

5.2 Last Purchase

My last purchase (before today) was three items off Amazon, quite the mix. I purchased a bottle of vegan probiotics, a 3-pound bag of blood meal, and a package of silicone hair ties. I purchased them because I needed them, but nothing was urgent. The Amazon selection was largely for my convenience and to take care of different stresses in my life. Here is the story of the 3 browser tabs that led to this purchase – Instacart, Walmart Grocery Pickup, and Amazon.

I am allergic to pork (and other things), but I also have digestive problems and diverticulitis. It has been recommended that I take a probiotic to help keep my gut on its best behavior.

Unfortunately, vegan probiotics are hard to find locally. While I did find them at Kroger, they have been out of stock for over two months. When I sat down to order groceries using Instacart, I saw that they were still out. Walmart doesn't carry them, but I checked just in case. I checked Amazon and found them. I added it to my cart, set it up on subscription shipping, saved \$5 on the same brand, and did not have to search another store. Problem solved. Tomorrow my gut will be reminded to behave itself – again.

Then I remembered that, I am out of blood meal. I am a recent convert from the “kill every plant” lifestyle so I have been researching ad nauseum on how to keep the garden alive. I even had my husband's college alma mater test my garden soil when even my pinto beans flirted with death's doorstep. I found out that it was not me, it was the 112 bags of soil and compost I bought earlier this year and filled 108 square feet of garden beds with. The soil was almost completely devoid of nitrogen which is essential for so many things plant related. The solution is nitrogen only fertilizer. Except, gardening is seasonal on purchasing and supply chains even if we do have

a bit of growing season still ahead of us here in North Texas. Where do you get fertilizer when the local stores have stopped stocking it to make way for Thanksgiving and Christmas? Even the website was showing out of stock. With my vegan probiotics waiting patiently in my Amazon cart, I searched for blood meal. Found the one I used 3 weeks ago but it was out of stock. Looked at the other options because blood meal is blood meal. I'm not blood meal brand loyal yet. I found one that was half the cost that I could have the next day. Problem solved. My vegan probiotics did not have to travel solo, and my misbehaving soil will get a nitrogen dusting tomorrow.

I have naturally curly hair and I hate having it in my face, especially if I have an active migraine. I prefer the silicone hair ties because they hold the hair in place, and I am not constantly adjusting the ponytail slide. I noticed that they were getting harder to find a couple of years ago, so I purchased 3 packages of them. I do have to replace them every few weeks because my curls still tangle around the silicone bands, and then they snap. A couple of days ago, I broke one. I got a new one and noticed that I only had 4 remaining, so I wrote it on my grocery list. As I sat dutifully checking off grocery items as I loaded them into my Instacart or Walmart Pickup carts, I searched for silicone hair ties, except no one had them. Not a surprise, it has been a couple of years. Here I am doing my grocery shopping and stop to braid my hair because I had a migraine developing. That 2-day old hair tie snapped as I took it out! One browser tab over was my patiently awaiting Amazon cart where I then searched for silicone hair ties. I found the exact ones I was using – in stock. Price was not an issue in this case. Yes, they were \$2 more than I would have paid originally, but desperate times sometimes call for flicking the frugal angel off the shoulder for a few minutes.

That frugal angel climbed back on my shoulder just in time to convince me to remove the boxes of different sized sticky yellow bug catchers and tomato cage clips that found their way to the cart after I added the blood meal. I fell victim to Amazon's multiple scrolling "just because you don't have enough in your cart already" suggestion lists. Not once, but twice. They are supposed to take care of white flies and other garden flying nuisances and my tomatoes are currently a falling over hot mess. They were totally justifiable. Amazon conveniently reminded me about these garden pain points right there on the screen under the blood meal. Amazon won for a moment, but frugality won out when I thought about how I'd have to explain and justify why I spent another \$100 on Amazon this week. I removed them from my cart and quickly checked out.

Please note, no frugal angels were hurt in this experience. My husband's reaction to the smiling Amazon box I brought in and placed on the counter in front him did nothing to discourage me from loading more into my cart already. One could say he was a bit too giddy to find out what I bought him only to find himself disappointed in my selections. My youngest son's orchestra mandated all black dress shoes were not one of those items even after shoe-store-hopping for 3 hours today. I won't forget today too quickly though because Amazon will remind me when I visit next time how I was getting tired, cranky, and desperate by shoe store number 6 today. Amazon will feed me images of attractive men's dress shoes that I will no longer need which will be accompanied with pictures of other things men like to wear with all black dress shoes. Me and Amazon need to have a break from each other.