

# A Heaping Helping of Nonsense

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## Monday

### Our Lavender Problem

So, I did a little reading, and apparently our lavender is dying because it is getting too much water. It's a problem with the selection of arrangement of plants in our kitchen garden bed. The rosemary, sage, and rosemary, all Mediterranean herbs, on the opposite side of the garden bed, are doing great. But the lavender is in between the basil and the corn, zucchini, and cucumbers, and those plants need more water than the lavender likes. And the mulch may be hurting things in this case, rather than helping.

I haven't been watering precisely at the roots of each plant; I've just been spraying parts of the garden bed with a hose, especially now that I'm back at work full time and so usually not able to spend as much time gardening as I was in May. So, I'll have to try to make use of this information next year — maybe we'll try to arrange them into separate wet zones and dry zones. I am hoping to set up more separate fire rings, for example one just for basil, and one just for leeks. I think the smell of these plants alone will tend to deter rabbits.

We'll also want to re-think what we plant in the concrete block border of the kitchen garden bed. It appears that some of the pungent herbs such as thyme and rosemary and the low-growing spicy globe basil seem to be very good at repelling rabbits, but the rabbits will climb right over things like pansies. We tried a marigold type in the border, but it turns out they grow much too tall, and so do the other basil varieties, to be really well-suited to place in the concrete blocks. (I thought that maybe the tight spaces would cause them to grow smaller, but apparently that was just a fantasy). So we might want to do something different with the border plants next year, planting all the blocks in shorter-growing kinds of aromatic thymes, rosemaries, sages, spicy globe basil, and some of the smaller *Allium* varieties, such as chives or bunching onions, maybe along with the shorter variety of marigolds (the yellow or gold "Taishan" varieties), skipping the pansies, which mainly have served to feed the rabbits. We might also try some of the lower-growing varieties of lavender in the concrete blocks, and try to remember to water them very sparingly.

As for lavender plants themselves, some commentators suggest not watering lavender at all — letting the plants get by only on rainwater. So that might be something to try, at least as soon as the starts seem to have established roots. Commentators also say that lavender plants hate clay soil. I’ve had fantasies of ordering plug trays and creating huge rows of lavender or thyme for the edges of our yard and driveway, but unless I want to first create long berms of much better-draining soil to plant them in, they might not work out very well. So for the foreseeable future, I may want to make a separate lavender bed.

Watering is a challenge. Sometimes, certain plants seem to take off and grow like crazy after a deep watering produced by heavy rain — more water than I can give them with a hose. And other times, certain plants seem to take off and grow like crazy when I have forgotten to water them and it has gotten very hot. Sometimes, they are the same plants, which is confusing. In any case, we’ve learned a bit and so have lots of ideas for things to try (and possibly fail at) next year!

I should probably at least attempt to write about a few things other than my most noticeable recent obsession, the gardening projects. I haven’t really gotten much reading done at all over the last few months, and of course we haven’t been to see any films in theaters in a long time, but I have been doing a little bit of reading, and we have watched a few movies, usually with many interruptions. So:

### ***The Education of a Gardener* by Russell Page**

I’ve had this book since we lived in Saginaw. It was on the shelf of New York Review Books Classics in my little attic home studio room, but I never managed to read it prior to the start of the years of upheaval, job loss, and moving, and so it has been in a box for several years. Just recently I got all my NYRB Classics unpacked and shelved, and it called out to me.

The gardening the author writes about is quite different than the type of gardening I’ve been doing, growing edible plants and a few flowers in small garden beds. The author was a landscape gardener and garden architect, often working on very large and quite famous projects. This book is an autobiography of a sort, but only of a sort — he writes almost nothing about his origins or formal education, which I find suggestive of the kind of family wealth one might be reticent to speak about, for reasons of taste and modesty, and writes almost exclusively about his work, with obvious lacunae that are themselves interesting. For example, he discusses the landscapes and gardens and statues he saw time spent in Sri Lanka during World War II, but mentions absolutely nothing about what he was doing there. I find this suggestive that he worked in intelligence. Wikipedia says he worked in the U. K.’s “Political Warfare Department,” but doesn’t cite any evidence to that effect.

