

LAURA ON LIFE

Finding An Orphan Opossum

We have two cats that bask in my daughter's adoration. Unfortunately my oldest son is allergic to cats, so they bask outdoors.

The cat's dishes are on my back deck in a hopeless attempt to feed the cats... my cats... and nothing but my cats... so help me God.

God's other creatures have other ideas, however. Every night opossums, raccoons, neighbor dogs, and other riff raff come to our back deck to feast from our cat food buffet. Every night we chase them away.

I wouldn't mind feeding the entire block's army of woodland and domesticated

animals, but what have they ever done for me?

At least my cats will occasionally catch a mole digging up my yard and let my daughter smother them with her hugs. Of course, they probably catch moles only because the line is too long at their food dish. I'm fairly certain that their catching moles is not due as much to their undying gratitude as it is to the fact that they like to play with things that move... or twitch.

The other day, my daughter interrupted my cat's soon-to-be death pounce when she spotted a baby opossum. He was no more than 6" long; just

the right size for a mid-afternoon snack. The opossum was so tiny, it really should have been with its mother. Because opossum are nocturnal, it certainly shouldn't have been wandering around at 1:00 in the afternoon acting like cat bait.

When animals don't behave normally, you have to suspect rabies. So, we watched the baby opossum for a time to see if it showed signs of the disease. Occasionally, we had to shoo away our enthusiastic cat.

The little orphan didn't seem scared of us, probably because it was unlikely that he'd ever seen a human. Human generally do



Laura Snyder

not wander around our backyard after midnight, and if the tiny opossum's mother was any kind of mom, she would not have allowed her kid to stay up past six in the morning.

The witless creature eventually climbed into a low shrub and decided to

take a nap right there. It was exhausted. My cat would have no trouble reaching it at that height. My daughter and I knew that if we left, that little guy was toast. We were concerned, as well, that it was not old enough to feed itself.

We weren't sure exactly what opossum ate, but we knew they ate cat food. We put some in a little dish and placed it near the baby opossum's perch. We thought that if it ate the cat food, it probably could take care of itself.

About that time, my husband wandered around the corner of the house. He crouched down beside

us to see what we were looking at. Spying the opossum and the little dish of food, he said, "You're starting young, I see."

"What do you mean?"

"Training," he said. "Training what?"

"You're training that animal to raid our cat's food. No wonder the cat wants to eat it."

Laura Snyder is a nationally syndicated columnist, author & speaker. You can reach Laura at lsnyder@lauraonlife.com Or visit her website www.lauraonlife.com for more info.

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1815 Miscellaneous

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Farmers - Ranchers - Homeowners 2011 Pesticide Container Collections

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension Service have set the following dates and locations for the 2011 Pesticide container collections. All plastic containers up to and including 30-55 gallon drums, plastic minibulk/shuttles, and 30-55 gallon steel drums will all be accepted. All containers must be triple rinsed or pressure rinsed. Make plans to attend the collection nearest you and thank you for your turnout in the past.

Date	Time	Location	City
July 18	9:00-2:00	Nelson's Seed Service	Miller
July 19	9:00-2:00	County Weed & Pest Shop	Watertown
July 20	9:00-12:00	Clark File Hall	Clark
July 20	1:00-4:00	Spink Co. Fairgrounds	Redfield
July 21	9:00-1:00	SD Wheat Growers	Huron
July 25	9:00-1:00	SD Wheat Growers	Chamberlain
July 26	9:00-12:00	Mettler's	Menno
July 26	1:00-4:00	Bon Homme Co. Hwy. Dept.	Tyndall
July 27	9:00-12:00	Country Pride Coop Fert Plant	Wagner
July 27	1:00-4:00	Farmer's Alliance	Corsica
July 28	9:00-1:00	Turnis Farm Service	Platte
Aug. 1	9:00-2:00	Agriance Warehouse	Aberdeen
Aug. 2	9:00-2:00	Border States Coop	Sisseton
Aug. 3	9:00-12:00	Farmer's Elevator	Rosholt
Aug. 4	8:00-1:00	Brookings Regional Landfill	Brookings
Aug. 8	9:00-12:00	SD Wheat Growers	Wessington Springs
Aug. 9	9:00-1:00	Davison Co. Extension	Mitchell
Aug. 10	9:00-12:00	Lacey's	Salem
Aug. 11	9:00-2:00	SDDA Bait Station	Pierre
Aug. 15	9:00-12:00	Perkins Co. Fairgrounds	Bison
Aug. 15	1:30-4:30	Southwest Grain	Lemmon
Aug. 16	9:00-11:00	SD Wheat Growers	McLaughlin
Aug. 16	1:00-4:00	Airport	Timber Lake
Aug. 17	9:00-12:00	North Central Farmers Elevator	Herreid
Aug. 17	2:00-4:00	Walworth Co. Hwy. Dept.	Selby
Aug. 22	9:00-12:00	Lake Preston Soil Service	Lake Preston
Aug. 22	1:30-4:00	Cenex Agronomy Center	Howard
Aug. 23	9:00-12:00	Lake Co. 4-H Grounds	Madison
Aug. 23	1:30-4:00	Moody Co. Hwy Dept	Flandreau
Aug. 24	9:00-2:00	Renner Fire Hall	Renner
Sept. 6	9:00-12:00	SD DOT Yard	Murdo
Sept. 7	9:00-2:00	Tripp Co. Recycling Center	Winner
Sept. 12	8:00-11:00	Midwest Coop/Cenex	Philip
Sept. 12	1:00-4:00	Bennett Co. Fairgrounds	Martin
Sept. 13	9:00-12:00	Finkbeiner Feed	Belle Fourche
Sept. 14	9:00-2:00	Central States Fairgrounds	Rapid City

All times are local

For more information, contact your County Extension Office, or the South Dakota Department of Agriculture at 1-800-228-5254 or visit website at www.state.sd.us/doa/das/

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