



AND A PUPPY IN A PEAR TREE

January 6, 2012

The Advent Calendar is used by many to count down the days until Christmas.

“The Twelve Days of Christmas,” on the other hand, marks the time from then until the Feast of Epiphany. Ending with “and a partridge in a pear tree,” one has twelve days’ worth of that line by the time the sixth (and the Wise Men) finally arrive.

It’s been a very long time since I’ve seen a partridge anywhere but can share a story of a puppy who got as close to that tree as he could. Yes, Minor – naturally – and his pear tree.

Return with me to early August.

The “orchard” planted last year struggles for survival but shows no inclination to be fruitful. Many of the apple trees, here long before me, continue to produce nicely though, except for one or two years’ applesauce (honestly, a joy), the birds and worms harvest most of those, leaving me to enjoy the blankets of blossoms each spring. And I definitely do.

Four pear trees were planted a couple years back and, like most other things here (weeds of course being the great exception), had never produced much of interest. Maybe a blossom or two and an equal number of pears. Then, most exciting to me, a lovely specimen of the nest of an oriole appeared, photographed but stolen by the wind before I could retrieve the treasure.

Something happened this year.

The one – the Bartlett – became absolutely bent over, so full of pears it was. They are small and hard and very green though not a pear green. Bows were filled, albeit prematurely, just to give some relief to the overburdened branches. Most were left with hopes that some would ripen. I anticipated the day!

In the meantime I duck under the lowest branches as I weed the hill just beyond the tree.





Sitting perhaps ten feet from the base, I catch a definite downward motion of the lowest limb at the same time I hear a sharp snap.

Minor, who seems born to eat anything, approaches with pear, and stem, not to mention a few leaves, possessively in mouth. He nestles close beside me and starts to chew.

Soon he has tired of his game (or finished his treat) and wanders

off to check on what Major's up to. Major of course would never stoop to eating anything found on the ground.

I only weed an hour this afternoon before the heat and humidity drive me back inside.

In that hour, however, Minor has repeated the journey to his buffet three times more, jumping high to grab branches I'd consider out of reach. I see the bough bob, hear the snap of the stem and only glimpse him momentarily before he is off again.

I don't believe he eats the entire pear. I've seen apples with one bite taken out and, yes, a pear or two in the same condition.

I have no idea where the rest goes.

Maybe, come spring, pear trees will be popping up in the most unlikely places. I'll double-check the driveway before I dig.

Summer thoughts but what a lovely thing to share on this, the Twelfth Day of Christmas: my own puppy in a pear tree!

Written August 6, 2011.