

**TAKE
ONE**

Gardener News

Serving the Agricultural, Gardening and Landscaping Communities

**TAKE
ONE**

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A miniaturized representation of nature



Tom Castronovo/Photo

Bob Castronovo is a Bonsai enthusiast who lives in Belle Mead, New Jersey. He is a consultant by profession, but his hobby is "Bonsai." His collection has over 150 varieties of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, which he keeps enclosed in his backyard.

By Tom Castronovo
Executive Editor

My Uncle Bob has been a mentor to me in the horticultural world since I was a kid. When I was a mere 15 years old, I use to hang out in his florist, garden center, his greenhouses and in his produce stand. I also tagged along with him as he was estimating landscape projects. The best was riding along with him snow plowing. We use to sing the Harry Chapin song "Taxi" together. When it comes on the radio, I still sing it and it brings back some wonderful memories. I think this verse is my favorite: "So I turned my cab into the driveway/ Past the gate and the fine trimmed lawns/ And she said we must get together/ But I knew it'd never be arranged/ She handed me twenty dollars, for a two-fifty fare, she said, Harry, keep the change."

As I got older, my landscaping and gardening career began with him before I went out on my own. He was always there, just like a "Green Industry" guiding light.

Today my Uncle Bob still inspires me. He is now creating Bonsai plants in his spare time.

As usual, I am always willing to learn something

(Continued on Page 16)

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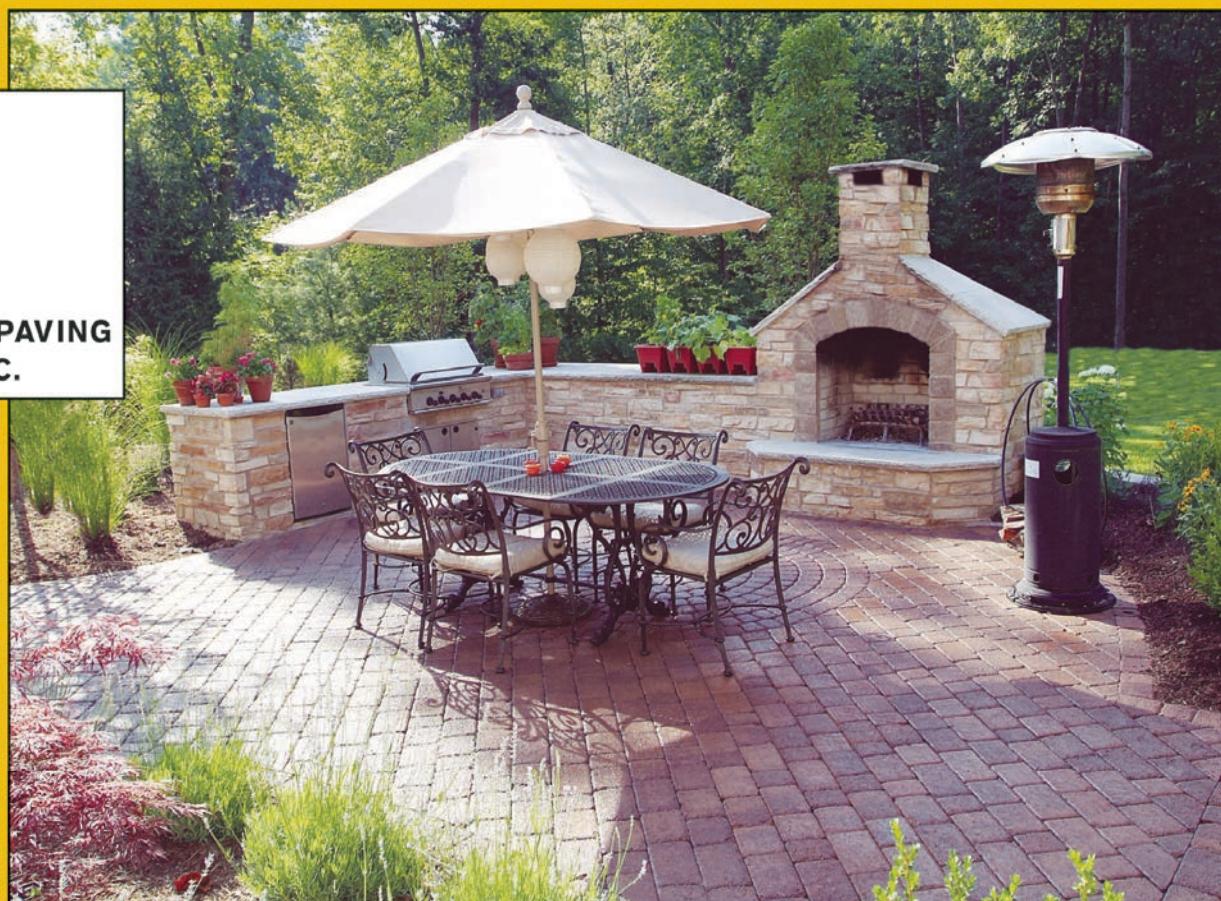


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Around The Garden

By Tom Castronovo
Gardener News

The Great Snake Invasion

I have not seen snakes around the property since I was a kid. And I will admit, that is a long time ago.

Last fall, I started to see snakes again.

I can't tell you how much I dislike the sight of them. As they slither across the lawn and through the garden beds, it just creeps me out.

As spring rolled around this year, it seems that the number of snake sightings has multiplied. I think I have at least four that I know of. Two that wiggle close to the house and two that are in different corners in the back of the property.

I have determined that these snakes are garter snakes. The neighbors tell me that they have an albino one.

The scariest part of seeing them is the surprise factor. They seem to appear out of nowhere. In the early part of June, I was cutting the back lawn. As I glanced to my right, there was one sunning itself in the garden. Needless to say, it startled me. My immediate reaction was to move to my left. As I did that, there was another one slithering across the rocks. Both of them lifted their heads and stared me down. I pushed the handle all the way down on my new Toro Personal Pace TimeMaster 30-inch-wide walk-behind mower and the quickness allowed me to escape the snakes at lightning speed as my heart raced with fear. You can laugh all you want. I am a big chicken when it comes to snakes. That part of the lawn didn't get finished 'til later in the day. I wanted to make sure they were gone. As I moved to a different part of the yard, the snake activity was there as well. The other two were in the lawn and I almost stepped on one of them. I had to check my shorts after seeing those two.

At that point, I'd had enough. I darted off the lawn and headed toward my car. My destination was Warrenville Hardware. Several years ago someone told me that moth balls deterred snakes, and I knew that the hardware store would have them. They have everything. I picked up four boxes and on my way down the aisle I spotted a snake-away product. I grabbed that as well. I was determined to scare these creatures away just like they scare the crap out of me.

When I got back to the house, I carefully crept around the property in fear, scattering the moth balls and the snake-away product. After I was done, I felt a big sigh of relief.

Several hours later I had enough courage to finish cutting the lawn, with no snake sightings. I was a happy camper and proud of myself.

The next task was to carry the outdoor furniture outside from the basement. As I opened the basement door, which separates the steps leading to the bilco doors, two snakes greeted me on the steps. Now I know where they went. It was a hot day and they found a small, and I mean small opening where the bilco doors meet together. My heart raced again. These snakes were now invading the house. I ran back up the inside stairs, across the house and out into the garage. I grabbed the one leftover moth ball box and what was left of the snake-away product and headed back down into the basement. I opened the door and tossed in the moth balls and the snake-away product. Several minutes later, the snakes headed for the opening and out they went.

Now, to make sure they don't return, I headed back down to the hardware store and purchased two giant glue boards. I put them right under the void in the doors. So far, the snakes have not come back in. I figured if they came back, I could catch them, boxed them up and move them down the street into the brook. All I had to do is pour some vegetable oil on the glue board and it would release the snakes unharmed.

I now scatter moth balls around the house on a regular basis. The snake sightings have decreased. I wish they would all just go away. I have now sealed all the cracks and crevices in the foundation to make sure they don't find their way into the basement.

I'm also thinking about installing aromatic cedar mulch around the house. Although not scientifically proven, some people believe this deters snakes as well.

I've learned that the garter snake is the most common snake found in the New Jersey. These snakes are the first to emerge in the state, and can often be seen in mid-March during warm spells. The adult garter snake's ground color varies from olive to brown to black and typically has three stripes, one on the back and one on each side extending from head to tail. The stripes are usually yellow, but may be greenish, brownish, or bluish, and stripes are occasionally absent. There is often a black or reddish, checkered pattern between the stripes which is more distinguishable on juveniles. The belly is pale yellow to pale green. Young are born in late summer. Just great! And an individual snake can give birth to about 30 young. I have no idea what I would do if I saw 30 snakes in one area.

I also learned that a garter snake can grow up to four feet long and that its bite is nontoxic. It does, however, hurt and will cause irritation. I have no reason to get that close.

New Jersey has 22 species of snakes. Two of our state's snake species are venomous, the timber rattlesnake and the northern copperhead, and the remaining 20 species are non-venomous.

I've never seen any snakes at the beach!

As always, I hope you find the information in the *Gardener News* informative and enjoyable.

Until next time...Keep the "garden" in the Garden State.

-Tom

Editor's Note: Tom Castronovo is executive editor and publisher of Gardener News. Tom's lifelong interest in gardening and passion for agriculture, environmental stewardship, gardening and landscaping, led to the founding of the Gardener News, which germinated in April 2003 and continues to bloom today. He is also dedicated to providing inspiration, and education to the agricultural, gardening and landscaping communities through this newspaper and GardenerNews.com.

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Robert Belleck
Water Garden Specialist

New Jersey is now coming to the height of the summer growing season. Many different fruits and vegetables reach their peak in July. Each one has an explosion of flavor. The sun-drenched days help sweeten some of our favorites, such as blueberries, raspberries and sweet corn. These are the days peaches will be picked, and we all know there is nothing sweeter than a ripe Jersey peach. All these flavor bursts are springing from the earth in successive waves of perfection for us to enjoy.

New Jersey residents and *Jersey Fresh* produce fans celebrate the wide variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables. They head to their nearby farmers markets, roadside stands and supermarkets. They take this incredibly fresh produce home to bake pies and cobblers, make salads and an endless array of dishes. So many treats are available to taste.

It is all local and all Jersey. It is so special because it is grown by farmers we know and trust and friends and neighbors in our own fields and gardens.

Everyone in New Jersey can get a seat at the garden table. It might be at a restaurant or hospital, maybe



NJ Dept. of Agriculture

By Douglas H. Fisher
Secretary of Agriculture

There's Nothing Like the Taste of Jersey Fresh

even a sporting event. We eat this produce because of the incredible flavor, but there also are numerous health benefits. That is why the United States Department of Agriculture MyPlate recommends that we make half of "our plates" fruits and vegetables each day. According to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov, eating a diet rich in fresh produce as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce the risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke, protect against certain types of cancers, reduce the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes, decrease bone loss and help maintain healthy blood pressure.

When you do something that special for yourself, there is another benefit that supports our pride in being the Garden State -- New Jersey's fabulous crops. Purchasing *Jersey Fresh* produce helps

our farmers stay in business. Our state has a rich heritage of families that have been farming here for hundreds of years. They grow a dazzling assortment of crops, from heirloom tomatoes, exotic herbs, and endless eggplant varieties to wine grapes, collard greens and bok choy, and hundreds more. What is harvested reflects a celebration of our marketplace and its rich cultural diversity.