I’ve been reading this book aloud to Grace and whichever babies are in our bed at the time, refusing to go to sleep. It has a strong sedative effect on the babies,

but unlike most things I read to Grace, this one seems to keep her awake. Page tries to structure his book around a series of lessons learned, almost like a lecture series about designing gardens in harmony with their locations, and he tries to seem very modest, but he can't help but do an awful lot of name-dropping, as he was rubbing elbows with a lot of old money. At one point he mentions having regular conversations with T. E. Lawrence — yes, *that* T. E. Lawrence, a.k.a. Lawrence of Arabia.

His introduction isn't well-structured, and peters out rather than ending, but the chapters are a bit more structured, although it's clear that this is one of those books where the author, not having enough time to write a short and concise book, wrote a long and rambling one instead. For a stiff-upper-lip Englishman, he also seems to spend a lot of time talking in vaguely mystical and spiritual terms; in later life, he was apparently a disciple of Ouspensky and the teachings of Gurdjieff, but so far in the book he's mostly mentioned an interest in Buddhism and Sufism.

I haven't gotten far enough into it to render a verdict on the entire volume, but I am still reading it. For one thing, it is a glimpse into a very, very different sort of life and world and time, and that is enough.

If you are looking for books that might contain more practical principles of architectural and landscape design, I would recommend *The Timeless Way of Building*, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, and *The Oregon Experiment* by Christopher Alexander, although in addition to, rather than instead of, this book. Those books actually were indirect inspirations for the Design Patterns movement in software, which I have found to be an interesting and valuable contribution to my thinking on software design. And it reminds me how much I want to get more shelves up so I can unpack more books, including my Alexander, and one of my favorite books, a book of photographs of Japanese railway station bento box lunches, which, I maintain, is right up there with *Macintosh Human Interface Guidelines*, accidentally, as one of the best books on user interface design I've ever been inspired by. (I miss my copy of *Macintosh User Interface Guidelines* — I may have gotten rid of it, as it is not in the database of books that I packed, although some books fell through the cracks, so I won't know for sure until I have unpacked the last box; unfortunately, copies are scarce and now, going for hundreds of dollars).

### ***The Complete Book of Nonsense* by Edward Lear (Folio Press)**

I came across a copy of the Folio Press edition of this book on eBay, for what I thought was quite a reasonable price, while looking for Folio Press editions of George Orwell's works, and so snapped it up. It collects Lear's nonsense books in a very handsome and well-made hardcover volume. I've been reading it to the kids — specifically, to the ones that show up to hear it: Benjamin, Sam, and Joshua.

The first book collected in this volume contains a long series of terrible, but also wonderful, limericks. They actually follow a more restrictive pattern than the limerick form strictly dictates. The first one reads:

*There was an Old Man with a nose,  
Who said, "If you choose to suppose  
That my nose is too long, you are certainly wrong!"  
That remarkable Man with a nose.*

So, this isn't the greatest limerick I've read. All of these limericks tend to have first and last lines that end with the same wording. The first line introduces a character with "there was," usually a man, often of a place. The last line ends by restating the description of the character. And so Lear mostly only leaves himself the two middle lines in which to do something funny, unless the character description is itself funny.

