

Gardener News

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June 2022

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No. 230

Improving Nutritional Health



Stephen Ausmus USDA ARS/Photo

ARS researchers have selectively bred carrots with pigments that reflect almost all colors of the rainbow. More importantly, though, they're very good for your health.

By Jan Suszkiw
Public Affairs Specialist
USDA ARS

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists are looking to beef up your salad—not with complementary

slices of tender chicken, steak or other meat but rather new, improved varieties of carrot and onion.

Philipp Simon, research leader of the ARS Vegetable Crops Research Unit in Madison, Wisconsin, is

coordinating the effort to fortify these popular salad items and fresh-market favorites (Cont. on Page 23)



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Around The Garden

By Tom Castronovo
Gardener News

Attention Outdoor Living Contractors and Weekend Warriors

I am sick and tired of having mulch and stones flying off commercial trucks and trailers as I drive around the great Garden State. I can't tell you how many times my windshield has been pelted. On the weekends, homeowner trailers are loaded to the brink of imploding.

It's very simple folks, cover your load!

Every once in a while, I feel compelled to write about this subject because it seems to get worse and worse as I drive from point A to B.

This is a serious safety hazard. It not only causes damage to vehicles traveling behind these reckless offenders, it can also contribute to accidents.

My SUV has two windshield chips from flying debris.

Rolling tarp systems are cheap and easy to install on commercial vehicles. Please use them.

Tarping a homeowner trailer is also easy, and cheap to do. Please do this.

The State of New Jersey also sees this as a problem and has created a law to protect people like me and you. If a police officer sees you, it's a \$500.00 fine for each violation. As a reminder, the motor vehicle law is N.J. 39:4-77.

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No person shall cause or permit a vehicle to be so loaded or operate a vehicle so loaded that the contents or any part thereof may be scattered in any street. Whenever the load of any vehicle is

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The owner, lessee, bailee, or operator of any vehicle described above found on a highway in violation of any such safety standard or procedure that may be prescribed by the director shall be fined not more than \$500.00 for each violation.

If my windshield gets hit again, I will take a picture of your license plate and report you. I don't want to seem nasty here, but it's for my safety and the safety of others. It also hurts my wallet, and it's a major inconvenience to repair the chip.

PS. The June solstice occurs on June 21, 2022, marking the start of summer. Yay! It's also the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.

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, landscaping and nursery communities through this newspaper and GardenerNews.com.



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**June 2022
Contributing Writer**
Hubert Ling

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As we climb out of the COVID pandemic phase and back up to normal lives, there is so much to appreciate about things we might have previously taken for granted.

Just meeting people in person again, being able to hug one another without fear of “catching something,” or smiling at someone because your countenance is no longer tucked behind a covering.

It can be, and is, so different now because of the myriad ways folks can encounter one another, whether through the virtual platforms that we’ve become familiar and comfortable with, or through the ever-expanding ways to connect through the “metaverse.”

We may continue to be “virtually present” in some instances, as circumstances dictate, to “meet” over computer screens, which has shown in certain situations to be more efficient.

But there are undoubtedly events that lend themselves to being present in the flesh.

County fairs, agricultural and otherwise, are one type of experience we have missed out on in some counties due to the pandemic. Thankfully, they’re set to return in full force in 2022.

Most of these fairs in some way involve county



NJ Dept. of Agriculture

By Douglas H. Fisher
Secretary of Agriculture

Ag Fairs Ready to Welcome Back the Crowds

agriculture boards as organizers or sponsors. There are differences in every fair depending upon the county, especially in what they highlight and feature within the same overall experience.

Following, arranged alphabetically, are the dates for the agricultural fairs in New Jersey:

Atlantic County, August 11-13; Bergen County, September 17-18; Burlington County, July 19-23; Cape May County, July 21-23; Cumberland County, July 5-9; Gloucester County, July 28-31; Hunterdon County, August 24-28; LEAD Fest, June 24-July 1; Mercer County, July 30-31; Middlesex County, August 1-7; Monmouth County, July 27-31; Morris County, July 22-24; Ocean County, July 13-17; Salem County, August 9-12; Somerset County, August 10-12; Stars and Stripes, June 22; Sussex

County, August 5-13; Warren County, July 30-August 8.

Our agricultural fairs feature an array of events and exhibits for just about every interest. Most have displays of livestock that 4-H or other club members have raised on their farms or at home; many service organizations have tables or booths with information about how volunteers can join; local musical acts frequently perform; many fairs have rides that rival any carnival, as well as games of chance familiar from midways and boardwalks; horseback-riding competitions abound; and last but certainly not least, most fairs have an event to crown a fair ambassador, including contestants showing off particular talents or skills.

Some have animal-themed attractions like draft-horse pulls. In counties where agriculture has a deep history, you might find displays of

antique farm equipment. You might encounter an area where they’ll teach you to build a scarecrow. Or you can watch a tractor-pull competition. Some have horticultural competitions.

As for food, if you go to a county agricultural fair and leave hungry, there’s just no explanation for it. Baking contests (almost all featuring the use of *Jersey Fresh* produce) are usually a staple of the fair. Food trucks and booths featuring every conceivable type of food are always popular. Candy apples, popcorn, lemonade, and freshly fried potato chips are made and sold by vendors.

And being that these fairs occur in warmer months, you’ll no doubt look for ice cream, perhaps even made by some of our state’s dairy farmers.

In all, county agricultural fairs in New Jersey have a wide array of activities,

exhibits and vendors that encompass everything from the incredibly old to the amazingly new, all at a price that most families can afford.

Much like New Jersey agriculture itself, the agricultural fairs in this state are diverse, and you’ll likely never have the same experience at any two of them. It’s worth going to more than one, if for nothing else than to get a sense of how agriculture differs from one county to the next.

With some of these fairs having been postponed for one or two years due to COVID, you can bet they’ll be putting their best foot forward to welcome back all the friends of agriculture they have missed.

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>

USDA Extends Deadline to June 15 for Public to Comment on Competition Challenges in Seed, Fertilizer, Other Agricultural Inputs, and Retail Markets

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces an extension to the public comment period to identify the impacts of concentration and competition challenges in seed, fertilizer, other agricultural inputs, and retail markets. The new deadline is June 15, 2022.

Three RFIs (requests for information) were published in the Federal Register on March 17, 2022, each with a 60-day comment period ending May 16, 2022.

USDA seeks information about competition matters as they relate to: (1) fertilizer; (2) seed and agricultural inputs, particularly as they relate to the intellectual property system; (3) food retail, including access to retail for agricultural producers and small and medium-sized food processors through wholesale and distribution markets.

The RFIs are intended to provide USDA with data on competition and market access for farmers and ranchers, new and growing market competitors, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, and the context of these markets for farmers. Additional information is available at www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/fair-competitive/rfi.

All written comments should be posted online at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Comments should reference the docket number of the RFI, the date of submission, and the page number of this issue of the Federal Register. Comments may also be sent to Jaina Nian, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Room 2055-S, STOP 0201, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-0201. Comments will be made available for public inspection at the above address during

regular business hours or online.

To enhance fair and competitive markets, this initiative from the Biden-Harris administration supports additional fertilizer production for American farmers and spurs competition to address rising costs, including price hikes from the war in Ukraine, and recent supply chain disruptions.