This time of year conjures up memories of our childhoods, when our parents and grandparents would pull out handed-down recipes producing special summer dishes. Do you ever really forget eating a ripe Jersey tomato sandwich or homemade zucchini bread? How about cooking just-picked corn-on-the-cob in the husk right on a hot grill? Those are memories we can still cultivate in our

children because what we remembered from our past is still the same as it has been for generations. Jersey farms, *Jersey Fresh*, *Jersey Seafood*, *Jersey Grown*. Savor the flavors of New Jersey.

For instance, here is an old recipe I recently discovered that I will be trying this month.

Anna Scott's Summer Squash Pudding (circa 1921)

1 quart cooked *Jersey Fresh* squash, 1 cup milk, 3 eggs, ¼ cup brown sugar, ¼ cup syrup or sweetening to taste, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon grated lemon or orange peel, pinch of ground mace, ½ tablespoon butter or margarine.

Mash the squash through a strainer; add the well-beaten eggs, sugar and flavoring; mix well, brush custard cups with butter or margarine and fill with the mixture; place in a moderate oven 40-45 minutes.

Test same as cup custard, by putting a silver knife in center. If it comes out dry, the pudding is done. Serve in cups either warm or cold.

There are so many recipes for using *Jersey Fresh* produce you can find in farm cookbooks you can pick up at roadside stands, libraries and farmers markets. Ask about them.

If you have any family recipes you would like to share with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, please send them to us at lynne.richmond@ag.state.nj.us. We would be glad to put your recipe on our *Jersey Fresh* website www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov.

Let's celebrate summer!

Editor's Note: Douglas H. Fisher is New Jersey's Secretary of Agriculture. He is the department's executive officer, secretary to the State Board of Agriculture and a member of the Governor's cabinet. Secretary Fisher fulfills executive, management and administrative duties prescribed by law, executive order or gubernatorial direction. He can be reached at 609.292.3976. For more info, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture>

Look Who's Reading the Gardener News!



It's in the news

Tom Castronovo/Photo

New Jersey State Senator **Bob Smith**, Chairman of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the State House Commission, looks over the June *Gardener News* in his Piscataway, Middlesex County, legislative office while wearing a *Jersey Fresh* baseball cap. Senator Smith began his elected career as Mayor of Piscataway from 1981-86. From 1986-2001 he served in the General Assembly. In 2002 he was elected Senator. Smith is an attorney with a B.A. from the University of Scranton (History), M.S. from the University of Scranton (Chemistry), M.S. from Rutgers University (Environmental Science), and a J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law.

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.

Chinese proverb

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Jonathan Green
organics

Wow! I have never been on such a rollercoaster ride in my 30-plus years in the lawn business as this year. First, an extremely mild and snow-free winter followed by a spring drought. I have never seen a real noticeable spring drought. What did this do to your lawn?

When fertilizers were first applied this spring, they barely turned the yellow winter grass to any shade of green. The weather was unusually warm too, which got rid of our cabin fever and got us out on our lawns early, but the lack of moisture prevented fertilizer from greening for many weeks. Is there something wrong with my lawn? Grass seed that was applied took forever to germinate due to the lack of rainfall too, even though we had record-high temperatures in March. Is it too late to apply my pre-emergence crabgrass control, the forsythia has bloomed? Not if you applied a control product that contains Dimension herbicide, it can control crabgrass until late-spring.

When discussing landscape design and construction, you will often hear designers use the term, "outdoor room" to describe areas in the plan. It sounds great, but what is an outdoor room?

We all know what an indoor room is - four walls, a ceiling and floor. There is also usually at least one doorway and maybe a window or two, but that's it. Pretty simple.

So if those are the only requirements, how is it possible to create an outdoor room? Although there is the ground outside, which could be considered to be the floor, there certainly aren't any walls or ceilings, are there? If that's the case, how can we talk about rooms being outdoors when clearly they lack the components necessary to create a real room?

The truth of the matter is that the great outdoors has everything that you need to create a room, and then some. You just need to think about things a little differently and be a little more creatively than two-by-fours and sheetrock.

Let's look into why I can say this and discuss how an outdoor room compares to



Turf's Up

By Todd Pretz
Professional Turf Consultant

A little bit of this... a little bit of that!

Once April rains arrived, dandelions went wild and appeared everywhere. But, as April cooled off, the bright yellow flowers quickly shriveled up and went away and the puff balls appeared. What next? A large crop of white clover emerged. The excessive moisture we received in April and May created ideal conditions for white clover to establish. I even saw 3- to 4-year-old sod lawns where some white clover broke through. This clover did not come with the sod, the seeds were already dormant and present in the soil from perhaps many years ago. Clover is a difficult-to-control broadleaf weed and it may not be completely killed off with your first

weed-control application. If clover still persists after 30 days, re-apply the appropriate controls. Follow all label directions for best control and safety.

Most irrigation systems were turned on in spring, but did not have to be used. Then on Memorial Day the 90-plus degree temperatures and high humidity hit us and red thread fungus appeared! Overnight, small patches in the lawn appeared with the stringy red thread look on the grass blades. Lawn fungicide was selling like hot cakes. Fortunately, this awful weather changed back to normal in a few days, whew!

At this time of year, be conscious of your watering of the lawn. Do not allow

the lawn to suffer to a wilted stage before you irrigate. In the absence of rainfall, watering two to three times a week should be sufficient unless the heat and drought stress go out of control. If you see definitive foot prints in the lawn after you walk over it, it probably needs a watering. A healthy growing lawn requires about one inch of rainfall or irrigation a week to look its best; do not over-water your lawn. You know how good it feels to take a plunge in the ocean or pool when it's really hot? Give your lawn a watering, it will appreciate it.

By the time you read this article we will know if we will experience a bumper crop of insects and weeds due to the

mild winter. Provided there is enough heat and drought, they will arrive. Remember to determine if your "brown" lawn is due to heat and drought stress, insect damage or fungus damage before you just treat it for an unknown reason with some chemicals. A light fertilizing from organic sources can be beneficial during summer months, provided it is not over 90 degrees or 90-percent humidity. A healthy growing lawn can withstand quite a bid of heat, drought and insect stress.

It seems like Mother Nature keeps on hitting our lawns with a little bit of this... a little bit of that during the growing season. We love Mother Nature, but take control and show her who the boss on your lawn is. Enjoy the summer.

Editor's Note: Todd Pretz is Vice President of Jonathan Green, a leading supplier of lawn and garden products in the northeast. For more information, please visit: www.jonathangreen.com



Creating Outdoor Spaces

By Jody Shilan, MLA
Landscape Designer

What is an Outdoor Room?

its indoor counterpart. We'll begin with the first and easiest comparison, indoor flooring versus outdoor flooring. When you think about it, both have wood options. Inside the home, we typically use hardwood. Outside we use wood decking or one of the newer composites. Another flooring option inside the home is a tremendous variety of natural stone or tile. Interestingly enough, outside we also have natural stone or a tile-like product - we call them brick or pavers. Inside there is carpeting, outside we have grass.

OK, so far so good, but what about the second component, walls? Inside the house, walls are used to separate one room from another and typically go from floor to ceiling. What about outside where there is no ceiling. Well, believe it or not

there are actually many more wall options outside than inside.

Let's start with fences. We use fencing as walls to delineate our property from our neighbors', to keep pets and children safe and to create privacy. We fence our back yard to separate it from our front yard and even fence in individual rooms like a swimming pool and patio area or vegetable garden or other defined space.

When discussing walls more we do build them, but they are usually made out of stone and are only 18 to 48 inches high. Although they are not eight to 10 feet high like inside the house, they do the job and nobody said they "had" to go floor-to-ceiling. They're tall enough to define the outdoor kitchen from the kids play area or to separate one landscaped sitting area from another.

What about plantings? Can't they create a wall? They certainly can. One of the biggest uses of evergreen plant material five to six feet and up is to create a privacy wall to screen neighbors from each other. Unlike interior walls, plant walls can grow as high as 20 feet or more, depending on your needs.

That just leaves the ceiling. Now I can be esoteric and say that outdoor rooms don't need ceilings because they are supposed to be open to the stars and the sky, but that would be cheating.

There are ceilings outside and they are available in both natural and manmade materials. The simplest ceiling outdoors is the canvas awning. It protects you from the elements and gives you a true ceiling feeling. What about pergolas? They are

ceilings that can be very open or provide filtered sunlight with the addition of lattice work or a vine, like wisteria, honeysuckle and trumpet creeper.

Finally, if you want a ceiling that is "au natural," how about just planting a shade tree or creating a space that takes advantage of an existing tree canopy. If you don't think tree canopies are really outdoor ceilings, please feel free to stand out in the hot sun while I relax under a beautiful oak tree and read a book in the nice cool shade.

Editors Note: Jody Shilan is the owner of Jody Shilan Designs in Wyckoff, where he provides landscape design and consulting services for homeowners and landscape contractors. He earned his bachelors degree in Landscape Architecture from Cook College, Rutgers University and his masters degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Currently, he is President of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA). He can be reached at 201-783-2844 or jshilan@gmail.com.

Sweet corn production has a long and storied history here in the Garden State. Along with peaches, blueberries and tomatoes, it is probably one of the most identifiable types of produce that is grown here in New Jersey. Produce marketers take advantage of this, and more often than not, will display their sweet corn as "Jersey Corn" or "Jersey Fresh Corn." And they do this for a good reason. Although I may be somewhat biased, I believe that New Jersey grown sweet corn is some of the best our country (or the world, for that matter) has to offer.

According to USDA statistics, in 2011, there were 7,400 acres of sweet corn that was grown for the fresh market in New Jersey. This means that all of this acreage was planted with the intent of selling it to be consumed fresh, and not canned or frozen or processed in some other way. While sweet corn is available in supermarkets for a large part of the year from other states, because of its sensitivity to cold



The Town Farmer

By Peter Melick
Agricultural Producer

Sweet Corn

temperatures, sweet corn is usually only available here in New Jersey from late-June through October.

As far as fresh fruits and vegetables go, sweet corn is probably one of the most affected by freshness. This quality also accounts for the fact that there is such a wide difference in quality between locally grown corn and corn that is shipped in from another region of the country. Once an ear is picked, the sugars in the corn start breaking down into starch and the corn starts to lose some of its sweetness. It is for this reason that consumers should source their sweet corn close to where they live. This will lessen the amount of time that the corn will spend in transit or in

refrigeration somewhere and will, in turn, help to maintain that great flavor.

Besides the sweetness of the corn, the other attribute that really differentiates it in terms of quality is texture. Over the past few years, plant researchers have come up with ways to increase the sweetness of corn and to allow it to hold on to some of its sugar content in storage. This has come, however, at the expense of texture. In order for sweet corn to hold up in transit, many of the shipping varieties have been bred to retain a very firm texture. This helps to ensure that they will hold up for extended periods of time. These varieties however, tend to give up some of that creamy texture that is associated with gourmet

quality sweet corn because they would not hold up as well in transit. These are just a few of the reasons why when locally grown corn comes into season, it is such a vast improvement over other offerings from farther away.

