

# Earth, Wind, Rain, & Fire

We enjoy and contend with elements anywhere in the world and Prince Edward Island is no different. The following may be of help in accommodating them at either end of the spectrum as well as understanding how the cottage and its occupants are engaged with them over time.

## EARTH

**Plants:** This parcel, and all that surrounded it, was a part of the original Rose farmstead established in 1798. A bit wet in the northeast corner it was cultivated in cranberries by Clarence Rose's grandfather, Clarence (across the road) turned 91 in 2008. The bushes have quite a history and still produce despite their neglect. Picked at the right time in October the cranberries turn immediately from black to red in the time it takes to place them in the bucket. If ever magic reflected from the eyes of children those moments confirmed it in the life of ours. You will find strawberries (May) near the bluff and blueberries (June) directly west of the porch. The 1/4" hard blackberries are called crowberries and aren't eaten—unless maybe by crows.

Wildflowers are spreading on the south yard and follow the summer with purple irises followed by lupine and assorted others depending on the time of visit. The Lupine seeds are best harvested weeks after they die but seeds are sold along the roadside between here and Souris. Feel free to create cut flower bouquets for the tables and counters but do leave the bulbs and some seed stock for future growth.

**Bank erosion and paths:** Prince Edward Island is vigilant about mitigating shoreline and bank erosion. When possible please use the steps to the beach. Avoid any activity on the actual bank itself. Please take care not to break off bank ledges and avoid disturbing any other plant life on the embankments.

**Septic:** The septic tank is a pump up system with the pump tank 10 feet south from the electric meter. There is a 2" pipe connecting it to the septic field across the road. Please do not dig near the septic pump or drive across the line.

**Garden:** Depending on schedules there may be a garden (thriving or otherwise) present. August guests should feel free to partake of whatever it willingly provides.

**Beach:** The beach is mixed red and white sand. Beach composition changes dramatically over the winter and with major storms as well as a short distance up and down the beach. Generally there is a rocky shore at high tides and a smooth sandy one at low tides. At low tide the sandbars extend far into the water. Take time to swim under the moonlight. If not now, then when?

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## WIND

**Cane bolts, doors, and chairs that fly:** As the windmills attest, this end of the island has strong and steady winds. The second biggest concern is unsecured open doors that can rip off the hinges and damage wall mounted lighting on the outside. Foremost would be concern of injury by such. Use the cane bolts AT ALL times and you will feel relieved. Occasionally there will be a severe windstorm to the extent the house shakes. The house is fine and so will be you, but unsecured items in the yard will either disappear out to sea or roll onto the road. Such winds are capable of rolling the chairs and trash bins. Should such a storm arise bring the items in or close to the house or things will look pretty ridiculous later on. Tents and canopies should be taken down as they will be damaged. In fact, they don't stand much of a chance over time. The high wind also creates a pressure drop on the exterior of the house and opening the kitchen door will be strenuous as the higher interior pressure pushes against it. Don't panic just exercise caution. Opening the kitchen window(s) a bit will alleviate this problem, can you figure out why?

**Kites:** Needless to say kite flying is simple. You can fly most anything and the best time is when there is an off-shore breeze, lest you fly them across the road and over the power lines. We stake the kites in the yard and watch them from the deck. Commercial kites tend to break in the wind but there are materials with which to make kites in the laundry room area. Sticks, Tyvek, plastic, duct tape and string are the basics. Add plenty of tail length in this wind.

**Sky:** The sky is wind related in that it is where wind does its thing. Not to mention stars too. Take the time to go out at night and observe the night time sky. Some guests say it rivals Australia's but I don't know. I do know it will make you pause and reflect, late at night, when children are asleep, about things that matter most for you and yours. Take some time; look up; breathe in; and consider . . .

**Off-shore breezes:** Generally the wind shifts to offshore in the evenings from its onshore direction in the mornings. Occasionally this is not the case and great caution should be exercised near the water when inner tubes, flotation devices, or small craft are being used. It is highly recommended that they not be used under these conditions given the danger the wind presents. Bring in all toys near the house before evening's end and you will prevent items blowing to the beach and floating off to Labrador. Somehow the explanation of convection differential between land and water masses does not cut it with a teary-eyed child trying to comprehend the loss of a favorite toy.