In general, the funniest ones are the ones that are either incredibly silly:

*There was an Old Lady of Chertsey,  
Who made a remarkable curtsey;  
She twirled round and round, till she sank underground,  
Which distressed all the people of Chertsey.*

Or startle us with violence:

*There was an Old Man of Whitehaven,  
Who danced a quadrille with a Raven;  
But they said, "It's absurd to encourage this bird!"  
So they smashed that Old Man of Whitehaven.*

A lot of the characters get smashed. And some of the funniest limericks combine extreme silliness with gore or violence:

*There was an Old Man of the Nile,  
Who sharpened his nails with a file,  
Till he cut off his thumbs, and said calmly, "This comes  
Of sharpening one's nails with a file!"*

Lear never hesitates to force a rhyme or produce a groan. Interestingly, the Folio Press edition includes this one, that includes an act of misogyny:

*There was an Old Man on some rocks,  
Who shut his wife up in a box;  
When she said, "Let me out,"  
He exclaimed, "Without doubt,  
You will pass all your life in that box."*

But omits this one, which includes an expression of bigotry based on skin color:

*There was an Old Man of Jamaica,  
Who suddenly married a Quaker;*

*But she cried out, "Oh, lack! I have married a black!"  
Which distressed that Old Man of Jamaica.*

I'm not quite sure what I would have done, had I edited the volume. Would I include one, but not the other? Included them with a footnote, or moved them elsewhere in the book? I would not have wished to simply censor Lear, but I also would not want to present verses like these as normative, where they might serve to either encourage or justify the misogyny or bigotry of the reader, or offend the reader due to the misogyny or bigotry expressed. I would probably keep both verses, but call them both out in an editor's introduction.

There's an essay on Lear called "Edward Lear's India and the Colonial Production of Nonsense," which I'd like to read, but I don't want to pay \$15 to read it. I have heard that one can often e-mail academic authors and ask for copies of their papers *gratis*, and that they are often able to, and happy to, send copies, as a courtesy, and that their agreements with various publishers allow them to do this. However, I am not sure if this is really true. I have tried e-mailing authors asking politely for copies of their papers on several occasions, and I never received any replies at all.

The second book in this volume contains a number of silly songs and verses, including the famous "The Owl and the Pussycat." But I think my favorite one is about the Jumbies, who went to sea in a sieve; each verse ends with the lines

*Far and few, far and few,  
Are the lands where the Jumbies live:  
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue  
And they went to sea in a sieve.*

The day after reading this to the kids, I walked up to Sam and said "far and few, far and few!" and he correctly recited the rest. So I guess they were listening!

### ***Police Story* (1985 film)**

All you really need to know about this film is that it was directed by, and stars, Jackie Chan, and that (according to Wikipedia):

Police Story contains many large-scale action scenes with elaborate, dangerous stunts. The film includes an opening sequence featuring a car chase through a shanty town, an action scene where Chan is dangling from a speeding double-decker bus before he stops it with his service revolver, and a climactic fight scene in a shopping mall with a large number of glass panes being broken. The latter scene ends with a dangerous stunt where, from several stories up, Chan slides down a pole covered with dangling electric lights, which explode as he slides down and then falls to the ground.

When that article describes the car chase "through" a shanty town, it doesn't actually mean "through the streets of" the shanty town — it literally means

through the town. The town is (well, *was*) an elaborate set built on a hillside, and the cars plunge right down the hillside — through the buildings, in what looks like utter chaos, but which must have been in reality a very carefully-planned sequence of camera shots. It's so over-the-top that the top becomes merely a vague memory.

The story is a bit laughable — OK, a lot laughable — and the portrayal of the female characters is pretty sexist — OK, a lot sexist. In other words, that aspect of the film hasn't aged all that well. But if you enjoy action movies, as I do, and as the older kids do, this one is a must-watch; they tended to wander away during the non-action sequences, which was fine by me.

I've also ordered a copy of *Rumble in the Bronx*, which should show up in the mail sometime soon, and contains a ridiculous chase seen involving a hovercraft. I remember it being almost completely plot-free, but full of amazingly choreographed fight scenes, and very funny. It's probably not as funny as I remember it being, back in the day when I saw it in the theater, but even if it is only half as funny as I remember it, it should still be pretty funny. And I've also ordered copies of *Supercop* and *Drunken Master*. eBay has been my friend, these last couple of months, a place where out-of-print DVDs can be had for not much more than the cost of shipping.

