

I love this time of year.

Indian Summer is in full force and it won't be long before the frost is on the punkins, the air will be crisp and clean and the leaves will be brilliant on the trees and satisfyingly crunchy underfoot.

I put out Halloween/Fall decorations last weekend for the first time in several years. On Saturday, I had scored two pumpkins for \$1.98, a fact which made me extremely giddy. I hate to spend more than that on something that is just going to shrivel, ooze gooey stuff and then end up in the trash can. Hopefully, no one will decide to relieve me of my bounty before Halloween.

I for one believe that no fall decor is complete without corn shocks. Unfortunately, with the early harvest this year, I had forgotten to put my order in. No corn shocks! Unacceptable.

I put in a call to my double-secret connection and alas, they had cleared the last of their fields that week. However, there was a field still standing around the corner and they knew the owner. I was told that as long as I twisted the corn off and gave it the farmer, I could have as many shocks as I wanted. My connection even volunteered to go with me. Sweet!

I have never gotten my own corn shocks before. They have always been dropped off and were waiting for me in the yard.

Her dad was very helpful and said we could borrow his corn knife — who knew one of those existed? — and even gave us advice: Don't cut your leg off. Good advice.

We drove around to the field and made our way in. I chose my corn shocks carefully. I wanted them to be just the right height and have just the right tassels on top. (I know. I'm a pain in the butt even though not many will say it to my face.) So, I twisted and she chopped and there was no blood loss.

I carried my treasures to the car through the near hurricane-force winds (maybe a small exaggeration) and carefully placed them in the trunk so as few pieces fell off as possible. I thanked my friends and preceded to do a u-ey to head back home and SMACK! The trunk lid whacked down on my corn shocks. I was not going to make her come back and go through the whole process again so I continued home. Thankfully, they were all in one piece.

When I got home, I unloaded the corn shocks and headed to the basement. I drug the spiderweb and its inhabitants, the bright orange pumpkin bags to be filled with balloons, the candle holders I had forgotten about and my other seasonal fare up and got to work.

Blowing up the balloons became the most challenging task. I don't remember how long they had been in the basement but some would expand into odd shapes. Perhaps they were fitting for weird balloon animals but definitely not the plump, round orbs I was looking for to stuff in the pumpkin bags. After a little stretching, they began to cooperate.

Then I noticed one I had discarded was not on the floor by my feet and Sweet Sadie Eleanor Louise? — nowhere to be found. I located her in the front room with half a bright red balloon hanging out of her mouth. For goodness sake, she's 12 — 84 in dog years — and she has reverted back to her puppyhood pranks. She looked me straight in the eye and gave a couple of chomps to that balloon and it let off a squishy, squeaky sound. She seemed pleased. I took it away and she pouted. Oh well, tough puppy love. (Of course I got her a biscuit. I'm not a monster.)

So the decorations are all up and I thoroughly enjoy them as I drive in and just sitting on the porch reading.

I know this sounds like it was a lot of work but it really wasn't. Really.