

It's a crying shame

"Food Week" comes to conclusion a little late, but sometimes you need to let something cook just a few minutes longer to get it just right.

I don't know if food tastes are genetic, but there is no denying that my Dad and I are onion fanatics. I am a big fan of all onions, cooked or uncooked. I can't say I have a true favorite, seeing as there are so many uses for each type. Give me a yellow or a red or a Spanish or a Vidalia or a white. Just don't give me any green, nor chives and especially not scallions.

Why is that, you may ask? (You may as well ask, since you're going to get the answer either way). For that, we'll have to end "Food Week" as it began, hopping into our wayback machine for a trip to my distant past, though not so distant as in "Sweet and Sour Childhood".

In a different incarnation of my formative school years, my family was living in one of our four different locations in North Miami Beach (all within about a 10 year span). In our current residential location, we had a nice single story home in a nice, quiet neighborhood again within walking/biking distance to school.

Our next door neighbor was a kindly older man known as Mr. George. I can't recall to this day if that was his last or first name and having been referred to by young kids in my recent past as "Mr. Jeffrey", I am even less sure. Suffice to say, I recall clearly referring to him as Mr. George.

Mr. George had a unfenced, well-kept back yard. The border between his house and ours was marked by a well-kept hedge of about high school kid height. Inside his well-kept yard, Mr. George nurtured a well-kept garden, featuring a variety of vegetables.

Mr. George often gave Mom fresh veggies and invited my sister and me to "dig up" veggies if we wanted. In retrospect, I don't know if this was the wisest invitation Mr. George could have made to two school kids, but as I said, he was a *kindly* older man.

Every now and then, my sister or I would stop by and pull up a carrot or tomato or something to munch on. Mr. George left soil and seeds nearby and encouraged us to replant as we ate, so we learned a little green thumb.

On one fateful morning, an early release Wednesday if my few remaining memory cells are correct, I was in quite a state. I had somehow managed to miss breakfast (got up late, got up early, some unrememberable reason). Being an early release, there was no school lunch either, so I was famished.

As I passed by Mr. George's house I caught a waft of fresh vegetable aromas and my tummy began to rumble. Popping into the back yard I proceeded to pull up a scallion and munch, intending only to use it as a bridge to get home.

Now here's the thing. While I can't imagine it today, somehow that delicious scallion combined with my rumbling tummy to create a perfect storm. Before I had even finished munching that scallion I was already pulling up another. And another. And another. I began eating scallions as a man in the desert would be gulping water.

Finally, a burning in my throat convinced me I had eaten enough. I can't tell you exactly how many scallions I ate that day, but it was a lot. A lot more than was healthy, for sure. A lot more than was wise, especially on a totally empty stomach.

By mid-afternoon, I had a ferocious stomach ache which led to other things we need not discuss. Mom was half angry and half laughing when I told her what I had done and Mr. George would chuckle and jest (*kindly*) with me every time after that point.

Since that day, I have rejected green onions, chives and scallions. I tried to "like" them again, but my food trauma was too great. That singular moment changed my taste buds forever and I could no longer abide the taste of the scallion family.

But I still love every *other* onion. In fact, I just grilled up a load of sausage, peppers and onions yesterday and boy, howdy was it tasty! I was going to make some fresh tuna salad today with some spanking fresh onions, but I was invited out tonight and it would take a load of toothpaste, mints and gum to make me presentable after that meal.

So yes, I lost my taste for scallions, but I still have plenty of onions to choose from, so in the end, there's really nothing to cry over.