## Tuesday

The kids made bread again today. I've been trying to get them to commit to making bread on some sort of schedule, two or three times a week. Joshua is the one who has gotten good at the bread-making. But for some reason he left Sam to do it today, mostly by himself. Sam did not use the right kind of flour — instead of the white flour and whole wheat chapati flour mix that was very successful last time, when supplemented with some extra gluten, he used only the gluten-free flour. So, the bread loaves came out sort of like large, misshapen biscuits. We'll have to figure out how to make the best possible use of them. They would probably be very good cut into thick slabs and dunked into soup.

I've been a bit stressed and anxious today — more so than usual. I didn't get to sleep early enough last night, then I woke up quite early and was unable to get back to sleep, so after trying for a while, I just got up. I went out and watered some of the garden beds before taking my morning coffee down into the basement.

When I got into my basement office, I found that one of the speakers of my studio monitors was producing a high-pitched buzzing noise. I'm not sure what the cause was, but I unplugged everything, pulled the two rack-mount amplifiers out of the rack, dusted everything out, unscrewed the cable plugs to check the solder joints, found nothing visibly wrong except a little dust, and then and plugged it all back together. It seems fine now. So it might be due to a cable connection that had worked itself a bit loose. I hope it was just that, and not

that one of the rack-mount amplifiers is failing.

We heard back from our insurance agent. I am supposed to send pictures of the repaired garage ceiling, and then the insurance company is supposed to release the last, withheld portion of reimbursement for repairs. We haven't heard back from the restoration company. She's going to try to contact them on our behalf. On my lunch break I took the pictures. So we should be getting a bit more money from the claim, and every bit will help.

Grace had wanted to file a claim over water damage to a very nice leather purse that was in a box, and was ruined by water, and some nice fabrics, which got mildewed. We had pictures, but the insurance company wanted "brand, style, original purchase price, and age in order to send for pricing." For the fabrics, the insurance company would want us to attempt to have everything dry-cleaned, and determine if that worked or not, and then if it did, file for reimbursement of the dry-cleaning costs, and if not, come up with detailed descriptions of the fabrics so they could determine the reimbursable value. It unfortunately became clear that was going to turn into another burden on Grace's time, and so I think we're going to have to make like Elsa and let it go.

## Podcast News

On Saturday afternoon, Grace and I took my new audio gear for a spin and recorded a conversation for a podcast episode, the first one I've ever recorded without using a computer. (The MixPre-6 II is a computer of sorts, of course, but it's not a *general-purpose* computer; it's more like a dedicated appliance for recording).

We accidentally spoke for over two and a half hours.

I say "accidentally" but it was mostly my fault we ran so long — I was a bit wired, and kept launching digressions and interruptions. Earlier that morning we had gone to Milan Coffee Works to buy some roast coffee and chai concentrate. We've been ordering online from them, and having them deliver right to the delivery drop-box in our driveway, but their web site was down, so we went in person. They were only letting 3 people in the building at a time, and everyone was politely distant and masked, so it seemed pretty low-risk. I haven't had one of their lattes in many months. It was not made with one of their best coffees — it think it contained one of their Brazilian coffees, which have a grassy, bitter note. But it hit the spot, by which I mean it gave me a dose of caffeine that is quite a bit higher than I usually have. So I was probably as talkative as if I had snorted a couple of lines of cocaine.

I've got to either edit out some of my babbling, or admit defeat and ask Grace to record a new conversation with me. I'll have to listen to it and see how hard of an edit job it will be. I'd ask my friend Rich to do it, and pay him, but he'd probably edit me out completely.