Sustainable and independent choices for fertilizer supplies demonstrates the administration’s ongoing investment in American goods and services to rebuild a more resilient, secure, and sustainable economy. Additionally, a reliable supply of domestic fertilizer addresses climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation, while fostering more sustainable production and precise application.



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From the Director's Desk
Rutgers Outreach
Provided by Brian Schilling
Director

Proper Mulching Practices Support Plant and Soil Health

Springtime is an exciting time of year. The trees are leafing out and our gardens are starting to wake up from their winter slumber. Freshly mowed grass and a new mulch ring around the trees suggest that greener days are ahead. In addition to enhancing the aesthetics of our landscape, many of our gardening practices can also encourage important ecosystem services, such as improving soil health. Mulching around the base of trees and shrubs is one such practice that fits this bill. When applied correctly, organic mulches such as bark mulch or aged wood chips function to increase soil organic matter, conserve water, prevent erosion, reduce weed pressure, and moderate soil temperatures. The mulched area also creates a buffer between the trees and the surrounding turfgrass, reducing competition for resources and minimizing the chances of mechanical damage from mowers or trimmers on the base of the trees.

However, when it comes to mulch, there can be too much of a good thing, as over-mulching trees and shrubs can have negative impacts on plant health that may not be observed for several years. When mulch is piled high against the base of the tree, it forms a mounded shape that resembles a volcano. In the landscaping trade, this is notoriously referred to as *Volcano Mulching*. This detrimental practice causes several problems for trees and shrubs and can even lead to the death of the plants. Unfortunately, this sight is all too commonly observed in the landscape, as volcano mulching has become so prevalent that some homeowners may even request that their plants receive this treatment from landscape crews, due to a belief that this is the way that proper mulching is supposed to look.

When mulch is mounded onto the base of the tree, this traps moisture between the outer bark of the trunk and the surrounding mulch. This can lead to fungal diseases and can encourage insect damage. The trunk of the tree is meant to be above ground, and the impacts of volcano mulching resemble those of a tree that was planted too deeply. When properly planted and mulched, the root flare at the base of the tree should be visible, meaning that the base of the tree should widen slightly as it comes in contact with the soil. Trees that have been planted too deeply or that have received a volcano

mulch treatment will not show a visible root flare and will look more like a telephone pole coming out of the ground. From a plant health perspective, this reduces the amount of oxygen that is available to the roots, eventually leading to root suffocation and plant death.

While proper mulching is an excellent way to conserve water in the landscape, volcano mulching can actually contribute to drought stress. If dry mulch is applied in a large mound over dry soil, it will require a greater amount of water to properly saturate the root zone of the plants. This is especially true if overhead irrigation systems are being used as opposed to drip systems because the mulch will be absorbing the water before it reaches the soil where the roots are growing. Similarly, rainfall must fully saturate the mulch before reaching the root zone. Organic mulch that is still in an active state of decomposition may also generate heat and use additional water as microorganisms continue to break down this material. The excess heat can further damage the base of the tree when mulch is in contact with the outer bark.

By following a few key guidelines for proper mulching techniques, you can ensure that your trees and your soil are being properly cared for. Organic mulch should be applied at a depth that does not exceed 2 to 3 inches. Mulch should not touch the base of the tree; it should be pulled back 3 to 5 inches from young plants and 8 to 12 inches from mature species. The root flare at the base of the tree should be visible and uncovered by mulch. Before refreshing mulch each year, it is important to assess the current depth of the existing mulch before adding any more. To correct previous applications of volcano mulch, gently rake back the mulch from the base of the tree, being careful not to damage the bark or any shallow roots in the process. When used correctly, organic mulches in the landscape are an excellent tool to conserve water, control weeds, and improve the health of landscape plants.

For more information, see the NJAES fact sheet *Problems with Over-Mulching Trees and Shrubs*: njaes.rutgers.edu/fs099 or contact your local Rutgers Cooperative Extension County Office: njaes.rutgers.edu/county. Additional landscape information is available at njaes.rutgers.edu/home-lawn-garden.

Editor's Note: This month's contribution was written by William Errickson, Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Monmouth County.



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New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative Urges Food System Action in Two New Reports

The New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative (NJFDC), a statewide policy network of which Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) is a part, has released two companion reports on the future of New Jersey's food system. The reports, "NJ Roadmap for Food System Resilience" and "The New Jersey Food System in a Nutshell," are based on public input.

The primary authors of the collaborative, which is comprised of food access and agricultural leaders, citizens and organizations, include Jeanine Cava, Stockton University, NJFDC co-founder and lead author; Sara Elnakib, educator and department head, RCE of Passaic County; Rachel Fisher, Stockton University; and John Gershman, New York University and Rutgers Environmental Stewards Program.

"NJ Roadmap for Food System Resilience" highlights the potential for more equitable food access and an enhanced agricultural sector in New Jersey by considering the voices of more than 300 food system stakeholders and leaders between 2020 and 2021. The report's key content speaks to current issues and recommendations for constructing a food system that promotes environmental, social, and racial justice. From citizens to law and policymakers, this content is accessible to anyone interested in learning more about people and planet-supportive food and farming in New Jersey.

"The New Jersey Food System in a Nutshell" report provides a foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities of the state's food system explained in the Roadmap report. Data are presented that reflect current, pressing issues according to state organizations and agencies. Some of these issues focus upon economic justice and climate change mitigation.

This report explores the goals and approaches

for accomplishing this vision and describes 11 "Core Opportunities for Action" to achieve a more equitable and resilient food system for the Garden State:

- Adopt a Holistic Food System Perspective
- Streamline Food System Governance and Develop a State Food Charter
- Improve Knowledge and Assessment of the Food System and Increase Transparency
- Operationalize Effective Processes for Inter-Agency and Multi-Sector Collaboration
- Foster Multi-Sectoral Food Policy Councils Across New Jersey
- Leverage Federal Nutrition Programs to Support Access to Food Across New Jersey
- Bolster Local Food Economy Infrastructure
- Implement Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Recommendations in the Food System
- Adequately Support, Integrate and Expand Existing Programs
- Connect and Expand Fresh Food Purchasing Incentive Programs for Full State Coverage
- Strengthen Livelihoods Across the Food System

These core opportunities for action are supported by 52 specific recommendations organized in three tables that explain perspective, process, and collaboration opportunities to mobilize these action ideas. The actions are organized based on where the change could be initiated, whether state government, university/research community, or multi-sector sources.

"This document was written as a tool for all 'food citizens' in the Garden State, from farmers to policymakers, parents and students. It is an ambitious attempt to weave together the

important work being done by so many food and farming organizations in NJ to present a holistic view of food issues and a Roadmap for us to get where we need to go, in a more coordinated and collaborative way," said lead author Jeanine Cava, who is the co-founder and lead facilitator of NJFDC.

Suggested lead parties, such as the New Jersey Legislature, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Hunger Free New Jersey, City Green and Rutgers Cooperative Extension, are included for each of the 52 actions. The final reports can be viewed at the New Jersey Food Democracy Collaborative.

"Rutgers Cooperative Extension has had a history of supporting the agricultural community and food systems in NJ for over a century. This report highlights the potential leadership role of RCE in multiple action items in the report related to creating equitable and sustainable food systems that are resilient to our current climate challenges," said co-author Sara Elnakib.

"The NJ Roadmap for System Resilience is a call for people across the food system to come together at the local and state levels to share data, resources and ideas so that we can collectively create a more equitable and resilient food system for all," added Cara Cuite, assistant extension specialist in the Department of Human Ecology.