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## **RAIN (water)**

**Windows:** Rain comes in the windows if they are open; even a teeny crack of 1/8" will allow enough water in to puddle on sills during a driving rain. If leaving the cottage for several hours amidst a questionable forecast, it is best to close all windows and the deck doors. If water gets in, simply wipe it up. The house has no basement to flood and the second floor is pitched so water doesn't run into the walls.

**Tides:** Tide times can be found online at: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/weather/> Low tides reveal sandy beaches and depending on how winter storms rearrange the beach the results can range from stoney to sandy and in between.

**Storm surf:** Do not swim in the high waves of a storm surf. Canada does not give out Darwin Awards. Additionally the waves can contain large stones and objects. Do take the time to explore the beach after such a storm, however.

**Jellyfish:** They show up at certain times. Don't play with them and you will be fine. There are two main types of jellyfish that surface in the waters: the Arctic Red, or Lion's Mane, Jellyfish and the White Moon Jellyfish. The Arctic Red is larger and more common than the White Moon, which is translucent and lacks the long red tentacles. The tentacles of the Arctic Red Jellyfish are used to stun their prey (zooplankton) before feeding. These are the same tentacles that may give slight stinging or mild burning sensations when people come in contact with them. No need to panic, the remedy is to rub wet sand over the irritated area. You can usually alleviate most of the discomfort caused by the sting of an Arctic Red Jellyfish.

Source: [http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/pe/pei-ipe/visit/visit4b\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/pe/pei-ipe/visit/visit4b_e.asp)

**Fishing:** The harbor area is a rich resource for fishing and learning about aquaculture. According to our children, smiles and a genuine curiosity will yield a wealth of information about fish, sources, preparation, access, and so forth. Tuna fishing starts in August and observing a tuna catch is always an event. By observing the draft line of returning boats you can tell when to head down to the harbor.

**Hoses:** Hoses are at the southeast and northwest corners of the house. Please avoid letting them run unnecessarily including playing with them. The southeast spigot is close to the electric meter and though it is a weather proof box that sits in driving rain storms it is still a good idea to exercise caution.

**Showers:** There are two showers in the cottage that work from a 40 gallon electric tank. Occasionally the house is fully occupied and a little planning will avoid inconveniences should everyone decide to take two showers a day. An exterior shower

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is located to the southwest of the house for the quick rinse of sand or to remove salt from the skin.

### FIRE

**Fire** adds such great ambience to beach parties, grilled food, candlelit dinners, etcetera but risks need to be kept in mind every time it is used, especially with regards to wind. We were initiated several years ago when a line of flimsy 5 foot high tiki torches leading to the beach were flipped through the air by a string of strong gusts. Flaming javelins are an entertainment touch to do without, not to mention the font size of the morning headlines. Herewith a few pieces of advice.

**Beach fires:** Build fires only on the beach. Do not build fires on the beach if there is an IN shore breeze. Generally the wind blows off shore at night. Resist the urge to have a fire should strong winds prevail inland as the sparks float up the bank and to the cottage.

Build fires small enough to put out with a few buckets of water. Build them below the tide line so if retiring for the night the rising tide will extinguish all coals. You will sleep better.

**Grilling:** Grill only with the provided grill. Grilling on the deck can be extremely risky given the winds. As has been the case with charcoal grills, moving the grill nearer to the house to avoid wind creates problems as well as a significant fire hazard. For this reason we use propane grills.

**Candles:** No open flames upstairs, ever. The chandelier above the table requires it not be left unattended. Children often want to light or extinguish the candles. Use extreme caution. A late evening conversation among friends around a candle lit table with the ocean background is indeed inviting and memorable. Enjoy, . . . and don't forget to blow out the candles.

**Smoking:** No smoking is allowed in the house. Outside, it is suggested to smoke downwind of the house if possible. Please dispose of cigarette refuse appropriately.

Thanks so much.