Something has gone wrong on my main computer. Logic Pro is now crashing

constantly and apparently my Ozone 5 mastering plug-in is not working right. So I have more problems to resolve before I can edit and/or finish producing this episode. I may be stuck in a software upgrade/downgrade nightmare, where I can't upgrade MacOS, because my old computer is not supported by newer versions of MacOS, but I need to upgrade Ozone, but only a little bit, and I can only get the latest version, which I can't run. We'll see. If that's true, it may be time to switch to a completely different digital audio workstation program, which would no doubt also be extremely time-consuming. And even with a solid-state drive, working with 2.5 GiB audio files is slow and a pain in the butt. Especially in a hot basement that isn't connected to the house air conditioning.

On Sunday we drank tea instead.

There's a new business in the spot where Mother Loaf Bakery was, called Milk + Honey. From them, we got some egg-free cheddar scones that had just come out of the oven. They were sprinkled with Maldon sea salt — those little square, ziggurat-shaped crystals are unmistakable — and some chopped fresh thyme leaves. They were absolutely delicious. We miss Mother Loaf, but this new place seems promising so far!

## Wednesday

Here in our little corner of Pittsfield Township, we've passed what is usually the hottest part of the year. In this area August is usually just a bit cooler than July. And we're have a wonderful few days with lowered temperatures and, more importantly, reduced humidity, which means sweat can evaporate, and so that makes it feel like I can work outside without risking heat exhaustion. Yesterday evening, after I finally left my office, after the end of my work day and the end of some time spent working on the podcast editing, I walked down the driveway to get the mail. The sun had not yet set, and the air temperature was probably the high sixties, along the wooded driveway. It felt heavenly.

### ***Wayne's World* (1992 Film)**

Continuing our dumb summer movie series, last night we watched *Wayne's World*. This film is regarded as the best of the Saturday Night Live character spin-off films, along with *The Blues Brothers*. I saw this film in the theater when it came out, and laughed a bit, and haven't really thought much about it in the intervening 28 years. The sexism has made it feel a bit dated, but there are still a lot of bits and pieces in here that are quite funny. The funniest bits to me are not the gross jokes or the dick jokes, but the moments of deadpan silliness, such as when Wayne and Garth get into a backstage green room with Alice Cooper and his entourage:

Wayne Campbell: So, do you come to Milwaukee often?

Alice Cooper: Well, I'm a regular visitor here, but Milwaukee has certainly had its share of visitors. The



French missionaries and explorers were coming here as early as the late 1600s to trade with the Native Americans.

Pete: In fact, isn't "Milwaukee" an Indian name?

Alice Cooper: Yes, Pete, it is. Actually, it's pronounced "mill-e-wah-que" which is Algonquin for "the good land."

Wayne Campbell: I was not aware of that.

I also still laughed out loud at the sequence in which Wayne and Garth re-enact the opening to the old *Laverne & Shirley* sitcom, although the kids had no idea what this scene was referencing.

*Wayne's World* is rated PG-13, and I don't really have many regrets showing it to the kids. The older ones got some of the dirtier jokes which tended to go right over the heads of the younger ones, but there were plenty of dumb slapstick for the younger ones to laugh at, too.

I have asked myself whether I want to show the kids the Austin Powers movies, at least the first one. So far, my answer to myself is "no." They are also rated PG-13, but since they haven't grown up on James Bond spy movies, I don't think the kids would really understand the film's parody context.

There was a sequel, *Wayne's World 2*, and I probably saw it, but don't remember a thing about it, so I'm putting it in a box in my mind with other things that don't exist, like the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy.

Want to feel old? Mike Myers is 57 and Dana Carvey is 65. I tried to guess their ages, watching this, and calculating about how old I thought both of them were at the time the film was made. I was off by five years in the case of Myers and three years in the case of Carvey. I thought Myers was my age (fifty-two). Looking at Carvey's face which is exceedingly clear in the Blu-ray, up close, it is quite clear that he is older than Myers, but I wouldn't have guessed he was eight years older. This means that in 1992, playing characters that were meant to be just a few years out of high school, Myers was about 29 and Carvey was about 37... and Wayne's love interest, Tia Carerre, was about 25.

