

## Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

One thing I really miss on the road is having a garden. Two summers ago was my first attempt at a real garden. The activity was supposed to be a learning experience for Abby and Carter. It was also for me, trying to fulfill my New Year's resolution. We tilled up a big patch of soil next to the garage, plotted and planned the rows, and then poked our little seeds in the soil. We watered, watched and waited. Eventually, little green sprouts were popping up everywhere. Then we completely lost control of this piece of land. Cucumbers, watermelons and pumpkins vined out everywhere. The tomato plants, which had been leftovers from a friend's garden, had a slow start. They leaned all over the surrounding plants; they dried up a little and then flowered. The green beans climbed a stand I'd made. Later, they outgrew the stand and reached up and grabbed the garage roof. The corn shot up at amazing speed. Radishes and lettuce were abundant. For weeks we ate salads with every meal. We gave away dozens of cucumbers. There was so much, even after loading up our friends and neighbors, we still had more. Then in September we harvested eight perfect pumpkins for our front porch.

Last month as we drove through the fields and farms in Utah, Wyoming and Kansas, I missed our garden even more. Not because of all the free food it produced, but that summer I learned that plants never stop putting forth effort. They reach past the boundaries set up for them. They continue to grow. That was a good lesson for me.

Something else happened last month. A fellow full-time traveler emailed me. She wished us well on the last leg of our journey. She also said to be careful. "It's harder to come home than it is to leave," she wrote. So in these final weeks, I'm trying to figure how to slide back into a stationary life. I want something to work on, to keep me from wanting to wander. I remembered the garden. I just needed someone to start it up for me. I called on my parents, lifelong gardeners.

They weeded out the mess our garden had become. They planted us onions, tomatoes and sunflowers. We got our water turned back on so they could use the hose. Mom and Dad gave me progress reports. But somehow it wasn't enough. I couldn't wait.

Now not only do I have a garden going at home, I started a little garden the camper. Carter's sunflowers are in coffee containers. In an egg carton, Abby's growing four morning glories next to my fennel and cilantro. We also have about 20 tiny tomato plants. We even put in a pinecone from Colorado, some buffalo grass from Nebraska and a cherry pit from our fridge. Kansas and Nebraska contributed soil. South Dakota is providing the sun light. Essentially, we've turned our camper into a makeshift greenhouse. It seems like every seed we planted is sprouting. To avoid crowding I had to transplant some into new containers.

As our seedlings travel home with us, we'll transfer them again into our backyard garden. I can see them taking root, stretching toward the sun, yearning to live, produce and fulfill their purpose. Another great garden, another great lesson.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at [www.ourtriptakesus.com](http://www.ourtriptakesus.com). Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. You may e-mail Becky at [beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com](mailto:beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com)