On our farm, because there is such a demand for high-quality fresh sweet corn early in the season, we grow the first few plantings under clear plastic mulch. This acts like a mini greenhouse which warms up the soil and allows the seeds to germinate and start growing much earlier than normal. This year, because of the early-season warm temperatures, we put in our first planting on March 23, a new record for us by about 10 days! Generally, this allows

us to lengthen our season by about two to three weeks. This corn will, with a little luck and good fortune, be ready for harvest around the first week of July. We will make successive plantings of corn about a week apart, starting in April and then finishing at the end of July. This allows us to have a steady supply of sweet corn right into October. In some seasons, we have even been able to get two crops of corn off of the same ground in the same year. So get ready for sweet corn season and enjoy it while it's here!

Editor's Note: Peter Melick is co-owner of Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick and a 10th-generation New Jersey farmer. Peter is a current member of the Tewksbury Township Committee, and a former Mayor of Tewksbury Township. He also served as a director for the New Jersey Farm Bureau and is a past president of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture. Peter has also been featured on NJN, News 12 New Jersey and on the Fox Business Network.



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A noteworthy recipient

Tom Castronovo/Photo

New Jersey Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Al Murray, left, stopped by the Garden Club of New Jersey's Eighty-Seventh Annual Meeting on June 7, which was held at the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel, to inform them that they received a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant. Specialty crops include, but are not limited to: fruits, horticulture, nursery crops and floriculture. The Garden Club of New Jersey received their grant for their Jersey Fresh/Jersey Grown "buy local promotional campaign" and their "educational community garden programs." During the meeting's lunch intermission, Murray met up with Vivian Morrison, center, President of the Garden Club of New Jersey; and Jeannie Geremia, Horticultural Chair and a National Garden Club Accredited Judge for the Garden Club of New Jersey, Garden Club of New Jersey Community Garden Chair and Central Atlantic Region Community Garden Chair of National Garden Clubs, Inc., while visiting the boutiques, exhibits and the floral design section.

Agricultural leaders gathered in New Hampshire



Tom Castronovo/Photo

New Hampshire, also known as the Granite State, hosted the 2012 Northeast Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) annual meeting at the Mountain View Grand Hotel in Whitefield on June 3-5.

NEASDA is the annual meeting of the Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Those states include: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. The current NEASDA President is Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food.

For the first time ever, NEASDA held its meeting in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Northeast region of the U.S. Animal Health Association, an organization of state and federal government veterinarians. Animal health and welfare, biosecurity and food safety issues and planning were on the shared agenda.

This three-day meeting included NEASDA business, Federal Agency updates, regional discussions, food export discussions, and farm tours.

New Jersey, also known as the Garden State, is scheduled to host the meeting in 2013.

From left to right are: Walter E. Whitcomb, Commissioner of Agriculture, Maine; Darrel J. Aubertine, Commissioner of Agriculture, New York; Lorraine Stuart Merrill, Commissioner of Agriculture, New Hampshire; Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner of Agriculture, Connecticut; Chuck Ross, Secretary of Agriculture, Vermont; Kenneth Ayars, Agriculture Chief, Rhode Island; and Douglas H. Fisher, Secretary of Agriculture, New Jersey.

Kings Food Markets Launches 'Local Fresh' 24/7

(PARSIPPANY, NJ) — Kings Food Markets (Kings) builds on its tradition of bringing customers the freshest, highest-quality ingredients with the launch of its exclusive 'Local Fresh 24/7' program. The Local Fresh 24/7 program allows Kings to offer customers the benefits of a local farmstand in the convenience of their neighborhood food market by making locally grown, farm-fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs available to customers within 24 hours of harvest – all within the aisles of its stores.

“At Kings Food Markets, we share the love of food with our customers, and it is important to us that we continually find ways in which we can bring them the very best selection of ingredients,” said Judy Spires, president and CEO of Kings Food Markets. “Time is of the essence when it comes to the taste and nutritional value of produce, which is why Local Fresh 24/7 is so important. Not only are we able to support our local and regional farmers, but also, this program allows us to provide our customers with the healthiest, most delicious fruits, vegetables and herbs possible.”

Through Local Fresh 24/7, Kings works with a network of small and mid-sized, regional farmers to deliver all featured products fresh to its stores within 24 hours of harvest. Local farmers supplying Local Fresh 24/7 harvest only the freshest, seasonal products in the morning, and through an expedited distribution process, they are delivered to Kings' stores and prepared for sale the next day. Once these products have been available for a single day, any items not sold will be removed from Local Fresh 24/7 displays and integrated into Kings' general selection of produce. This program is unique to Kings and was developed in partnership with Massachusetts-based Red Tomato, a non-profit committed to better connecting farmers and consumers.

“The logistics of Local Fresh 24/7 are unbelievably heroic,” said Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral for Kings Food Markets. “From the dedicated New Jersey growers who carefully tend and harvest these crops, to the distribution teams and Red Tomato staff who ensure delivery to the stores, to the amazing commitment of the entire Kings organization, this is an unprecedented effort to both support the local farmer and bring the absolute freshest, best produce to the supermarket shopper.”

With Local Fresh 24/7's emphasis on selecting only the freshest produce, products available through the program will vary daily, but customers can expect to find such summer staples as heirloom tomatoes, corn, squash, cilantro, lettuce, parsley, mint, radishes, spinach and more, frequently throughout the summer. For the latest updates on which items are available through Local Fresh 24/7, customers can visit Kings' redesigned website (www.kingsfoodmarkets.com), subscribe to customer emails, follow Kings on Twitter (@KingsFoodMkts) or like Kings on Facebook (www.facebook.com/kingsfoodmarkets). The Kings website will also expand this summer to not only include updates on the Local Fresh 24/7 program but all of Kings' farm fresh initiatives.

“At Kings, we want customers to be inspired every time they walk into one of our stores or interact with us online,” added Spires. “Providing access to some of the finest ingredients possible is a large part of that effort, and the Local Fresh 24/7 program is just one of the latest ways in which we're able to inspire our customers.”

Crabbing, swimming, boating, fishing, surfing, sunbathing, biking, water skiing, paddle boarding, body boarding, body surfing, personal water crafting, wake boarding, skim boarding, boardwalk rides, eating, drinking or just plain relaxing.

These are but a few of the amazing things our beautiful state affords us the luxury of doing, and right now it is prime time. Prime time to be outside enjoying the surf, sun, sand, boardwalks, etc.. Due to the ridiculous price of gas, coming to the beach for a few days, or more, has become a lot more feasible than heading to some far off destination with the family. With all of the activities, or just lying around, why not?

One of the greatest things is the diversity of some of our different beach towns up and down the Jersey coast. I love to take drives into other beach towns just to check out the restaurants, architecture, shops and whatever else they have to offer. Being able to speak about and help to promote the Jersey shore over the last few years has been great. It helps me to realize just how lucky we are to live here. Aside from writing about our shore area, I always like to mention our farmlands, the farmers and the importance



From the Deep

By Craig Korb
Executive Chef

Greetings from the Jersey Shore!

of buying *Jersey Fresh* fruits and vegetables, as well as the *Jersey Grown* program, which focuses on the different types of plants, flowers, shrubs and trees that are grown in our state. I'm always super excited this time of year because of all the great things going on all over the state.

Lest we forget, the terrific, award-winning vineyards within the state as well. Sure, I know, most of you are saying Jersey wine? Can that be good? The answer is YES. I have tried many, and while not all were to my liking, I have enjoyed a growing number of these wines over the last few years. So if you don't see them at your local bottle shop, ask about and put in a request for a few different bottles and give them a try. In three months, it will be time for the annual *Jersey Fresh* wine dinner at the Claw. This has definitely become my favorite wine dinner to do. Just a few of

the things we've had over the last two years are Jersey-made cheeses, wines, produce, seafood and even meats. This event sells out quickly, so check out the web site or call the restaurant for reservations if you're interested. It usually takes place toward the end of September and early October.

All right, now for the grilling recipe I've been promising. This is a great marinade for chicken, pork or even steaks. It's real simple and flavorful and the ingredients are pretty easy to come by. This can be served with some coconut rice or a nice salad of baby lettuce, such as arugula that has been dressed lightly with salt and pepper, a little olive oil and a squeeze of fresh lemon or lime. I'm going to use chicken legs with the thighs attached for this recipe, but you can easily use breasts or chicken wings. Good luck, have fun and get yourself to the beach!

Southeast Asian-style grilled chicken
(serves 2 for dinner)
2 chicken legs with thighs attached
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
1/2 bunch cilantro, stems OK, roughly chopped
1/2 bunch mint, leaves only, roughly chopped
1/2 Tbsp. seasoned rice wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. fresh ginger root, peeled and rough chopped
1 Tbsp. fresh garlic, rough chopped
Juice of 1 lime
1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
*optional- 1 Tbsp. fresh hot pepper, such as Thai bird chile or jalapeño
Method-
-place all ingredients, except chicken legs, in a blender or food processor until blended to a smooth paste-like consistency
-place chicken in a large

ZipLoc bag and pour in marinade, seal bag; try to get most of the air out and shake chicken around gently to coat with marinade, and place in large bowl for at least 1 hour or preferably up to 6 hours

-heat grill to a medium high heat

-remove chicken from marinade, reserve marinade for basting, wiping away the excess marinade from chicken

-make sure grill is brushed clean and lightly oiled

-place chicken on grill and turn down heat

-cook chicken until cooked through, turning from time to time

-toward the end of cooking, baste chicken liberally with the leftover marinade and let cook an additional 2-3 minutes. Discard the rest of the marinade after basting final time.

-chicken should be slightly browned with nice grill marks!

Editor's Note: *Craig Korb is executive chef at The Crab's Claw Inn, Lavallette, New Jersey. He has an Associates degree in Culinary Arts and a Bachelors degree in Food Service Management from Johnson and Wales University. For more information visit www.TheCrabsClaw.com or phone (732) 793-4447.*

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Renowned Jersey Fresh Blueberries Now Available

(TRENTON, NJ) — New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher announced that blueberries, the official state fruit, are now in season and available at local farm markets, roadside stands, pick-your-own farms and supermarkets. The harvest began ten days sooner than normal, due to the unusually warm weather experienced earlier this year.

"*Jersey Fresh* blueberries are always eagerly awaited," said Secretary Fisher. "Our exceptional blueberries taste great and can be used to make a variety of dishes including salads, oatmeal, and homemade pies."

New Jersey is one of the country's top cultivators of blueberries. According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, 62 million pounds of blueberries were produced last year on 7,700 acres with a value of \$94.7 million.

New Jersey ranks fourth in the nation in blueberry production. Atlantic and Burlington Counties are the main harvesters of the state fruit, accounting for 95 percent of the blueberry acres harvested in 2011.

The major varieties of blueberries grown in New Jersey include Blue Crop and Duke, named for one of the founders of Atlantic Blueberry Company in Hammonton.

New Jersey is also a major exporter of blueberries to Canada, which heralds the arrival of the harvest each year.

There are many reports as to the health benefits of blueberries. United States Department of Agriculture researchers found that blueberries ranked first in antioxidant activity in comparison to 40 other fresh fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants help neutralize harmful by-products of metabolism called "free radicals" that are associated with cancer and other age related diseases.