Since June 2020, more than 250 individuals representing various sectors in New Jersey have contributed to the network's collaborative efforts to discuss solutions leading to a resilient and equitable food system within the state. Stakeholders include emergency and charity food organizations, regional and local food banks, farmers, growers, producers, food access and equity organizations, and others involved in future food system solutions.



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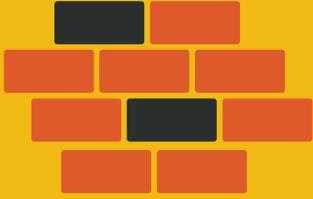
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Since 1840, the United States has conducted a Census of Agriculture that has almost always undercounted women farmers. That's because couples who jointly owned a farm had to designate only one person—usually a husband—as the one “principal farmer.” The old methodology failed to recognize that women often play an equal role in managing a family farm, or the primary role.

In 2017, the Census of Agriculture was changed to allow two principal farmers to be counted in one family, and that is the main reason why women's share of all farmers jumped by 26% nationwide and by 36% here in New Jersey. Today, over 40% of New Jersey farm owners are women, about four percentage points higher than the national average. Indeed, women play an even bigger role in agriculture than in many leading professions, such as the law and medicine.

Many of these women-run farms are in my Central Jersey district, which includes major parts of Hunterdon, Mercer, and Somerset Counties. In March, my office celebrated National Ag Day and Women's History Month by presenting a “Ladies of the Land Award” to several outstanding women farmers. Their impressive



Agriculture and Food Security

By Roy Freiman
New Jersey Assemblyman

The Big Impact of Women in Farming

contributions to New Jersey agriculture have made major, long-term contributions to their communities by fighting food insecurity, leading the agriculture industry, and building a more sustainable world.

Debbie Norz, a member of the NJ State Board of Agriculture, is part of a family-run farm that has been growing vegetables and raising livestock in Central Jersey since 1920. Norz Hill Farm and Market consists of over 1,200-acres that produce everything from corn to pumpkins to timothy hay.

Krista Coleman's passion for agriculture and the environment culminated in the creation of Farmer Over Yonder, an eco-friendly hydroponic garnish farm that uses compostable packaging for vibrant and flavorful garnishes. Founded in 2019, the farm utilizes

science and nature to produce the finest quality microgreens, edible flowers, and other specialty crops.

Andrea Kennette is the co-owner of Martenette Farms. After growing up in an urban environment, she fell in love with the farm life after spending four months on a livestock and vegetable grower farm in Southern Arizona. Now, Andrea and her husband Tony have been farming organically for six years. Last year they purchased land to establish a farm in Hillsborough.

Heidi Kovacs, a fourth-generation dairy farmer, founded Sugar Jersey Maples in 2013. A staple of Hunterdon County, the farm consists of a small, registered herd of Jersey Cows, and is one of just 40 remaining dairy farms operating in the state of New Jersey.

Jess Niederer started Chickadee

Creek in 2010, on land preserved by her grandmother so that it could never be developed, continuing her family's long line of Mercer County farmers since the early 1900s. Chickadee Creek Farm is an 80-acre, certified organic vegetable, flower, fruit, and herb farm.

Pam and Gary Mount founded Terhune Orchards in 1975 and now run the farm with daughters Reuwai (who concentrates on growing operations) and Tannwen (who focuses on retail and marketing). All three of the Mount women have become community leaders, holding positions in the Mercer County Board of Agriculture, the NJ Farmer's Direct Marketing Association, and Agricultural Leadership Development. In 2018, the entire Mount Family were recognized as “Vegetable Grower of the Year” by the State Board of

Agriculture.

One of the joys of being the chairman of the New Jersey Assembly's Agriculture Committee is visiting farms throughout our great Garden State. I look forward to meeting many more women and men who make up the backbone of our agriculture industry, and giving out many more awards.

Nowadays, the Census of Agriculture is conducted every five years, and this month is the last chance to sign up for the next one. This next census will measure farming in 2022 for publication in 2024. If you are a farmer who hasn't received an invitation to participate, go online and sign up through the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Let's make sure our entire farming community is counted.

Editor's Note: Assemblyman Roy Freiman represents the 16th Legislative District, which encompasses Mercer, Hunterdon, Somerset, and Middlesex. He is Chair of the Agriculture and Food Security Committee in the New Jersey State Assembly. He can be reached at asmfreiman@njleg.org or by calling 908-829-4191

The New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association and the NJLCA Education Fund are excited to announce that planning is underway for the 2nd Annual Northeast Green Industry Showcase (NGIS), our exciting outdoor living show held at the Hunterdon County Fairgrounds in Lambertville, NJ on September 28-29, 2022.

This year's show is growing and going to be even more exciting than the inaugural event. Exhibitors have already begun signing on to display their equipment, lawn and landscape materials, pest control supplies, nursery stock, irrigation and lighting products and more. This regional event is an outdoor trade show aimed at owners and supervisors in the landscape, nursery, farm, hardscape and outdoor living industries.

As we did in 2021, NGIS will have an outdoor equipment demonstration area, where attendees can try out and test drive a variety of equipment available. This will give them an opportunity to learn about new equipment, test more efficient equipment that will help them in their businesses, and discover other facets of the outdoor living industry. The demo area will follow all OSHA requirements and be treated as an OSHA construction site. All those who enter will be required to wear OSHA-approved ANSI Safety Vests and follow all safety protocols.



The NJLCA Today

By Gail Woolcott
Executive Director

Plans Are Underway for 2nd Annual Outdoor Living Show

Current exhibitors that have already signed up include Aquarius Supply, Bobcat of North Jersey, Cambridge Pavers, SiteOne Landscape Supply, and Tech Terra Environmental. Other expected vendors include nursery, heavy equipment, handheld equipment, insurance, fleet tracking, technology providers, seed, sod and artificial turf dealers, snow equipment and supply.

New this year, the show will have an entire pavilion dedicated to the education and licensing requirements of the outdoor living industry. It will serve as a one-stop shop for all educational, certification and licensing needs to legally do business in the State of NJ. From Rutgers Cooperative Extension to USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, from Mercer Community College to Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education, this pavilion will have nearly everything that one would

need to run a legitimate outdoor living business. We look forward to hosting licensing and certification agencies for Irrigation, Pest Control, Fertilizer, Plant Dealers and Tree, as well as agencies that educate on pavers, segmental retaining walls, turfgrass, pool and spa, the NJ State Police, Department of Transportation and other industry organizations. Want to learn what you need to do landscape construction in NJ? How to become certified in pesticide application? Statistics on the landscape and agricultural industry? How to combat spotted lanternfly?

This year's education will also be top notch. Additional details will be forthcoming, but educational classes in pavers, tree work, pesticides and more will be offered in both an indoor and outdoor setting and some hands-on. Working with Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, the Interlocking Concrete Paver

Institute, New Jersey International Society of Arboriculture and others, we expect to offer several certification and recertification topics for the outdoor living industry.

Exhibitor lists and educational updates will be located at www.NGIS-NJ.com and monthly in my column. I cannot wait to tell you more about the upcoming things we have planned for this one-of-a-kind outdoor industry trade show and educational opportunity! There will also be competitions throughout the two-day event and great food at all of the food vendors. And as always, the amazing networking that naturally happens at all our events can provide some of the best education.

