gifts on Father's Day.

One stunted weeping willow cloned from Lisa and Joe's tree at what the kids called the Haunted House, the old Tucker place a mile south.

Another willow clipped from the vast old cow-chewed weeper by the ruins of the dairy up Soldier Creek.

Two ditch-side bush willows I dug up and stole from Perdita's property over to the west: one clumped up at the roots with a wild bald-hip rose (or maybe a Maximilian rose?) and an uninvited golden currant.

Three big ponderosas we bought somewhere. Two paper birches and two big chokecherry trees we got from Harold. A half dozen volunteer currant bushes below the tall ponderosas and aspens where birds perch in loud crowds and crap out pounds of currant seeds. Tussocks with culms seven feet high of giant wild rye from a pinch of seeds I got from Bill McDorman. A perennial sprout of hops I scrounged south of Corral.

Late in my own season, I live now on a whole acre of regrets.

Old-guy regrets: for times when I failed to care, failed to love,  
Failed to be kind. And lately, when I failed to water the trees.

In the past five years -- distracted, pooped out, or something --  
I looked the other way. So out I lurch now, hose and sprinkler,

To look again. And pay atonement in the only true cash I have.

I rig and fix two chugging sprinklers on rickety tripods I got

From Amazon. Stupid shoes sodden in the soggy grass, jeans  
Stiff with spray slop. Staggering blinded by rogue hammersplats

To my eyes, pissed off at dragging hoses and tripping on stuff.

And yes, watering *myself*. Maybe, maybe I'll sprout and grow up

Tall, squirt some more. Soaking two ridiculous big feet soggy  
To the shins: soggy to gladness for absolution, for the cool, for peace,

For glad springs of love

For water from the well.