Blueberries also are a large part of New Jersey's agri-tourism industry. With pick-your-own farms in 9 counties throughout the state, picking blueberries can also be a fun family activity. To find a pick-your-own blueberry farm or markets carrying *Jersey Fresh* blueberries, visit the *Jersey Fresh* website at www.jerseyfresh.nj.gov or www.visitnjfarms.org.

The Department offers these tips for selecting blueberries: Look for blueberries that are plump and fresh looking; Pay particular attention to their color; they should be blue, black, bluish-black or purple; Blueberries have a gray, waxy deposit on the skin called bloom. The bloom is a protective coating, so don't wash blueberries until ready to use; Freeze blueberries on a cookie sheet and then place into a freezer storage bag; Blueberries spoil quickly if left at room temperature, but can be stored in the refrigerator for three days; Avoid containers that have juice stains on them, a sign the berries are crushed; and Wrinkled fruit means they have been stored too long; while soft, watery fruit means the berries are overripe.

Shame on us in the landscape and gardening community. We are in the midst of perpetuating an epidemic of monumental proportions. This disease is slowly and systematically harming our ornamental trees and plants. Seen in abundance in commercial buildings and residences as well, it seems as though, if a little is a good thing, then a massive amount should be excellent. Actually, the opposite is true. We have been called in to investigate problems with landscape plants and have had to dig them out of the seas of mulch to find what we are looking for. Not only the piles of mulch around single trees, we are also finding mounds of mulch in foundation beds as well.

What can be the cure for this mulch volcano epidemic? This is a simple but time consuming fix. We need to carefully remove this mass of mulch and soil down to the crown of the plants with care being given to not injure and skin off the bark. Once this is accomplished we can cultivate into the soil the decomposed spoils of mulch from long ago and if appropriate install a light one- to two-inch layer of mulch to aid in water retention as well as weed suppression. This will affect the cure needed and save our landscape plants from a slow suffocation.

Now that the mulch problem

I got up early last weekend, camera around the neck, and was blown away by how many of these were going completely crazy in almost every single yard I drove by. Stop after stop, I photographed them and I am glad I have a digital camera – film is expensive. Some big, some small and some that had become a 15- foot-high, 20-foot-wide, 100-foot-long hedge separating two properties! And every group, from bottom to top, were bright, bright yellow!

Wow, have you guessed what I am referring to? Yes, the explosive spring-time FORSYTHIA. I was told by friends in late-March that it went spectacular in the Hudson Valley and had already been showboating in Pennsylvania, and if those buds were any indication that far south it was going to be amazing in Maine, and yes-suh, it sure was, approximately 30 days later. Every spring is truly wonderful – but I think this is the most prolific I've ever seen... seems like every single bud came



The Landscaper

By Evan Dickerson
Landscape Professional

Mt. St Helens is alive and Well in The Garden State

has been solved, we can turn our attention to proper pruning practices. Proper horticultural pruning can enhance the health and beauty of your plants. Improper and indiscriminant shearing of ornamentals can increase the incidence of disease problems and can make the plants more attractive to insects. By horticultural pruning, we mean systematically reducing the height and girth of plants by removing branches through the use of hand pruning. This involves reaching into the plant and cutting back into the old wood, therefore reducing the size of the plant while keeping the natural shape and intended look of these ornamentals. Try to make cuts at a lateral stem or bud. This will eliminate long pieces of dead tissue which are an open invitation for problems.

Proper pruning to enhance the natural form of your plants will also make them more efficient water users as well.

This is important at this time of year as we are soon bound to endure some hot, dry weather. Too often shears are used to shape ornamental shrubs into "snow cones and hockey pucks." In this day and age when people are looking to save money, the temptation may be to save when pruning and just quickly shear your shrubs. Although this may save time and money, it will cause irreparable harm to your plants, which will cost many times more than the labor savings will give you.

Timing can be important in your pruning as well. Generally speaking, if your pruning is done properly and you are maintaining the natural form of your plants, most can thrive with the job done yearly.

Ornamentals that bloom before the end of June should be pruned after flowering. This will encourage the setting of buds for next year's flowers as these buds

form on this year's growth. There are other plants which flower after June. These varieties would be best served if pruned in winter or early spring before bud break, since these plants set up their flowers during the current spring season. Still other plants may actually benefit from light pruning before or after their blooming period and there may even be another bloom on some of these. Dead heading, removing old flowers and blossoms on perennials and ornamentals, can be done at this time as well. This will extend the blooming period on some plants and aid in the set-up of flowers for next season on others.

Certainly, when plants are used as a screen or to border an area, and the intended look is a hedge, the gas or electric, even hand shears would be appropriate to use. However when shearing, it is important to remember to keep the top of your hedges slightly thinner than the bottom.

This will ensure fuller growth. Pruning devices of all types must be kept razor sharp. Not only will this make your job easier to accomplish, it will keep your cuts clean and even.

A good rule of thumb for any pruning is to get it accomplished at a time when the plant will recover the fastest. Usually this is during the summer months when new growth will be properly stimulated and this new succulent growth will be able to harden off enough to withstand the effects of winter. Even though there are times when fall pruning cannot be avoided, it is best to do a little planning to get your pruning done at a more appropriate time.

Pruning and mulching for that matter, although seen as daunting tasks, may actually be a therapeutic experience. The anxiety can be taken out of these chores by proper training. There are many good reference books and your county agriculture agents can also offer assistance as well as your local garden center and landscape professional.

Editor's Note: Evan Dickerson is owner of Dickerson Landscape Contractors and NaturesPro of North Plainfield. He has been pioneering the organic approach to plant health since 1972. Evan can be reached at 908-753-1490



The Miscellaneous Gardener

By Richard W. Perkins
Freelance Writer

"What is BRIGHT Yellow & Everywhere in Bath, Maine?"

through the light winter we had unscathed. Forsythia is tough, but the buds often get frozen; that's why after a hard winter you often see bushes with only a skirt of flowers, all the color close to the ground where it was protected by snow. But not this spring. My neighbor's bush covers my entire fence line of approximately 75 feet, and is at least 18 feet tall of solid stem-to-stern yellow buds!

Having the opportunity, I asked a retired ship's Captain my mother knows where the forsythias came from and this is what he told me. Bath, as a thriving ship-building town since 1743 and the nation's fifth-largest seaport in the mid-19th Century,

had many ships coming into port with cargo from the Far East, including forsythia plants that were given to the shipmates' wives and children as a reminder that as sure as they would bloom brightly in the spring, so would the ice melt in the rivers and they would be coming home. What a beautiful sentiment, I thought, and looking into the plant's history a bit further, this is what I found: Plant hunter Robert Fortune is credited with bringing them to the West in 1844, but the botanical name honors Scottish botanist William Forsyth (1737-1804). He was a royal head gardener and founding member of the Royal Horticultural Society, started an

international seed and plant exchange, and was King George III's chief superintendent of the Royal Gardens at Kensington and St James'.

A new and unique species of forsythia was noticed by the Scottish botanist Robert Fortune (1812-1880) on the coastal island city of Zhoushan in eastern China during one of his plant-collecting expeditions for the Royal Horticultural Society. He introduced the species to England in 1844. Forsythia is comprised of 11 species. One is native to southeastern Europe in Albania and Serbia on the Balkan Peninsula. The rest are native to eastern Asia: six in China, two in Japan, and two in Korea. The

hybrid's first introduction into the United States was in Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum in 1889. That may be the first recorded "botanical" introduction to the United States, but according to the old sea Captain, his relatives had it flourishing in their front yard for at least 75 years before that. If the astounding number of them in this town is any indication of his claim, I bet you he's right. I have lived all over the Eastern Seaboard and I have never seen anything like it. Almost appears that each Captain with a vessel that had been to the Far East was competing to see who could bring the most forsythia back to Bath, Maine.

Thanks for reading and see ya next month.

Editors Note: Richard Perkins is an avid horticulturist, a member of the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance and the Seacoast Writers Association. He can be reached at perkinsphoto7@aol.com



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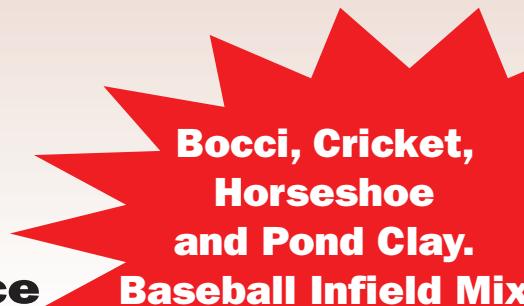
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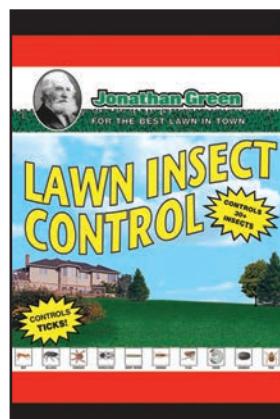


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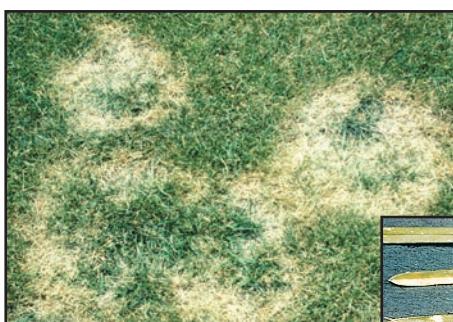


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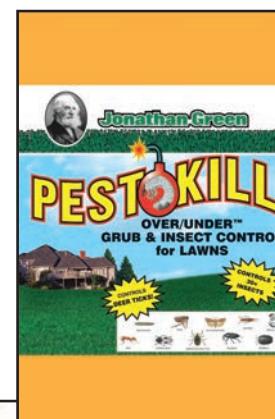
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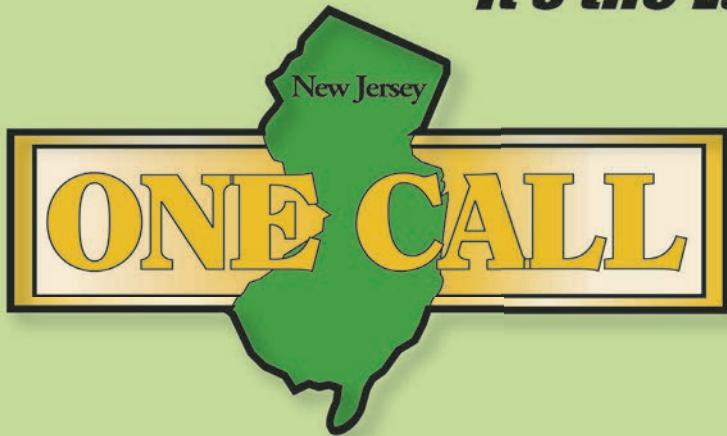


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CASE FILES

From the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Union County *Garden Help Line*

By Madeline Flahive DiNardo, Union County Agricultural Agent and Master Gardeners, MC Schwartz and James Keane

Q. Help! My garden is being eaten away by slugs! What can I do? -Slimed in Summit

A. Slugs can be thugs when it comes to your flower and vegetable gardens. Slugs and snails are members of the mollusk family, along with clams and oysters. They thrive in moist conditions and are often found in shady locations or areas that are weedy. Well-irrigated areas are another favorite locale.