This past month, the trade show committee spent time meeting and discussing the 2022 show logistics. Where will everything be situated, who do we want for education, what types of equipment are in demand,

making sure we get alternative battery-powered equipment, deciding on updated layouts, etc. We have just begun reaching out to our exhibitors and educators, and everyone is enthusiastic about our plans for the 2022 show.

I have every reason to believe that NGIS will grow this year and establish itself as a truly unique and popular show for the northeast outdoor living industry. As a reminder, the Northeast Green Industry Showcase is geared towards the outdoor living industry and those interested in equipment and industry education.

Editor's Note: Gail Woolcott is the Executive Director for the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association. She was presented with a community service award from the Borough of Fairview for her assistance in leading the 9-11 Memorial Park project and the Legislative Champion of the Year award from the Federation of Employers and Workers of America. She is currently the State Licensee Chair on the National Association of Landscape Professionals International Certification Council.

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Growing Gardeners

By Diana Dove

Environmental Educator

How to Engage Youth in Garden Ceremonies & Town Events

Happy National Garden Week June 5th to 11th, 2022! As I have stated before, future gardeners grow from *engaging youth* in gardening and garden activities. As Garden Clubs and Public Gardens present National Garden Week special events, now is the time to encourage **Growing Gardeners** to participate, not just in gardening, but to take part in ceremonies and public programs. How do you interest children and teens? When youth see others involved, they become interested. For example, here's what took place at a past town-wide Arbor Day Ceremony held at our elementary school's Butterfly Garden. It was a combined effort planned by our KNMBG Youth and Adult Garden Clubs (part of the Garden Club of NJ), who partnered with our local Washington Borough Shade Tree Commission, and Green Team. This allowed them to network resources, individual abilities and community connections.

Together they planned a meaningful ceremony that was inspiring and fun for everyone. Children and teens, aged 3-18, became part of the ceremony that focused on the importance of trees. Here are tips to engage youth...

Invite diverse youth groups to participate with special jobs to do, and engage them in the ceremony. If you do this, they will come! Our Youth Garden Club set up a pollinator exhibit, they talked to guests who visited their Youth Garden Club table, they distributed Clean Communities reusable bags, and they helped with clean up. **Youth were highlighted** in the garden ceremony as teen Youth Gardeners performed instrumental music, Brownies led the pledge of allegiance, and all the children and teens sang "America the Beautiful"

led by a professional singer. Children from various groups made tree posters, and then became a delightful part of the ceremony by stepping up to the microphone to describe their trees! *Youth planting trees* in our Arbor Day Ceremony was a main highlight. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and youth gardeners planted three trees with police officers and our local Fire Chief. There are many tips to share to encourage youth participation.

Some children introduced speakers or were Youth Presenters. One Eagle Scout prepared a speech about his Eagle Scout project. He described how he learned to lay landscaping stone along the garden path leading to a memorial American sweetgum tree dedicated to a local high school quarterback football player.

Children were given the opportunity to meet the members of the Green Team and the Shade Tree Commission face-to-face. They met the Mayor who read the Arbor Day Proclamation. Scout troops prepared kids crafts. In return they sold bottled water to cover craft expenses. They set up a recycling display and a bin to remind everyone to recycle. Youth members distributed freebies (Garden Club pollinator posters, and free plants given away for a donation).

Boy Scouts greeted visitors and directed parking. The high school's SAVE environmental club, and Junior and National Honor Society members volunteered. Part of the event's preparation involved scheduling a gardening session with the Youth Corp of Phillipsburg crew. They dug and prepped the garden spot where three trees were to be planted. Mulching was completed as some of the final garden tasks to spruce up the garden.

Plan ahead, communicate, and stay in touch! Text, email, call, and talk face-to-face. I attended zoom meetings with high school club teens. Prior to the pandemic, I coordinated after-school Garden Club meetings and attended in-person high school service club meetings, enlisting youth volunteers.

Make it relevant and meaningful. All students like to be rewarded by a kind word and reassuring encouragement that they are doing a good job. Youth awards may be offered: participation certificates, trophies, plaques, internships, scholarships, award dinners, fun award picnics, field trips, etc. Students interested in Junior and National Honor Society need their hours verified, which is done online.

Let youth know that you value their time. Praise the students. Tell their Teacher Advisors and School Administrators of their involvement and commitment, and describe the good things they accomplished.

Above all, **make it fun** and rewarding. One 13-year-old speaker talked about how his whole family volunteered to garden and he said, "**I never had a bad day in the Butterfly Garden.**" As a youth gardener, he said, "**Every day in the garden is a good day.**" That's what you want youth to remember. They should think about gardening as fun while they learn gardening skills and volunteer side-by-side with experienced gardeners. What a positive impact this kind of community involvement can have on children of all ages, surrounded by gardeners and community leaders who are role models. Gardening should be something they look forward to. The school and community garden should be a place where **Growing Gardeners** feel safe and welcome as they grow up to become **Future Gardeners**.

Editor's Note: Diana is an Environmental Educator with award-winning programs for all ages who has been teaching since 1975. She can be reached at dianadove13@gmail.com She currently co-teaches "Wildlife & Litter" programs with her husband, Mike, that are free to NJ groups when sponsored by Clean Communities. This includes guided nature walks, pond studies, education booths at town festivals, and outdoor programs for youth & adult garden clubs, schools, camps, libraries, and service organizations with a message about not littering. She is a former Sr. Naturalist for Somerset Co. Parks. In October 1996, Diana founded a schoolyard, wildlife habitat garden at Memorial School in Washington Boro, Warren County, NJ. Please "Like" the FB page of the Karen Nash Memorial Butterfly Garden. Diana volunteers as Youth Chair on the Bd of the Garden Club of NJ and is a First Place National Winner of the NGC Youth Leader Award. She has a BS in Forestry & Wildlife Mgt, with a concentration in Biology, plus a BA in Communications from Va Tech.



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There are not many groups of plants that “tick all the boxes.” However, the many species of deciduous native azaleas that are found throughout the East Coast offer many attributes including being native; having many ecological functions including being attractive to the arriving Ruby-throat Hummingbird; can grow in deep shade, but also thrive and can have the heaviest flowering in full sun; some of the species such as the swamp azalea, *Rhododendron viscosum*, literally grow in standing water along streams and rivers; and they have a myriad of mostly fragrant flowers ranging from white and pink to orange and red and every shade in between.

Locally, the swamp azalea is found throughout the waterways of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. From mid-May to mid-June, if you canoe or kayak any stream or river in the pine barrens, you will see upright shrubs with fragrant, white, tubular flowers cascading over the edges of the waterway. While it will grow in moist areas, in the garden it does not require this.

Rhododendron arborescens is another fragrant native azalea commonly called the sweet azalea. It can reach 8-20 feet tall with an equal spread. The flowers are soft pink to white and the internal floral parts (the style) is bright red. ‘White Lightning’ is a pure white selection. They will be



Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

By Andrew Bunting
Vice President of Public Gardens and Landscapes

Native Azaleas

in full flower from June to July.

On April 29th I was in Washington, DC at the U. S. Botanic Garden, and the Florida azalea, *Rhododendron austrinum*, was in full bloom. *R. austrinum* has dense clusters of tubular bright yellow to orange flowers. It is relatively compact reaching only 8-10 feet tall. There are several cultivars selected for both yellow and orange flowers. ‘Austrinum Gold’ has bright golden flowers. ‘Millie Mac’ has yellow flowers with a white edge. There are also hybrids with other species, such as the Coast azalea, *Rhododendron atlanticum*, which has fragrant orange-yellow flowers.