## Sunday

Well, as often happens, between work and our busy evenings and weekends, the rest of the week sort of got away from me and so I'm left trying to figure out what happened. I got some things done that I wanted to get done. I made more herb butters — four big loaves wrapped in plastic wrap and now in the freezer. I made two with thyme (just the regular French cooking thyme), one with chives, and one with fennel. I also made biscuits for breakfast. The first batch was plain, and Grace made a compote of blackberries to go over it. Then I made a second batch with the herbs — thyme, chives, and fennel. It was delicious!

Because it was raining, we scrapped our plans to take the kids out for a hike in the woods and instead watched *The Blues Brothers*.

### ***The Blues Brothers* (1980 Film)**

There are few films that I consider to be perfect, or nearly perfect. This is one of them.

I had not seen this film in a long time, but it seems to me that in 2020 it is even better than I remember. Oh, the plot is ridiculous, and none of it is to be taken very seriously; keep in mind that it was the first of many movies based on characters from Saturday Night Live. John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd created the Blues Brothers characters, but they were “realer,” in a sense, than other SNL characters; there was no *Wayne’s World* cable show outside of the sketches and film, but the Blues Brothers band was actually a band, at least of a sort. Aykroyd seems to have had a genuine love of the blues genre. The liner notes for the 1978 album *Briefcase Full of Blues* included a fictional back-story for Jake and Ellwood. And *Briefcase Full of Blues* actually went double-platinum, so I don’t think it can be dismissed as just a kind of parody or hoax, although it *was* of course a “publicity stunt” of a sort. The film basically follows that back-story sketch and fleshes it out.

It would be easy for folks in 2020 to claim that the film, filled with Black musicians, is a sort of act of cultural appropriation. But I really don’t see it. I think the film shows a deep love of the genre and a deep love of the City of Chicago, and so it is more an act of cultural *promotion* than appropriation. The cinematography in this film is gorgeous, much better than I remember, and the Blu-ray transfer really highlights it. It’s likely that the last time I saw this film, I was watching a VHS tape, so this is a pretty big upgrade. The city becomes a character in the film, if not the main character, with long shots lingering on neighborhoods, expressways, interiors, and elevated trains. The Black blues musicians in the film are treated with great, and occasionally moving, respect, and I imagine that a lot of white Saturday Night Live fans may have heard the music of older blues musicians like John Lee Hooker and Cab Calloway for the first time when they went to see this film.

Speaking of Cab Calloway and moving displays of respect, there’s a terrific scene at the beginning of the climactic concert where the Brothers are very late for their own show. Calloway jumps in as an opening act. The setup on the stage is modern and low-key, but as Calloway begins his song, the stage is instantly transformed into a big band arrangement, with Calloway in a white suit, the band in tuxedos, and a backdrop of marquees of great blues venues past such as the Cotton Club and the Savoy. Calloway sings “Minnie the Moocher,” a song he recorded in 1931. Here he is back in the day. It’s a gorgeous moment of magical realism.

There’s just so much to enjoy about this film, including one of my all-time favorite chase scenes, right through a shopping mall, destroying much of it. So

many aspects of it probably guarantee it could never be made today. At least for a time, it held the record for the most cars ever destroyed in a film. And the police are held up to ridicule. I'm not at all convinced that would work today; I think the film would create a *faux* firestorm of ginned-up controversy about anti-law enforcement bias. But something that would be lost on modern audiences is that the ridicule in the film is, mostly, not even mean-spirited. In fact, there's only one gag in the entire film that actually left me grimacing. There's a moment when Ray Charles (in the film, the proprietor of Ray's Music Exchange) is hanging a poster for the big show — and hanging it upside-down. The film has so much love for Black musicians, but felt it was OK to poke fun at blindness.