Slugs are basically snails without shells; their bodies are covered in a protective layer of slime. There are several species found in New Jersey. The smallest is the Gray Garden slug, about one to two inches long. It is gray with black spots. The other is the Spotted Garden slug, which is gray with black spots and light black longitudinal lines on its black. The Spotted Garden slug can be almost four inches long! The three species of snails commonly found in New Jersey vegetable gardens are the Brown Garden, European Garden and Decollate Snail. These snails are smaller than slugs. The garden snails have a round shell and the decollate snail has a cone-shaped shell. Slugs and snails have two sets of tentacles on the front of their bodies. The shorter pair is used to sense odors and the longer is an extensible eye stalk.

Slugs and snails lay an average of 20 to 30 eggs, depending on the species. Most eggs are laid in the spring and early summer. Slug eggs are clear gelatinous balls that are 1/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter. The eggs are found close to the soil surface, hidden under leaves, mulch, rocks, trash or boards where conditions are cool and moist.

Just before hatching, the eggs may appear cloudy; the baby slug or snail resembles a small adult, but may not have the same coloring at first. As soon as slugs and snails hatch, if temperature and humidity are right, they begin to feed. Slugs and snails live one year outdoors, but may live longer in a greenhouse.

Most snails and slugs are nocturnal, feeding at night when dew provides moisture and temperatures are cooler. During the day, slugs and snails hide under plants, mulch, or other cool locations. Occasionally, you may find them feeding during the day in heavy shade and moist conditions.

Slugs and snails have rasping mouth parts, damaging plants by scraping plant tissue, causing irregular holes in leaves, stems, flowers, fruits, and vegetables. In a ruthless infestation, the leaves can be entirely shredded. To add insult to injury, slugs and snails leave a clear or silvery slimy trail on plant foliage, fruits and surrounding stones or walkways.

Since these garden mollusks need to live in moist habitats, altering the environment in your garden can help make it a less favorable spot for slugs and snails. Removing trash, weeding and pruning or pinching back overgrown plants help improve ventilation in the garden. The movement of air through the garden reduces moisture. Staking large flowers can also improve air circulation. Vegetable plants such as tomatoes, peppers and squash should be staked or trellised so their fruits are kept off the ground, no longer easy prey to these voracious eaters!

Keeping a one-inch even layer of mulch will protect plants, but not retain too much moisture. Don't place fresh grass clippings in the garden, it is much better to add them to your compost pile. A good garden clean up in the fall will eliminate overwintering spots for adults and eggs. Making a barrier of wood ashes piled one inch high by three inches wide can protect plants from invading slugs or snails, but be careful as wood ash can raise soil pH.

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet FS397, Slugs and Snails in the Vegetable Garden, has advice on managing these pests. If you are not squeamish, hand picking slugs /snails in the evening or early morning is effective. If you prefer not to handle them, try setting traps. You can place boards or upside down grapefruit skins on the soil surface where you find slug damage. During the day, the culprits will hide under the board or grapefruit skin. Viola, you have captured them! There are also commercially available pitfall traps designed for slugs and snails. The classic stale beer or malt in a pie tin or cup set into the ground is still an effective way to manage slugs, but remove the drowned slugs each morning. Another attractant could be a mixture of one teaspoon of yeast to three ounces of water.

Slugs and snails have natural predators such as fireflies and certain ground beetles. Toads, turtles and snakes feed on slugs. Chickens, ducks and geese are also great slug eliminators!

Editor's Note: The Union County Master Gardener's HELP LINE fields hundreds of citizen inquiries a year – offering assistance with their indoor as well as outdoor gardening and pest control questions. Responses to resident phone calls and on-site visits comply with current Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station recommendations. Union County residents can call (908) 654-9852 or email mastergardeners@ucnj.org for assistance. A complete listing of Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) offices where you can contact a Master Gardener in your area can be found on page 22 of the Gardener News. Free RCE fact sheets are available at www.njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs.

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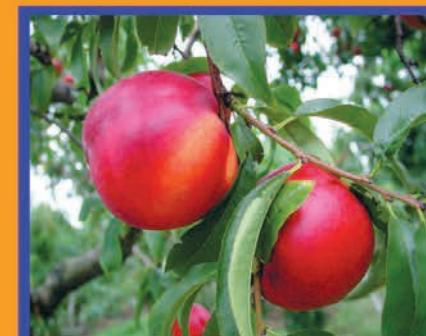
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Unique Plants

By Bob LaHoff
Nursery Specialist

A Guilty Pleasure

There are times in life when you know what the right thing to do is, but you simply go the other way. I'm not talking about a moral compass here, but rather a gardening decision I made, for my own property, a few years ago. Despite repeated warnings from many respected colleagues in the horticultural field, I went forward to prove them all wrong. Simply smitten by the color and texture of Blue Lyme Grass, *Elymus arenarius* "Blue Dune," I just had to have it in front of our boxwood wall at home. And so I went forth and planted it in the ground.

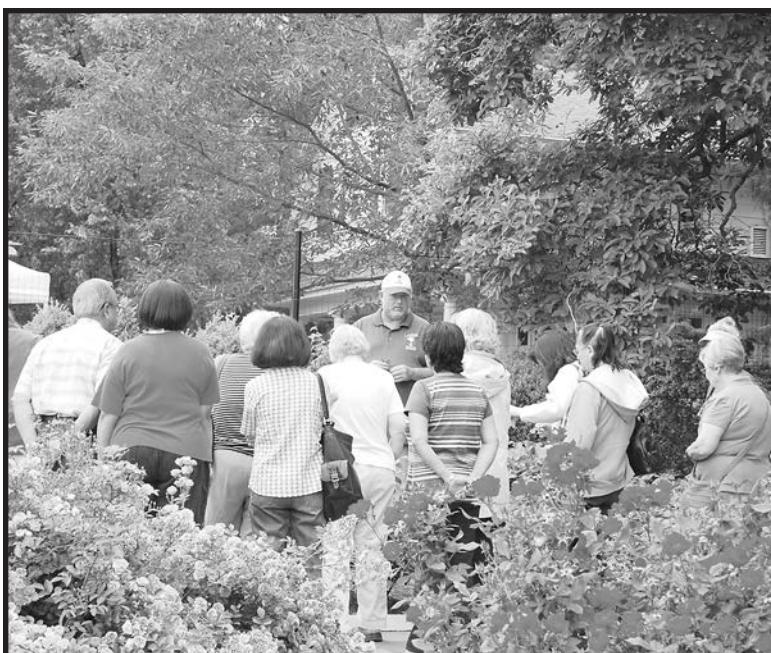
Many garden centers market this gorgeous perennial grass. And many people purchase Blue Lyme Grass and put in their gardens. However, I'm not sure how many of those people actually know the potential of this aggressive grass. While many people seem to share my affinity for the bold grass, whenever I sell it at our garden center I try to warn those interested of the "borderline invasiveness" of *Elymus* "Blue Dune."

Blue Lyme Grass has striking, flat silver-blue foliage and is a standout in any landscape. An excellent groundcover, Blue Lyme Grass spreads quickly by underground rhizomes. Typical spacing on this plant is every two to three feet apart. I myself followed this advice and watched as it engulfed a portion of my property in one season. More on that later, though. Best situated in full sun to part shade, this dramatic herbaceous grass is "hardy" from zones 4-9. Once established, Blue Lyme Grass needs little attention. Very fast growing to about 2 feet tall, flowers are held another foot above this in late summer. It is these flower spikes that have always captivated me. Reminiscent of wheat blowing in the wind, to me, these arching flowers turn beige by summer's end. For those of you movie buffs out there, if you remember the last scene of the 2000 movie "Gladiator" with Russell Crowe, he runs his hand through tall blades of wheat with Italian Cypress, *Cupressus sempervirens*, in the background. That scene reminds me of the flower heads on our own Blue Lyme Grass.

Back to the questionable decision to use this perennial grass, en masse, at our own home. Prior to me planting some 35 of these beauties, I purchased and installed a bamboo barrier. Bamboo barrier is a high-density polyethylene plastic sheet that was 60 mil (0.060 inches) thick and 30 inches tall. A highly effective tool to control the spread of running types of bamboo or other aggressive plants, here was my answer to prove it could be done. Not inexpensive or light, almost one pound per foot, this has done the trick despite my skeptics. Trust me, the hardest part of the planting was the installation of the bamboo barrier. I rented a trencher and had the help of several friends to create, essentially, a huge outdoor, underground planter that was bottomless. The thick plastic acts like the walls of a container, only submerged underground. Two years later, I have proven that with enough effort you can overcome the expected. However, I will say this: Occasionally I have gone in and thinned the herd, so to speak, so as to keep the color and aesthetics I envision. In addition, a trick I learned at the New York Botanical Gardens. I kept two inches of the bamboo barrier above the soil line so the plant would not jump over the designed planter and into unwanted territory.

A grass used to help control soil erosion on embankments benefits from an occasional haircut during the growing season to encourage new foliage. Particularly useful in coastal areas, Blue Lyme Grass withstands heat, sand and drought. Heavier clay soils are said to slow the plant down... not at my home! Consider planting this grass in copper containers, by your pool or patio, for a truly stunning effect. Pair the metallic silver-blue foliage with pale yellows, pinks and blues for outstanding combinations, too. Finally, the plant is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will thrive in inner-city environments. Never were truer words spoken! I used this plant, several years ago, at Dimaio's Restaurant in Berkeley Heights, Union County, N.J. Surrounded by macadam, Belgian block and vehicular traffic, they continue to thrive to this day. Virtually no soil, extreme heat radiating from the parking lot, a fence behind them and curbing in front, these tough buggers are still going strong.

Editor's Note: Bob LaHoff is co-owner of Hall's Garden Center and Florist in Union County, a member of the Union County Board of Agriculture, the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association, the American Boxwood Society, the European Boxwood Society, a members of the Reeves-Reed Arboretum Buildings and Grounds Committee, a lifetime member of the Conifer Society, a member of the NJ Plants Trade Show Advisory Board, and past member of the retail council for Monrovia Growers. He can be reached at (908) 665-0331.



Tom Castronovo/Photo

A symbol of love and romance

On Saturday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., rose lovers gathered at the Rudolf W. van der Goot Rose Garden on Mettlers Road in the East Millstone section of Franklin Township's Colonial Park to commemorate the 38th Annual Rose Day Celebration. Jeff Van Pelt, center, Horticulture Supervisor at the Somerset County Park Commission Colonial Park Gardens, led a tour of the stunning display garden that features more than 3,000 roses representing over 325 varieties, including the award-winning All-America Rose Selections. Visitors viewed modern hybrids, species, and various classes of Old Garden Roses in the one-acre garden. All the roses are clearly labeled for easy identification and only roses that thrive in central New Jersey are kept in the garden.

July's Community Gardens Scoop

By Jeannie Geremia
Garden Club of New Jersey

We made it through the most amazing spring and “heaven only knows” what summer has in store, so I thought I’d relate some tidbits about gardening, and community gardening, in particular.

First off, I have to tell you about the thrill of seeing the most awesome community garden I have seen to date. That, my gardening friends, is the Hopatcong Community Garden that started with Alice King approaching the Hopatcong Borough Council with a proposal to implement a community garden in April 2011. If you’ve been to Lake Hopatcong, you would understand the rationale for establishing one there, as there is an overabundance of huge “native boulders,” rock ledges, trees and nary a place to put a garden. Ms. King has since passed on, but the seed of her project was continued and finally came to fruition in April 2012.