The flame azalea, *Rhododendron calendulaceum*, shares many of the attributes of *R. austrinum*. In May and June, this upright shrub is covered with an abundance of showy flowers that range in color from yellow to salmon to pink and orange and red. Like most of the native azaleas, it also

has reasonably good fall color ranging from orange to yellow to red. ‘Scarlet Orange Flame’ has red to orange flowers.

The Cumberland azalea, *Rhododendron cumberlandense*, is found throughout the mountainous areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. Blooming from May to June, it has ball-like clusters of salmon to orange flowers.

Rhododendron prunifolium, the plumleaf azalea, fills an important niche in that it tends to bloom from mid- to late summer. The flowers can be bright red or can also be blends of orange, red, and pink. ‘Cherry Bomb’ has reddish-orange flowers in July. ‘Peach Glow’ has peach colored tubular flowers.

One of my favorites is *Rhododendron vaseyi*, the pinkshell azalea. The flowers are soft pink and it tends to like cooler conditions. It is much less heat tolerant than

more southern azaleas, such as *R. austrinum*, *R. alabamense* and *R. prunifolium*. While the species is a clear pink, there are white-colored selections such as ‘White Find’.

Found in the woods of Pennsylvania and New Jersey is the pinxterbloom azalea, *Rhododendron periclymenoides*, which has delicate white to pink flowers that can be fragrant. This species will thrive in considerable shade.

This myriad of different species thrives for the most part in sun or shade and from USDA Zones 5 to 8. They combine well with other native shrubs such as the summersweet, *Clethra alnifolia*; the Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*; inkberry holly, *Ilex glabra* and the Florida anise, *Illicium floridanum*. They can be underplanted with any native groundcovers such as the Christmas fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*; lady fern, *Athyrium felix-femina*; native

ginger, *Asarum canadense*; and a host of native sedges including *Carex pennsylvanica*, *Carex appalachica*, *Carex eburnea* and *Carex plantaginea*.

Native azaleas are very versatile. They offer a range of colored flowers and different species that will thrive in shade or sun and in dry to fully saturated soils, and most are great for wildlife.

Editor’s Note: Andrew Bunting is Vice President of Public Gardens and Landscapes for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. He is one of the most recognized horticulturists in the Philadelphia, Pa., region and a highly regarded colleague in the world of professional horticulture. Bunting has amassed a plethora of awards, including the American Public Gardens Association Professional Citation, Chanticleer Scholarship in Professional Development, Delaware Center for Horticulture’s Marion Marsh Award, and the Certificate of Merit from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. In addition, Bunting has lectured extensively throughout North America and Europe, and participated in plant expeditions throughout Asia and Africa. Learn more at <https://phsonline.org/team/andrew-bunting>

Exhibitor Information for the 2022 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show, “In Full Bloom”

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society has shared its list of exhibitors for the 2022 Philadelphia Flower Show, “In Full Bloom.” This year, visitors can anticipate seeing the works of extraordinary landscape architects, garden designers, and florists. The roster of designers will be larger than previous years, with 40 major exhibitors creating forward-thinking and progressive designs for large-scale gardens between 900 – 2,500 square feet.

This year’s Show features an eclectic mix of award-winning, world-class designers, including more female-led firms designing major exhibits than ever before, creating half of the spectacular, show-stopping gardens that the Show is known for. The Flower Show will shed light on the incredible achievements of women in the field of landscape and garden design with stunning

and thought-provoking displays that explore the restorative power of nature and plants as well as the importance of mental and emotional health that contribute to a person also being “in full bloom.”

In addition to the major exhibit gardens, dozens of smaller garden spaces ranging in size from 254 – 899 square feet will also be on display. These smaller experiences feature educational gardens and the Flower Show competitive classes, where amateur gardeners and plant societies are invited to create themed gardens that serve to inspire all visitors to explore the world of horticulture and get their hands dirty. Additionally, these gardens provide exciting new ideas and inspiration for those gardening in small spaces and demonstrate the amazing potential of even a small space to serve

as a beautiful garden respite.

“Every year, we try to find designers, builders, thinkers, and garden makers who we think will explore and present some aspect of the theme in an exciting, thought-provoking and lively way. We want designers who are firmly rooted in horticulture and great plant design but who are also thinking about culture at large and how these designs relate to those issues. We want guests to be moved and delighted and to be changed, in some small way, by these gardens and the ideas behind them,” said Seth Pearsoll, PHS Director of Design.

The Philadelphia Flower Show is located in Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park at 1500 Pattison Avenue & South Broad Street.

Tickets are available for sale at PHSONline.org/the-flower-show

USDA Opens Grants Application to Improve SNAP Customer Service

The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service announced that \$5 million in competitive grants are being made available to enhance efficiency and access in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through process and technology improvements.

The SNAP Process and Technology Improvement Grants are awarded through a competitive application process. The multi-year grants seek to improve the experience of SNAP participants by enabling grantees to update inefficient or ineffective processes or use technology to streamline operations and provide better customer service. The application process also requires grant applicants to demonstrate how their initiatives will affect SNAP with respect to equity and inclusion, which supports the Administration's focus on advancing racial equity.

"FNS is deeply committed to improving SNAP so that all Americans can get the healthy food they need," said Stacy Dean, USDA's deputy undersecretary for food, nutrition, and consumer services. "By putting the needs of SNAP applicants and recipients at the center of this grant initiative, we can harness changes in processes and technology to drive toward the end goal of making SNAP work for the people who use it to feed themselves and their families."

Previous grantees have used funding for SNAP improvements such as making mobile applications easier to use, implementing live call centers, or creating automated text messaging notifications to remind households of key actions required to maintain benefits. Once awarded, grantees have three years to spend funds and complete their projects.

This year's PTIG applicants will be required to address at least one of the following priority areas:

- Increasing the use of technology-based tools to expand enrollment of underserved populations;
- Aiding in the transition from pandemic operations and improving disaster response operations; and/or
- Modernizing SNAP customer service, client communication, and administrative processes to improve accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness.

These grants build on the Administration's commitment to modernizing programs, reducing administrative burdens, and piloting new online tools and technologies that can provide a simple, seamless, and secure customer experience.

Eligible entities include:

- State and local agencies that administer SNAP;
- State or local governments;
- Agencies providing health or welfare services;
- Public health or educational entities; and
- Private non-profit entities, such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks, or other emergency feeding organizations.

All applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST, June 27, 2022.

To learn more, visit www.fns.usda.gov



In the Chef's Corner

By Aishling Stevens
Executive Chef

Foraged Ingredients

Summer is right around the corner! The tree canopies are already contributing to landscape microclimates, the scents of new growth fill the air, and the possibilities for fresh and innovative menus keep me up at night – in a good way. In this month's column, I'm sharing one of my favorite topics, wild foraged ingredients. Such ingredients include ramps, ginger root, woodland strawberry blossoms, berries, nettles, wild mushrooms and many more interesting finds throughout the year.

Given its namesake, The Garden State is clearly known for its abundance of farm grown produce. However, not many people appreciate the wide variety of wild edible plants that grow in the woods and meadows all around us. Over 400 wild edible plants grow in New Jersey, with an even longer list of derived ingredients, since many plants yield in multiple categories: leaf/stalk, root, flower, fruit and bark.

Knowing where and when to find these ingredients and how to harvest them in a responsible and sustainable manner is a true science.

