

Jeff, my son-in-law, grew up with fresh garden produce. He enthusiastically got his kids involved in planting tomato plants in pots last summer. And out of the blue, he decided they should have a lemon tree, something to provide a fresh citrus smell to the house.

So online he went and ordered just that. I recall seeing the new addition to the Lutz home. It was like a plant with little yellow balls on it. The tiny lemons reminded me of Lemonhead candy from a box, pretty cute actually. I haven't seen Lemonheads in years and don't know if they still exist.

Frankly, I try to avoid the candy section.

And so it was, they watered the tree. Austin, 7, sang me the song recently that he and his dad sang to El Dorado. Sounds like it got some tender loving care and personal nurturing.

Cold temperatures took some toll on El Dorado from what I understand. Even though it lived inside, possibly the very reason that trees don't grow in Nebraska prevailed. It gets cold. But it hung in there.

My gardening experience happens to be nil. I once gave consideration to a garden but it was a bit late to get started when we moved to our first little house. Kind neighbors kept showering us with their overflow and we had more fresh veggies than we could keep up with.

Call it lazy or whatever, but the action of starting my own garden the following spring got nixed. And again, we were blessed with kindness from others (without the weeding).

Our current home wasn't very old when we bought it. The previous owner had a spot in the far corner of the lot, which she foresaw as her garden as they planned the yard landscape prior to their unexpected move.

Good idea, but the spot ended up with a slab of cement for a storage shed once we took ownership. I didn't put up a fight. Frankly, I wouldn't know the first thing of where to start.

Maybe my grandkids will take enough interest that they can help me with a new experiment some year, then I too can anticipate watching the edibles appear. I love summer squash and small zucchini and it's quite expensive to buy. Yet there hits a time when once again, others are willing to share their abundant crop.

Do I really want to be a mooch forever?

I got an interesting call from Jeff last week. He wondered if my daughter had told me about their visitor from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture after Jeff had left for work.

No. Department of Agriculture?

It seems that the area is quarantined from lemon trees and El Dorado should have never been shipped. Who knows how the word got back to state officials that there was a lemon tree living out west but it is no longer a part of the Lutz abode.

Yes, the kind woman showed identification and confiscated the tree.

Jeff has been known to joke with me before and I was confused why he would call with such a bizarre story. No joke, he assured me. The tree is gone.

And he didn't even get to say goodbye.