The HCG Garden Committee, a sub-committee of the Hopatcong Environmental Commission, developed membership duties, proposed activities, and a tentative timeline along with visiting neighboring community gardens. You can view their information on their Facebook page (Hopatcong Community Garden). Sharon Gruber, a member of the HCG Garden Committee related that the “key players” to having achieved this fabulous garden, and one my Raritan Township Community Garden will try to emulate are: the aforementioned Alice King, Mayor Sylvia Petillo, who streamlined the process, Ron Jobless, of the Hopatcong Department of Public Works, who provided constant support, and Hudson Farm Foundation, who put up the fencing and financed the project. William Gregor, a local engineer, drew up the garden layout. Jennifer

Barrone, Heidi Becker Dolan and Sharon Gruber were the main organizers for the fundraisers and meeting agenda. Sharon also wrote the grants and organized the construction. They began fencing construction on April 1, 2012 and opened the garden on May 1.

My husband and I were given a grand tour of this garden by our son-in-law, Jerry Scanlan, who is Environmental Chair for Hopatcong, and my husband took numerous photos, as it is impressive indeed. It is fun to see what each individual does in his or her own garden plot and it seems that no two are alike. HCG Garden has approximately 50, 10-foot-by-15-foot plots and a waiting list already. Several gardeners were laying out their garden plots when we visited and all were outlined with untreated lumber. They had two raised square-foot garden beds for disabled gardeners, and much, much more. We may never achieve all the components of this garden, but it is an inspiration for sure. The only problem they seem to be having are woodchucks that are able to get a running start and scale their 8-foot-high fence. They think these smart critters have achieved this by running up the slanted posts in the corner, and then it’s over and down.

Our own community garden in Raritan Township got off to a late start with the rainy May weather being an unrelenting obstacle. But we laid out all the plots (32 in all), and made them 10-foot-by-14.7 foot. I found a perfect black Hollyhock at the Hunterdon Land Trust Farmers’ Market, which I planted in the center of my plot, only to dig it, and some other plants, up again when I realized I had some standing water to deal with. Our community garden is in a “wet” area, but the good news is, the soil was absent that confounded New Brunswick shale that I’ve spent the last four

decades digging out of my own garden (I have about succeeded).

So, yes, my gardening friends, I decided to put in raised beds and I have to thank my non-gardening husband, Bob, for helping me erect two octagonal beds. I had two of our vehicles filled all week long with 16 bags of top soil, eight bags of Bumper Crop and two bales (2.3 cubic feet) of peat moss. We are going to get top soil for all the community gardeners to use, but I am impatient, and the weather just doesn’t want to cooperate. Any leftover soil I have, I’m giving to the Robert Hunter School kids for their community garden plot and the Girl Scout Troop 435 as their plot’s produce will go to the local food bank. We have four rows of eight plots each, and since we got a late start, we may make Row C a communal garden the whole length with squash, pumpkins, flowers for cutting, etc. What fun that will be!

I’d love to hear about your community gardens, so please get in touch with me and don’t forget to go on the Garden Club of New Jersey’s website and click on Community Gardens for our grant application with awards of up to \$500. We just gave out three more for a total to date of 21 grants going to community garden projects and garden education days throughout the state. GET OUT THERE, make a difference, join a garden club!

Editor’s Note: Jeannie Geremia is Horticultural Chair and NCG Accredited Judge for the Garden Club of New Jersey, Inc., GCNJ Community Garden Chair and Central Atlantic Region Community Garden Chair of National Garden Clubs, Inc. She can be reached by emailing jeannieg42@earthlink.net, Garden Club of New Jersey’s website is: www.gardenclubofnewjersey.com and phone number is: 732-249-0947.

A miniaturized representation of nature

(Continued from page 1)

new.

This is what Uncle Bob has taught and shown me about Bonsai’s.

Bonsai is the art of dwarfing trees or plants and developing them into an aesthetically appealing shape by growing, pruning and training them, in containers according to prescribed techniques. Bonsai plants are not genetically dwarfed plants; in fact, any tree species can be used to grow one.

Bonsai plants are usually planted in colorful trays or colorful shallow pots. Keeping a Bonsai alive and healthy is not significantly more difficult than caring for any other potted plant.

The watering, feeding and pruning of Bonsai are straightforward gardening techniques that can be learned easily, even by someone with no prior experience in dealing with plants. The skills required to maintain and develop the shape of a Bonsai are also very easy to acquire. Pruning shoots and shaping Bonsai with wire are all simple techniques that are identical to those employed by the most revered Japanese Masters.

Any substantial plant can be trained into a Bonsai with a bit of hard work — although some plants are very difficult to make adapt to the shallow pots and restricted growth. Trees and shrubs which are used more commonly for bonsai — and which adapt quite well — are evergreens such as pine, cypress, azalea, holly, and cedar. Deciduous trees such as cherry, maple, zelkova and beech are also prime candidates.

Try to keep the Bonsai out of direct sunlight. They need good air circulation and should be in a place where they are easily accessible to you for maintenance. You can usually tell if a plant likes or dislikes where it is currently positioned — if you do detect signs of stress such as wilting, burnt foliage or discoloration — move the plant to an area more fitting. As a general rule, you should consider the origins of a plant and how it would grow naturally.

How frequently you water your Bonsai depends on many things. A dry wind, excessive heat, or a combination of both, can quickly dry out the soil, so you must monitor moisture levels regularly.

When wiring, try to imitate the natural curves of trees in nature.

There are two types of Bonsai wire available — copper wire and aluminum wire. The size of wire used depends on the size of branch you want to train and in most part should be chosen yourself — also dependent on how significantly you want to change the shape of a branch and how stubborn the species of plant is.

Check every few weeks for wire cutting into the bark of the Bonsai — particularly during spring and summer, or you risk the danger of ugly scarring.

To prune correctly you must find out the type of plant your Bonsai is and research when the best times are to prune old and new season growth

As you can see, Bonsai is a combination of three things: It’s art, a hobby and a horticultural practice.

Thanks, Uncle Bob!

Editor’s Note: Tom Castronovo is executive editor and publisher of Gardener News. Tom’s lifelong interest in gardening and passion for agriculture, environmental stewardship, gardening and landscaping, led to the founding of the Gardener News, which germinated in April 2003 and continues to bloom today. He is also dedicated to providing inspiration, and education to the agricultural, gardening and landscaping communities through this newspaper and GardenerNews.com.



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If you could meet and spend a weekend with one person, who would it be? For me it is Dr. Michael Dirr. This dream became a reality after he invited me to Athens, Georgia when we met at Plant O Rama back in January at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Dr. Dirr was the keynote speaker, and I was representing the Mid Atlantic Horticultural Therapy Network exhibit with a wonderful colleague, educating flower showgoers about horticultural therapy. I overheated during his afternoon talk and left before he finished. I was so disappointed. As I sat out in the foyer “cooling down,” a member of the BBG staff asked me to follow her as I would start the line for Dr. Dirr’s book signing.

I was first in line with several hundred people behind me. Dr. Dirr spoke to me for 15 minutes. As he signed his latest book, “Dirr’s Encyclopedia of Trees and Shrubs,” he invited me to come to Georgia to visit. I was overheated. I thought I was hearing things. I wasn’t imagining. He was serious. We emailed over the next several months.



Horticultural Therapy

By Laura DePrado
Specialist

Chasing Plants with Dr. Michael Dirr: A Dream Come True

Last month my dream became a reality having spent nearly four days in mid-June with Dr. Dirr, his wife Bonnie, my husband Mike, (yes, he was invited too) and their 13-year old collie mix, Bailey, at their beautiful stone and brick home in the countryside of Athens. His home is more spectacular than the photo in his book. Dr. Dirr is the leading expert on trees and shrubs for landscapes. He has written countless books, spoken all over the world, and has set the gold standard for horticultural reference. In my opinion there is no one greater or more admired than Dr. Dirr. His wife, Bonnie, is a gifted artist, a painter and illustrator. Her illustrations are in his “Manual of Woody Landscape Plants.”

The warm, yet rich simplicity of the Dirr’s home

is a reflection of their love for life, family, friends and art, with photos, paintings, pottery, vases and books given to them over 47 years and displayed in every room.

Upon our arrival on Friday evening Dr. Dirr was just finishing up working in his garden. He was walking in bare feet. The beauty of color, trees and shrubs in every bed, both finished and a work in progress, was indescribable. He was so excited to show off the new wall that was being built on the front lawn near the road. Dr. Dirr had an adventurous “itinerary” planned for the weekend. Chasing plants was the beginning, middle and end of every stop, with lots of surprises in store along the 150 miles or so we covered. Our first stop was Happy Valley Pottery and Chappelle Gallery,

home of world famous pottery and art. Dr. Dirr introduced me to owner Jerry Chappelle, an amazing and talented artist whose work is commissioned by senators, musicians, actors and members of the U.S. government. Dr. Dirr insisted on buying my husband a gift of a handmade mug Jerry Chappelle had just finished.

We lost count of all the unplanned stops in between all of the planned ones. Everywhere we went, Dr. Dirr introduced me as a “horticulturalist and lover of plants, a friend from New Jersey here to help him find HT.” We went to nurseries, greenhouses, tree growers, University of Georgia, where Dr. Dirr’s friend, Mike Glenn, owner of Select Trees, donated 250 trees such as Magnolia, Leyland Cypress, Oak, Maple which can be found throughout

the Campus. We stopped in to see Mike, but he wasn’t “home.”

We also stopped at PI, Plants Incorporated, Dirr’s private company specializing in propagating shrubs and trees both small and large testing them for bloom and pest and disease resistance. *Hydrangea Arborescens* and *macrophylla* were in bloom in every shade of blue, pink and white. Dr. Dirr took us on a private tour of the Georgia Botanical Garden, exploring all of the expansion of the gardens both indoors and outdoors. Dr. Dirr sent me home with an open invitation to return and plant gifts of his favorites, *Acer Palmatum Seiryu*, *Viburnum Little Susy* (after his daughter), *Cornus Florida Oconee*, *Quercus shumara*, and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*.

Editor’s Note: *Laura DePrado is a HT Practitioner and owner of Final Touch Landscaping, LLC; Laura has a Horticultural Therapy Certificate from Rutgers University, B.S. in Journalism; Member of the AHTA, MAHTN, NJNLA and NJ Farm Bureau.*

Hydrangea arborescens – One ‘Smooth’ Garden Performer!

By Bruce Crawford
Contributing Writer

Hydrangeas certainly rank highly among shrubs for providing color to the summer garden. They are easy to grow and they “play well” with perennials and other shrubs. The biggest challenge confronting many a gardener is how to prune the plants. Several species form flower buds on the previous year’s growth, and if that growth is removed in the winter or early spring, few flowers will appear. Fortunately, there are also several species that develop flower buds on current season’s growth, allowing fall and winter pruning. Our native *Hydrangea arborescens*, or Smooth Hydrangea, serves as a fine example. Not only does it remove any confusion surrounding the practices of pruning, but it offers beautiful form with attractive white flowers for the garden.