I have had the good fortune of working with local foragers who over the years have worked with me to develop a library of hundreds of local ingredients classified by peak availability, common and Latin names, flavor, and nutrition attributes. In certain cases, some of these ingredients are hyper-seasonal and may only be available for a few short days or weeks. Experienced foragers keep meticulous records of each year's harvest,

not only noting location and dates of peak ripeness, but even going so far as to record soil temperature and weather conditions.

In season I meet with foragers weekly to see their harvest, plan upcoming menus, and to review my ingredient wish list for the upcoming weeks. In next month's column I will be featuring a recipe from one of my favorite dishes with foraged ingredients, but what would a great locally sourced meal be without a properly paired libation to start off? On that note, I would like to introduce my colleague, Dan Donovsk.

When Dan started his culinary career, he already had a passion for local ingredients which he originally picked up as a boy at camp. That is where he learned traditional Lenape Indian skills which allowed them to live off the land. Fast forwarding to today, Dan is part of our foraging team and is also head of the mixology program, where he goes beyond farm-to-fork in his quest for natural local ingredients infused into innovative and memorable libations. An example of this practice is the replacement of common citrus used for acid with other components such as Verjus, Vinegars, Shrubs, and Kombucha derived from foraged ingredients.

Dan has created specialty gin, amaros, aperitivos, cordials, syrups, and tinctures from all foraged ingredients. Sustainability-themed is incredibly important, as some of the cocktails get their names from famous naturalists that have helped to preserve nature. All wild

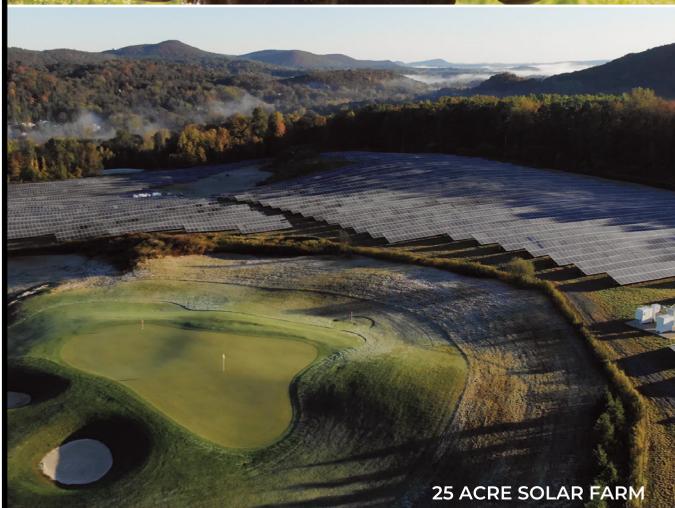
items harvested are done so in a sustainable manner as to preserve nature - the true star of the show. Most of the ingredients are hyper-seasonal and harvested when the desired flavor or texture peaks. His libations are geared towards those looking to 'take a walk on the wild side' so to speak.

One of Dan's latest innovative libations is the Juniperus. Using foraged gin as a base, he starts by garnishing three dames rocket flowers, each wrapped with a pickled magnolia petal. The petal is pickled with black vinegar, rice wine vinegar, and honey.

It is both sweet and savory with notes of ginger from the magnolia blossom. For greater visual appeal, the beverage is showcased on a bed of moss accompanied by wild eastern red cedar to symbolize the importance of the plant and the role it plays in the cocktail. Its berries are the base component for our gin, accompanied by 11 other foraged ingredients (Sweet Cicely, Sweet Flag, Japanese Knotweed, Angelica, Spice Bush Twig, Morrow Honey Suckle, Japanese Honey Suckle, Autumn Olive Flower, Red Clover Blossom, Fleabane Flowers, and Yarrow Flowers.) All of them marry together to create a true harmony and balance, and overall, the gin is very floral with a hint of citrus from the Japanese knotweed. Most gins typically use berries from *juniperus communis* for flavor. The name gin itself is derived from either the French genièvre or the Dutch jenever, which both mean 'juniper'.

Until next time... Cheers!

Editor's Note: Aishling Stevens is the Executive Chef at Crystal Springs Resort in Hamburg, Sussex County, N.J. For more information on its culinary program, visit www.CSResort.com.



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Once we get into the month of June, it is time to start thinking about planting pumpkins. Although in other parts of the country that have different growing conditions than we do here in the Garden State, pumpkins might be planted earlier or later in the season, we generally plant our pumpkins and winter squashes during the first two weeks of June. The key with timing the planting of pumpkins is that they should be ready for harvest anywhere from the first week of September to the second week of October. If they are planted much later than the second week of June, there is a good chance they will still be green for Halloween. And if they are planted too early, by the middle of October, the flesh can become soft and the stems can dry out and fall off.

On our farm, the pumpkin planting process actually starts during September of the prior year. At that time, we plant rye, which will then overwinter, and then grow in the spring. Before the grain matures, we cut the rye down, usually late May, and then let it dry so that the sun bleaches it into a nice



The Town Farmer

By Peter Melick
Agricultural Producer

Planting and Growing Pumpkins

golden color. (In my opinion, rye makes some of the most attractive straw out there.) After it has sufficiently dried, we then bale and store the straw, (hopefully before it gets rained on.) Now in addition to having a barn full of straw, we have a nice empty field in which we can plant our pumpkins. We have found that pumpkins and winter squash do very well when they are planted into rye stubble. But first, we have to put the requisite amount of fertilizer down which is determined from a previously conducted soil test.

After the fertilizer is applied and any problem weeds are treated, it is time to actually plant the pumpkins. For this task, we use what is known as a “no-till” planter. This type

of planter allows us to plant the seeds directly into the ground without having to plow, disc and harrow the ground first. The planter works by creating a very narrow slit in the soil where the seed is then placed. Then, this area is compacted slightly to ensure that there are no air pockets around the seed. If we were to use conventional methods to grow this crop, we would have to make at least three more trips across these fields with tillage equipment to get the ground ready for planting. That would mean that much more time, and that much more diesel fuel (both of which are presently in short supply).

Another advantage to no-till planting is that you can plant into ground that is a little

wetter than if the ground had to be worked up first. With conventional tillage, you have to let the soil dry out before each step in the tillage process. And in a wet year, that can sometimes be almost impossible.

After planting and before the seed germinates and emerges from the soil, we apply an herbicide to the soil to keep other broadleaf weeds and grasses from growing and competing with the pumpkins for water and nutrients. And then about a month after planting, when the young plants have approximately four to six leaves, we treat them with a postemergence herbicide. This treatment will control any weeds that snuck through the preemergent application but not

harm the pumpkins themselves.

At this stage, the pumpkins will grow rather rapidly and should have the ground completely covered with vines by the end of July. As the plants start flowering and setting fruit, they become more susceptible to diseases and should be treated for powdery mildew, downy mildew and phytophthora. In wet years there can be heavy disease pressure, while in dry years it can be almost non-existent.

And once the fruit starts to mature, it is time to start harvesting. Happy Halloween and good luck!

Editor's Note: Peter Melick is co-owner of Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick and a 10th-generation New Jersey farmer. Peter is Mayor of Tewksbury Township, Hunterdon County, NJ. 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.

Rain, rain go away! This past spring has been a typical cool, wet, rainy season. In April, I spoke to a group here in New Jersey about watering requirements and techniques. There seems to be a lot of confusion as to how much water is necessary for your lawn to grow and develop. Let's explore what we talked about.