There's also a moment of pretty gross misogyny, when Jake dumps Carrie Fisher into the muck of a sewer, after making goo-goo eyes at her to convince her that he still loves her. Sure, she *has* just spent the entire movie trying to kill him, using the most comically violent and cinematic murder weapons she can get her hands on. But given the way he apparently has treated her, he richly deserved it.

In real life Belushi, who appears to do a series of back-flips down the aisle of a church, was not well during filming; his substance abuse problem was spinning horribly out of control, and he died in early 1982.

There have been at least three cuts of the movie — an original “roadshow” version, designed to be presented with an intermission, of unknown length, a “preview” version cut down from the “roadshow” version, and the theatrical version at 133 minutes. We have the theatrical version. While it would be fun to see longer versions of some of the songs, from what I've been able to tell, most of the additional material in the 148-minute cut doesn't really need to be there. For example, there's a scene where we see Jake without his sunglasses(!), at his factory job. I don't see a good reason to watch that version. But it is still tragic that apparently, according to the director John Landis, all the unused footage was discarded by Universal Studio in 1985, and the home video “restored version” released a few years ago on DVD was made from a stolen print of the “preview version,” recovered by the FBI and Universal Studios after someone tried to sell on eBay.

So, it's likely that we will sadly never be able to see a reconstruction of the director's original “roadshow” version, or even a collection of outtakes, including, according to IMDB, a discarded song, a cover called “Sink the Bismarck.” I've often wondered what *else* the band played at the country venue, Bob's Country Bunker, to get through their gig — I don't think they could have just played “Rawhide” and “Stand By Your Man” over and over, and apparently this is the answer.

If we are able to go ahead with our plans for outdoor movie nights, I want to feature *The Blues Brothers*.

## It's Raining Basil

It rained a lot this weekend, and the rain wasn't great for our garden. Or, rather, it was good for some plants and terrible for others. When the sun came out yesterday I went out to look at the state of the kitchen garden bed and a few of the separate fire ring beds. The peppers are doing great. The separate cucumber bed is doing great. The tomatoes are growing like crazy, although we have to watch them closely because some of them seem to be cracking from the extra water. The sage, especially the pineapple sage, is growing like crazy. The creeping thyme varieties around the outside edge of the garden have gotten far too much water, but the plants in the concrete block border have done very well.

When I went outside after the rain yesterday afternoon, I discovered that the wet days had stressed our overgrown basil plants, and they had dropped perhaps a third to half their leaves! We should have been harvesting basil much more regularly to keep them cut back, but it was time for drastic action to salvage what we could. So I cut all the basil plants down to less than half their height. We got the cut sprigs bundled up and into bags, which went into the refrigerator, and we will deliver basil to some friends. I cleaned out drifts of wet basil leaves from between the plants. I think they will probably survive and produce some more basil for us to use, but it might take a while. Meanwhile, there is more sweet basil in the kids' garden bed that is ready to use, so we can make more pesto and freeze it as soon as we get more walnuts.

I also cut back the overgrown dill plants, freezing some leaves and putting a number of the seed heads in a bag to dry out, so that we can collect the seeds. We should have plenty of dill seeds. I will make a batch of herb butter with the dill leaves, after we get some more unsalted butter.

We've been harvesting a few of the Black Krim variety and last night, ate several of them, sliced up and sprinkled with a little sea salt. We were planning on making fried green tomatoes, but wound up making a cold dinner of tuna salad, doctored up with some terrific celery and parsley and green onions from our gardens, and various sandwich-makings, along with a few chicken drumsticks baked with lovage leaves.

Grace made a drink of pineapple sage and stevia, which she didn't like very much but I liked. We'll have to experiment with more uses for the pineapple sage, since we have a lot of it.

## Wrapping Up

That's about it for the week; this is going out late, on Monday instead of Sunday. It's supposed to rain more today, so we may have more troubles in the garden.

On my way out, I want to direct your attention to an article. Here's a piece from The Atlantic about America's response to COVID-19. It includes an audio version.

Have a great week, and stay as safe as you can!

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