Hydrangea flowers consist of two types of “florets,” the showy yet

sterile florets in which the anthers have become petaloid and the less showy fertile florets that produce seed. In the wild, most flowers consist of fertile florets, allowing greater seed production and an enhanced likelihood of the plant reproducing. Of course, gardeners much prefer a larger number of the showy sterile florets. Interestingly, the name *Hydrangea* is based upon these flowers. It is derived from the Greek *Hydor*, meaning water and *Angos*, meaning vessel or jar. Thus, a direct translation is water jar, which is a reference to the water jar shape of the seed capsules.

Hydrangea arborescens is native to the East Coast of the United States and is hardy to zone 4. It is an understory plant, typically found in moister soils near streams or along road cuts. In New Jersey, I have witnessed it growing by the Delaware Water Gap. The species epithet of *arborescens* means “tree-like,” and in the wild it can grow to nearly 10 feet tall, with an open “tree-like”

appearance. In the garden, it is more mounded and rarely exceeds four feet in height. Although native to woodland conditions, it has proven far more floriferous if provided with afternoon, or even a full day of sun. The key is to amend the soil adequately with organic matter and to apply several inches of mulch, ensuring that the soil will hold sufficient amounts of moisture to prevent the foliage from wilting or scorching. Smooth Hydrangea slowly spreads to form a colony, and is very effective when used in mass, as the plants will slowly knit together and form a weed-free thicket.

In the wild, Smooth Hydrangea has dome shaped flowers that consist primarily of fertile florets with a few white-colored sterile florets around the perimeter. This is called a Lace Cap floral arrangement. “White Dome” is an attractive Lace Cap selection, with the center of the flower packed with fertile florets and surrounded by a dense ring of sterile

florets. Occasionally, the flowers develop into “balls” of sterile florets, referred to as Hortensias. One of my favorite selections has been the cultivar named “Annabelle.” It was found by Joe McDaniel in a garden in Urbana, Illinois, but its lineage traces back to a garden in Anna, Illinois where it was originally found in 1910! “Annabelle” has large, spherical, ball-shaped flowers, upwards of 10 inches in diameter that principally consist of sterile florets. The florets start out green, change to white for upwards of five to six weeks before fading back to green and finally tan come fall. Throughout the winter, the spheres remain intact and tan, adding a unique accent to the winter garden. In late-spring, all the stems can be cut back to three to four inches and the process begins anew. Incrediball™ is similar to “Annabelle,” with the stems reported to be slightly stiffer, although I have experienced little problem with the stems of either bending under

the weight of the flowers. Invincibelle™ Spirit offers four- to six-inch diameter Hortensia flowers that are pink in color. It is a bit more delicate than the previous two plants, but adds a new color dimension. Hardy, native, easy to prune and with numerous selections that all perform admirably in the summer garden, *Hydrangea arborescens* provides is a very garden worthy plant!

Editor’s Note: *Bruce, foremost a lover of plants since birth, is director of the Rutgers Gardens, an adjunct professor in Landscape Architecture at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, an instructor for Rutgers - NJAES Office of Continuing and Professional Education and chairperson of the Garden State Gardens group. He is a member of the Garden Writer’s Association and the New York Hortus Club. He can be reached at (732) 932-8451. For more information, please visit www.rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu*

Optimizing Propane Flaming Weed Control

(NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ) — Here's a weed control tip: If you use flaming weed control with vapor phase propane burners, perform your work in the afternoon, beginning at least eight hours after sunrise.

That's right. Flaming the same weed, like a difficult to control grass at 6 leaves, results in 62% injury early in the morning vs. 82% injury by *simply waiting 8 hours or more after sunrise on the same day*. We know from weed science experience that while 62% injury sounds like a big percent, it is inadequate, ineffective control. All weed species show more injury when flamed in the afternoon. Broadleaf weeds, more sensitive to flaming than grasses, may experience 90%+ injury rates when flamed 8 hours after sunrise or later.

There is a documented—but not well-understood—daily variation in the leaf water content of plants, which affects their susceptibility to flaming weed control used to prepare stale seedbeds. These findings come from studies by Stevan Z. Knezevic and colleagues at the University of Nebraska.

The bottom line is that flaming should always be conducted in the afternoon, on smallest weeds possible, to improve reliable control and reduce propane consumption rate when making stale seedbeds.

On long season crops like organic processing tomato, we know from field trials in Italy that even after preparing stale seedbeds by flaming, additional tillage and hoeing will be required. Total labor inputs will average 50% higher than conventional weed control methods, and the weeds in the field at harvest will be higher.

Propane flaming is not a job to be taken lightly. Flaming is potentially hazardous, expensive, slow, and labor intensive. It may involve nurse tank storage and hazardous transportation regulations. But mostly, flaming is frustrating because the results are frequently unreliable, particularly on grasses and larger weeds.

So, if you are going to perform flame weeding, stack the deck in your favor, and forget the idea of going out in the cool, calm, early morning hours to perform the work.

Source: Professor Jack Rabin, Associate Director - Farm Programs, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



Tree Notes

By Robert Andreucci
ISA Certified Arborist

Trees in The City

A lot of what I deal with on a daily basis are the trees growing in suburban areas – places like Basking Ridge, Flemington, Warren and other “backyard” habitats. But what about the street trees and trees living in these towns and other urban environments? These trees need care as well and they also have some special concerns associated with living along streets and parking lots. We will spend some time this month talking about street trees – trees living in the city, along major roads or in urban parks.

The basic care strategy for urban street trees is the same as for all trees: Plenty of water, adequate growing space, proper nutrients, healthy roots and a good dose of sunlight. But there are some specific concerns for trees growing in the stressful environment of a city. After proper planting and having the right tree in the right spot, the first area of concern is the root system (roots and root collar). If there is one common problem I see among trees planted in shopping malls, along streets or in the city, it is a damaged or buried Root Collar. And this is bad, because a tree's root collar is the critical transition area between the trunk and roots. If this area is covered with soil and mulch, various problems can develop.

Many common root diseases can infect the trunk, especially when there is moist soil in contact with the trunk. These diseases may be cankers or wood decay organisms. Disease problems become more apparent in a wet year, but can also develop following a prolonged drought. Either way, they cause serious problems for the tree. Insects can also hide and grow in the mulch piled against the trunk. Protected from predators by mulch or soil, several groups of wood-boring insects can more easily attack tree trunks. Other insects are very specialized and only attack root collars that are buried. Girdling Roots can also be a problem. Soil can also girdle the trunk. When the trunk is buried and the tree tries to grow in diameter (as it must to survive), the trunk pushes against the soil. When the soil next to the trunk is compacted, the trunk can no longer grow in diameter. At this point, the trunk growth rate decreases as the soil exerts a girdling force.

Another area of concern for city trees is abiotic stress factors – things caused by non-living factors such as temperature extremes, snow, road salt... etc. Much of the emphasis in plant care is devoted to biotic diseases, which are those caused by living organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses and nematodes. Proper attention to both types of diseases is essential in maintaining plant health. Symptoms of both kinds of diseases can be very similar. This is why skilled diagnosis is critical and it takes a professional to make a proper diagnosis. Diseases affect different species of plants in different ways. Woody ornamentals usually manifest abiotic diseases in the form of generalized symptoms that develop over most, or a large portion, of the plant. Many abiotic stress agents predispose plants to the biotic problems – and that is the problem. Many trees are capable of fighting off the general problems they may face on a daily basis, but these abiotic problems weaken the plant and make it susceptible to a host of other problems. The most common preventable abiotic problems are de-icing salt damage, improper pruning and physical trauma. For things like storms and excessive heat and ozone, the best strategy is to keep the tree healthy. A healthy tree can survive a brief heat wave and drought and should be fine after the stress event is over.

Remember, with a little care, trees can survive almost anywhere!

As always, I hope you learned something!

.....'Till next month

Editor's Note: Robert graduated from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and Syracuse University with degrees in science education and forest biology. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and a New Jersey Certified Tree Expert. Robert is currently teaching AP Environmental Science, Biology and Chemistry at Liberty High School in PA., and on staff at Temple University teaching Horticulture. He delivers many short courses and seminars at various outdoor education facilities. He is available for talks and consultations in both NJ and PA. Robert can be reached by calling (484) 560-5744.

NJ Floriculture Crops – 2011 Summary

The following floriculture statistics were compiled from interviews of all known growers of floriculture crops in New Jersey. Growers must have annual gross sales exceeding \$10,000 of all floriculture crops to be included in the state tabulations. Individual crop details, including quantity sold, price, and value, are summarized only from growers whose gross sales of floriculture crops are above \$100,000.

Value of Production: New Jersey ranked seventh in the nation in expanded wholesale value of floriculture crops with a value of \$179.6 million. This is ahead of last year's ranking of eighth in the nation. The total crop wholesale value for all New Jersey growers with \$100,000 or more in sales was estimated at \$169.2 million up 1 percent from \$167.9 million in 2010. These operations, which comprised 47 percent of all growers, accounted for 94 percent of the total value of floriculture crops. The expanded wholesale value of floriculture crops in the 15 major producing states totaled \$4.08 billion for 2011, compared with \$4.15 billion for 2010.

New Jersey's total bedding and garden plants sales, the largest contributor to total value of sales for growers with \$100,000 or more in sales, was \$107.7 million, a decrease of 2 percent from a year earlier. Potted flowering plants were up 13 percent in value to \$25.7 million. The value of cut flowers increased by 2 percent to \$12.6 million.

Number of Producers: The number of producers with sales over \$10,000 in New Jersey totaled 324 in 2011, a decline of 4 percent when compared with 339 in 2010. This bettered the national trend of a 7 percent decline. The number of growers in New Jersey with sales of \$100,000 or more decreased from 154 growers in 2010 to 151 growers in 2011.

Production Area: Total covered area for floriculture crop production in the Garden State in 2011 was 21.2 million square feet. Greenhouse space in New Jersey accounted for 98 percent of the total covered area with 20.8 million square feet. Film plastic structures totaled 16.2 million square feet, glass greenhouses totaled 4.2 million square feet, fiberglass and other rigid plastic covers totaled 359 thousand square feet, and shade and temporary cover totaled 379 thousand square feet. Open ground usage totaled 2,112 acres.

The Floriculture Crops: 2011 Summary can be found at www.nass.usda.gov.

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Tom Castronovo/Photo

Premier produce resource for networking

New Jersey's current and seventh Secretary of Agriculture of Agriculture, Douglas H. Fisher, center; New Jersey's fifth Secretary of Agriculture, Art Brown, second from right; and Paul Hlubik, left, the United States Department of Agriculture's New Jersey Farm Service Agency Executive Director; join Dean Holmquist, second from left, President of the Eastern Produce Council; and Paul Kneeland, right, 1st Vice President of the Eastern Produce Council, at the Eastern Produce Council's annual *Jersey Fresh* dinner meeting. The event was held on June 12 at Demarest Farms in Hillsdale, Bergen County. The Eastern Produce Council is a thriving organization of over 500 members consisting of: produce business professionals, retailers, wholesale distributors, growers, vendor/brokers, and logistics providers.

Summer is upon us. I welcome it with open arms. The weather in 2012 has definitely been interesting. Favorable for the most part, but that is not to say there weren't a few scares early on.