First of all, lawns are not native to America. The idea of having a mowed, manicured lawn came from Europe centuries ago. The lawns of today have been researched and bred to tolerate a wide range of light, soil, water and fertilizer requirements. Next, throw in low mowing, insects and disease and you can see how grass plants can be stressed. As far as water goes, the typical lawn needs about one inch of water weekly during the growing season between March and December to grow properly. This water ideally comes from natural rainfall. The only reason to consider supplementing watering with some irrigation is if the lawn will be going under stress during hot summer months. Most lawns in the world do not have irrigation and they tend to survive with the proper care.

When I lived along the shore,



Turf 's Up

By Todd Pretz
Professional Turf Consultant

More water, really?

I only had irrigation on the front lawn. The backyard was all wood chips and trees. I didn't use the irrigation usually until the end of May. Why are so many of us watering our lawns so much during spring months when there is plenty of moisture in the soil? As winter changes to spring, your lawn will slowly start to come out of dormancy from the yellow, light green or brown color we look at all winter. Just like bulbs blooming and trees budding, your lawn will not start to green-up until it wants to. This is determined by the temperature of the soil and air. Watering your lawn will not speed up this greening process.

My current home is “western” New Jersey does not have any irrigation. My lawn looks pretty

good. Why? Because I follow a sound maintenance program. A good lawn program eliminates most supplemental watering requirements. I think I only used my hose and sprinkler 2-3 times last year, when I seeded some and during a hot, dry spell in summer. We have discussed many lawn programs over the years. This includes fertilizing two times in the spring, weed controls when necessary, and proper mowing including raising the height to three inches during summer months. If you need to water, water correctly. You want to avoid short, frequent watering cycles. Do not water every day for 10-15 minutes, but perhaps once a week for 30-45 minutes. We do not want to water too much so we can avoid run-off and

wasted water. Remember, we do not live in the rainforest where there is rain every day. Short, shallow watering produces little root mass and your lawn may not hold up during summer months. If you can push a screw driver all the way down into the soil, great. Otherwise, apply some soil amendments to “soften” the soil, allowing better water penetration.

What about watering when establishing newly sowed grass seed? Be sure to properly prepare the soil surface, loosening the soil before spreading seed. Is your soil in good shape? Did you get a soil test? Is your pH in the proper range to grow grass? Are you trying to grow grass in a very shaded spot? All of this sounds familiar, right? Yes, newly planted grass should stay

watered for the first 10-14 days until the grass seed starts to germinate, then start to reduce watering. If you are trying to grow the grass faster with more water, remember, the grass seed will not germinate until it wants to. It can't be rushed with more water! One homeowner told me they applied seed and it was raining in the morning, and then asked, “Should I water again in the afternoon?” No, slow down on the watering. We are all probably using too much water on our lawn.

Speaking of spring seeding, every year we get complaints of slow germination. Please remember that cold, wet springs delay seed germination. Grass seed will germinate much quicker with warmer soil in August than April, just like I would rather go swimming in the ocean in August and not April! Happy 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

Bartlett Tree Experts Distributes Over 30,000 Trees for Arbor Day 2022

Bartlett Tree Experts gave away more than 30,000 tree seedlings on Arbor Day Friday, April 29, 2022, in communities across the U.S. as part of the Bartlett Legacy Tree Program, which has distributed over 515,000 tree seedlings since its inception in 2014.

The Legacy Tree Program, celebrating its eighth anniversary, was established by Bartlett Tree Experts to support tree planting and stewardship in local communities through the annual distribution of seedlings in schools, at events, and to reforestation efforts. During the first half of this year, more than 60,000 trees are being distributed by Bartlett Tree Experts employees through the program. The majority of those seedlings are handed out or planted in the spring, primarily as part of Arbor Day and Earth Day festivities, events, and activities in a variety of locations.

“Our Legacy Tree Program is all about bringing trees and people together. It’s gratifying to see this program making that happen each year,” said Patrick Franklin, who manages the program. “Each of our Arborist Representatives is encouraged to distribute at least 100 seedlings every year, and many are so enthusiastic about the mission that they go far beyond that number. It’s a great way for Bartlett Tree Experts to make a difference while giving back to our communities and improving the environment.”

With all of Bartlett’s 151 offices participating in the program over the last eight years, the seedlings have been given away in over 30 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, and numerous locations in greater London in the United Kingdom as well as Dublin, Ireland. Most community-based Arbor Day events were cancelled in 2020 because of COVID-19, prompting Bartlett Arborist Representatives to get creative in distributing seedlings. Many events resumed last year with social distancing guidelines in place.

As in years past, seedlings will be personally distributed by Bartlett Tree Experts in recognition of Arbor Day.

“With our Legacy Tree Program, we have always been involved in the planting of trees after natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, droughts and wildfires, as well as to help increase the urban tree canopy,” Franklin said. “I’d say the biggest change this year is that we’re seeing more seedlings going out compared to the last two years because of the easement in COVID restrictions, and people are feeling more comfortable getting back together. It’s great to see more of these events being scheduled and taking place!”

The tree seedlings being distributed include a variety of native species, such as white oak, redbud, and dogwood. Species selection varies by geographic region with a focus on increasing the local diversity of native tree populations. So far this year, more than 60,000 seedlings have been ordered through the program for distribution in 2022 by Bartlett Arborist Representatives. “An incredible start,” Franklin said.



Unique Plants

By Bob LaHoff
Nursery Specialist

Martinis in the Garden

“It’s Five O’Clock Somewhere” is a song performed by Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffet, and written by Jim “Moose” Brown and Don Rollins. It is an expression that means it is 5:00 pm somewhere in the world, when the traditional nine-to-five workers are done with work for the day, and celebrate with Happy Hour. Whatever your libation of choice may be at the end of your day, week or special occasion, Martinis are no longer just on the drink menu, they can be planted in your garden too!

Olive Martini™ *Elaeagnus, Elaeagnus x ebbingei ‘Viveleg’ PP20177 (E. macrophylla x E. pungens)* has common names of Silverberry, Oleaster, Silverthorn and thorny olive. Full disclosure, Silverthorn is often seen as a fast growing, weedy ornamental able to grow and thrive in a variety of conditions. Tolerant of shade, drought and salt, animals and birds can disperse seed, expanding “its area of distribution.” In a word... it’s often seen as invasive. This cultivar, however, is not! According to Invasive.org, “no reference that we have lists this species as invasive in North America. This species is included for comparison to other species that are considered invasive.” Now that we have that out of the way, let’s examine the attributes of “Martini”.

Olive Martini™ *Elaeagnus* is a unique evergreen plant that I find beautiful and useful in landscapes. In early spring, the leaves take on a silvery hue, an almost dusted appearance. As the foliage matures, intense gold-edged leaves create a stunning display that lasts through the winter. Sturdy structure and stable color are

its makeup, yet Olive Martini™ is an afterthought to the likes of viburnum, burning bush, forsythia, osmanthus and privet as possible hedge solutions. Hardy in zones 6-9, this showy evergreen is primarily grown for its extraordinary foliage. Capable of reaching heights and widths of 10-15 feet, this plant is not for the meek. An ability to swallow up large areas quickly, Olive Martini™ has great value and promise even when purchasing smaller sized containers. Part of the Southern Living Plant Collection, Olive Martini™ is a durable, deer resistant, sun/part shade, wet or dry plant that lends itself well as a formal hedge candidate. Remember to water this plant regularly to establish and it appreciates well drained soil. “Plant Geeks” be mindful that, “this cultivar possesses metallic scales on the leaf typical of other cultivars.” Fascinating to me, UC Landscape Plant Irrigation Trials™ (UC Davis) suggests that Olive Martini™ be irrigated on low water to slow and control overall growth.