With the mild winter feeling like spring had sprung in late-February, the favorable mild April in the daytime with the occasional low temps and frost scares at nights, to May's amazing daytime sun but nighttime downpours. I am starting to feel that the older I get the more of a weather historian and forecaster I am becoming. Having the right weather when the crops are ready for sale has become a very important factor of growing nowadays.

Someone once told me a long time ago when I had my truck route selling flowers, "You can't sell a geranium in the rain." I remember the look on his face, he was a geranium grower in northern New Jersey trying to sell to this flower shop and it had just started to rain, and the flower shop had just cancelled his order right before my eyes. He was not



The Professional Grower

By Tim Hionis
Greenhouse Specialist

Chasing after good weather

happy and only cancelled because it started raining.

This type of scenario seems to be more commonplace. This industry is weather-driven and there is no one to blame for it. It's just the nature of the beast. This is a reason being able to forecast the weather report of what's to come in the near future and hoping for the right combination of weather has become important to a successful crop's yield. A great challenge for the greenhouse grower is being able to target having plant material to be available, ready, and looking beautiful for when the weather is just right to keep up with demand. In the flowering plant industry, when the weather is right, and the sun shines during

the day at the right time of year, the demand for high-quality flowering plant material is unprecedented. But when the sky comes crashing down, with cold, rainy days for extended periods of time, multiple days sometimes weeks or hot and humid sticky weather, it gets tougher.

Plant material gets stressed. It sometimes takes time for things to get back to normal. Writing about this now is funny, but when it happens and there are commitments to fill during these periods of unfavorable weather, it makes for some sleepless nights. Luckily this year, these kinds of disappointments were minimal. Except for a small stretch of high heat and humidity in May, the season

seemed to have only small kinks to iron out.

There is nothing worse than having a crop targeted ready for sale for a certain week and that whole week is overcast, rainy, cold, or overly hot and humid and the effect of it are phone calls of postponement's until the weather changes for the better.

Here is another scenario of being a successful forecaster in the greenhouse industry. April's climate was mild and beautiful. It was so nice that the phone calls that were pouring in were, "Do you have any flats of annuals available?" Flats of annuals! Are you kidding? It's way too early. April 15 and the demand was for annuals, annuals like impatiens and begonias

Survey Shows Top Outdoor Living Trends for 2012

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — The American love affair with the back yard shows no signs of slowing, according to the 2012 Residential Landscape Architecture Trends survey conducted by the American Society of Landscape Architects. The results show a preference for an undemanding outdoor space for lots of entertaining.

Landscape architects with a specialization in residential design across the country were asked to rate the expected popularity of a variety of residential outdoor design elements. The category of gardens and landscape spaces, with 94.9 percent rating somewhat or very popular, was followed closely by outdoor livings spaces at 91.5 percent, which were defined as kitchen and entertainment spaces.

Across all categories, 97.4 percent of respondents rated grills as somewhat or very in-demand for 2012, followed by low-maintenance landscapes (96.6 percent), fireplaces/fire pits (95.8 percent), and dining areas (95.7 percent). Lighting features remained a popular choice from 2011 at 93.1 percent, as Americans plan to take more of their lives outside once the sun sets – to an extent.

"The economic recovery continues to struggle, but residential design has remained stronger than other categories throughout the recession," said ASLA Executive Vice President and CEO Nancy Somerville, Hon. ASLA.

Americans also love their pools (79.2 percent), but not quite as much as their spas (80.4 percent) and other decorative water elements (89.9 percent), such as waterfalls or bubblers.

Seating and dining areas remain high on people's lists (95.7 percent), as do installed seating at 86.9 percent and weatherized outdoor furniture at 81.2 percent.

When thinking of gardening, Americans tend toward the practical and sustainable with native plants (86.3 percent) and food/vegetable gardens (81.2 percent), with over half of them preferred to be organic (61.2 percent).

Besides planting locally and organically, other sustainable elements continue their popularity with homeowners. Native or drought-tolerant plants (85.4 percent), drip irrigation (81.7 percent), and permeable paving (71.6 percent) are making their way into outdoor living spaces across the country.

Additional information on residential landscape architecture can be found at www.asla.org/residentialinfo.

too. Who would've known? No one, because if any greenhouse in New Jersey was carrying soft annuals in flats that early would be either out of their mind or a complete genius for timing it just right.

But what was the question on the phones last year in April? "Do you have any bulbs or pansies?" Why? Because last April, the temperatures were terrible and the only items that were favorable for the climate were cool-weather stuff. Although, once we get into June and July, we keep hoping for mild weather. Hoping the humidity stays low and there aren't many days above 95 degrees. And if it does, we just hope there is a pool or a beach nearby to jump into. See you next month.

Editor's Note: Tim Hionis has been growing plants for over 20 years, and is co-owner of Hionis Greenhouses and Garden Center in Whitehouse Station, NJ. He can be reached by calling (908) 534-7710.

Freshness equals time. That is the conclusion. We could be talking about anything that is fresh, really. The time it takes to get fresh meat, seafood, flowers or produce to the end user is directly related to freshness. Think about all the items that have date codes on them. Why are they there? It's simple – freshness equals time.

This should fall in perfectly with locally grown product. Local can be defined as product grown in your area. It could be from towns you know but definitely from states you know. It could be neighbors but it could also be people you have heard about or never heard about.

The logistics of getting product from growers to market shelves can be complex. It is really not as easy as it sounds. Stores predict what customers will buy and order product from buyers. Buyers find the best choice to fulfill those needs. Growers are selected and orders are placed. That's the easy part.

Growers need to predict what buyers want. Seed is selected, fields are chosen for



Passionate About Produce

By Paul Kneeland
The King of Produce

Freshness and Time: Local 24/7

each of the products. Soil is tilled, seeds are planted and the proper nutrition, fertilizer and weed control are applied. Plants are nurtured, watered, pruned and prodded.

Harvest time comes and hopefully, if everything works out perfectly, what the buyers want, the growers have. But that just starts the fun. Truckers have to be arranged and, in a most efficient way, product brought from grower to buyer.

Buyers produce purchase orders, invoices are created and the transaction is almost complete. Product arrives at the warehouse and it is checked by an inspector so that it meets all quality specifications – size, temperature, shape, quality – all checked thoroughly. If everything checks out, then the transaction is complete.

Product is then placed in the warehouse to be picked for delivery. Some product is ordered in large quantities for efficiency. These products usually can be stored for a long period of time, up to three weeks. Some products need to be ordered in smaller quantities. These products need to be moved through the system quickly.

Product is picked in the warehouse – consolidated onto one truck for each individual store. Trucks leave the warehouse and go to the stores. Stores receive the product, check it again and accept what is given – transaction complete.

Product is put away properly in coolers until it is ready to be put out on display, usually within the same day. Workers put product out

on display and a product prediction is made for the next day and an order placed.

And that is one day.

Every day, I try to think of a new way to do something. Better. Better than everyone else. Something that nobody else has tried or done before. Some things are brilliant, some not so much.

In one such idea mode with the Red Tomato organization, a not-for-profit organization that connects growers with buyers, we came up with something that would be very challenging. We have figured out a way to get product from field to store – available for sale – in 24 hours. Consider everything just explained. Fresh product in the store 24 hours after it is picked.

Local 24/7 at Kings Food Markets was born and

introduced at our Livingston location on May 23, 2012. We are so excited to be able to bring this to our customers. Product is harvested early morning, picked up around 9 a.m., brought back to our wholesaler and put on trucks immediately for delivery. Truly in the store within 24 hours. That is fresh.

We have expanded the program to all stores and we have been working feverishly to get more growers on board for 24/7. July is going to be very exciting in our stores!

Freshness equals time. 24 hours is a very short period of time for anything. We pride ourselves on having the freshest, largest variety, best tasting locally grown produce that you can find.

Editor's Note: Paul Kneeland is the Vice President of Produce and Floral for Kings Super Markets. He has been in the food business for 26 years, has a degree in Business Management from Boston College and is certified in food safety with ServSafe. He can be reached at pkneeland@kingsm.com

WHAT MAKES A NEW JERSEY PEACH SPECIAL?

(CLAYTON, N.J.) — New Jersey's particular climate, soil, sun and rain make just -right conditions for summer's favorite fruit to be about the best there is, putting New Jersey fourth in the country's peach production with a wholesale value of more than \$36-million, according to the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council, the state's organization dedicated to promoting and marketing peaches. This year's crop holds the potential to be as good or better than last year's and, like most other Jersey crops, are ripening earlier and most likely will be available by the end of June. The fruit is already being picked in South Jersey orchards.

"Peaches have been cultivated here since the 1600s," says Santo John Maccherone, grower and chair of the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council. "Many of our 92 growers have a long history of growing and marketing the very finest peaches and nectarines."

Customers seem to agree. According to supermarket produce buyers, their customers begin demanding "Jersey-grown" peaches in early July, often before the fruit comes in and purchase all the stores have available. Many supermarkets throughout the New Jersey metro area (including NY & PA) do special peach events, with tastings and peach baked goods.

New Jersey growers produce 100 different varieties of the fruit on 5,500 acres and packing 68-million pounds (2,720,000 1/2-bushel boxes) during the season, generally July through mid-September. The 2011 crop value was \$36.6-million (wholesale) and included yellow and white-fleshed peaches, flat (or doughnut) peaches and nectarines. Packing houses, located in south Jersey, have hydro-cooling and storage facilities, and offer both standard 1/2-bushel boxes and specialty packaging. Most importantly, they pack and ship locally grown peaches from trees to stores in one-to-three days (depending on store location), thus preserving the fruit's sugars and nutritional value.

Nutritionally, a peach packs a wallop in just 35 calories (a medium peach, about 2 1/2 inch diameter). It's low in calories, high in fiber -- 2.6 grams. It's also rich in antioxidants, such as Vitamins A & C, important to maintain good health and skin. A peach is one of the tastiest high-potassium foods, providing 333 mg of potassium. According to health-related websites, potassium deficiencies can cause muscular weakness, fatigue, anxiety, acne and other problems.

Peaches and plums also may help fight breast cancer. According to research scientists Dr. Luis Cisneros-Zevallos and Dr. David Byrne from AgriLife Research at Texas A&M, extracts found in commercial varieties of peaches and plums have been shown to kill breast cancer cells while not harming normal cells. The AgriLife research scientists identified two phenolic compounds within peaches and plums that are responsible for killing the cancer cells. Phenols are organic compounds that occur in fruits and may affect traits such as aroma, taste or color. Stone fruits such as peaches and plums have especially high levels of phenols.

The Peach Promotion Council produces a *Peach Buyers Guide* that lists growers, packers and shippers, and describes the extra effort purveyors take to ensure quality and proper handling of quality "Jersey Fresh peaches."

For further information and Buyers Guides, contact the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council information office, 856-307-6450 X1; info@jerseypeaches.com; or visit the website www.jerseypeaches.com



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Full Moon, July 3, 2012 TIP OF THE MONTH

As you enjoy fresh produce and fresh-squeezed fruit and vegetable juices, it's important to know how to handle them in a safe way to help protect yourself and your family. Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged; when selecting pre-cut produce — such as a half a watermelon or bagged salad greens — choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice; bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market; When preparing any fresh produce, begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water *before* and *after* preparation; and wash all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically, at home, or purchased from a grocery store or farmers' market. Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent is not recommended; and keep your refrigerator set at 40° F or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check!



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