While the glossy, pointed leaves of Olive Martini™ are highly ornamental, it does feature subtle clusters of fragrant, creamy bell-shaped flowers in the autumn. This multi-stemmed evergreen, with its rounded form, appears balanced against needle conifers, deciduous beauties, or perennial counterparts. Olive Martini™ could be pruned almost any time of year. However, maintaining this exciting evergreen in late winter, once Mother Nature is through with us, is widely recommended. Not just tolerating heavy clay soil types, but thriving in them, Olive Martini™ seems destined to succeed in “Jersey” landscapes.

Olive Martini™ is an interspecific hybrid tolerant of urban pollution. Nearly two years ago, a client referred us to his friends in Hoboken, NJ. Potential clients, they had purchased a brownstone with an amazing courtyard and enormous potential. Clients with means, both well-traveled, avid collectors of art, and with extraordinary eyes for detail. Their hope was for something different. A vision to outline and frame their inner first floor courtyard with a plant type not often seen. Voilà, we offered Olive Martini™ to satisfy their thirst for their Italian travels. Planting every six feet apart, we wrapped their well-lit interior courtyard with some 22 hefty specimens, placing their classical marble Roman portrait busts, suspended on short Corinthian columns, within the Martinis. Imagine, 11 front lit sculptures recessed within this variegated evergreen, maintained at 8 feet.

The client’s vision of a well-balanced, livable space, conjuring up past experiences to Italy, became a reality. At last check, their 6-foot wall is defining their architecture and creating the escape they had so hoped for. Strongly variegated evergreen foliage dusted with silver, framing their Roman busts has me feeling that I too am in Italy. Thankfully these clients, now friends, include me on their guest list every year to celebrate Vulcanalia, a festival held in late August to honor Vulcan, the God of fire. While Romans were especially concerned about crops burning in dry heat, our client’s celebration is set to extinguish the thirst of their guests with healthy libations during the summer heat. A soiree not for the timid!

Full Moon

● June 14, 2022 ○

Eastern Daylight

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, past member of Reeves-Reed Arboretum Buildings and Grounds Committee, a lifetime member of the Conifer Society and past member of the retail council for Monrovia Growers. He can be reached at (908) 665-0331.

The topic of tropical plants conjures up different images to different gardeners. These images may include large and bold foliage or perhaps flowers with dramatic shapes and colors. When I first saw Indian Pink, or Pinkroot, at Longwood Gardens many years ago, the bold red and yellow flowers struck me as something tropical, heralding from far warmer regions of the globe. Little did I know that this plant, botanically known as *Spigelia marilandica*, was native to regions throughout central and southeastern North America and not the Caribbean!

Spigelia is a member of the Loganiaceae or Logania Family, which not surprisingly is a family found primarily in tropical regions. Its namesake is the genus *Logania*, native to Australia and New Zealand. *Spigelia* contains about 60 species, with the vast majority native to warmer expanses of North and South America. *Spigelia* was named in 1753 by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778). It honors Adriaan van den Spiegel (1578-1625), a Flemish Physician who was renowned for his studies of anatomy. He also studied botany and techniques for preserving dried specimens of plants. Interestingly, Linnaeus



Morris County Park Commission

By Bruce Crawford
Horticultural Manager

Indian Pink – A Plant of Tropical Flair

initially considered the plant to be a honeysuckle, naming it *Lonicera marilandica* in 1753. Not until 1767 did he alter the genus to *Spigelia*. The species epithet of *marilandica* means 'of Maryland'. Despite its exotic flowers and family ties to topical regions, it is native to Maryland south to Florida, west to Texas and Illinois and is hardy from zone 5-9.

The common name of Indian Pink was evidently first coined by the English writer and gardener John Evelyn (1620 –1706). His inspiration for the name remains partially a mystery, since no part of the plant is pink! Similar to other members of the Loganiaceae, the plant is poisonous and contains the alkaloid spigeline, with the highest concentrations in the roots. It was collected and used

by Native American Indians and later by European settlers as a vermifuge to treat intestinal worms, which at least explains part of the common name. Its medicinal virtues caused it to be collected to excess, explaining why plants remain rare in nature. Another benefit the alkaloid provides is reduced deer predation, a huge benefit for gardeners!

Although rare in the wild, it is becoming increasingly popular amongst gardeners and deservedly so! The exotic, brilliant red flowers appear along the upper surface of a curved cyme, which emerges from the tips of the unbranched stems. Between 2-12 vertically oriented flowers appear along the cyme from June into early August. The trumpet-shaped flowers are 1½-2” long and consist of five fused petals.

Near the tip of the flower bud lies a slight constriction that marks the 'hinge' above which the five petals open to reveal the gorgeous, bright yellow inner surface. The yellow beautifully compliments the red trumpet below! Each ½” long petal comes to a sharp point, providing a 1” diameter star at the flower's tip. Although the flowers are pollinated by insects, the most colorful and noted pollinator is the Ruby Throated Hummingbird, begging the question of why a gardener would install Hummingbird feeders when you can simply plant a mass of *Spigelia*!

It is not just the flowers that look attractive, but also the foliage and overall habit of the plant. Plants grow from 12-28” tall and slowly expand over time to make a sizable clump. The oppositely

arranged lanceolate foliage is an attractive dark green and ranges from 2-4” long by 1-2½” wide. In the wild, plants are typically found in lightly shaded and moist areas including low woodlands, stream edges and locations adjacent to swamps. However, they are very adaptable and grow well in average garden soil amended with compost.

Indian Pink is becoming more available at nurseries and is certainly worth the time to find. With so many virtues, I am uncertain why this plant has not become popular long before now – perhaps its scarcity in nature is partially to blame. Regardless, this hardy plant has a beautiful tropical flair that will certainly enhance your garden with bold color and the ever-entertaining motion of Hummingbirds!

Editor's Note: Bruce Crawford is a lover of plants since birth, is the Manager of Horticulture for the Morris County Parks Commission, and a Past President of the Garden State Gardens Consortium. He can be reached at BCrawford@morrisparks.net

Catch A Windflower

Windflowers are delicate flowers which bloom at the ends of long stalks and sway with every gentle breeze. Windflowers are also called anemones, which is Greek for, you may have guessed, windflower. Anemones, according to Greek mythology, sprang forth from the tears of Aphrodite for her departed Adonis.

NJ has three native windflowers: *Anemone canadensis* and *A. cylindrica* which are both rare, and *A. virginiana* which is more common. However, of these three I have only seen *A. virginiana* a few times in the wild. *Anemone canadensis* is too rambunctious for me to recommend as a garden plant, and *A. cylindrica* and *A. virginiana* are very similar to each other so I will concentrate on *A. virginiana*.

Anemone virginiana is found in 38 of the 50 states. Its range extends from Maine west to Minnesota, and south to Louisiana and Georgia.

A. virginiana is sometimes called thimbleweed since the mature fruit looks like a thimble. These thimbles are about 1 inch long, ½ inch wide, and are produced on plants which are from 1 to 2.5 feet tall.

The 'thimbles' start off light green and mature in fall to a brown-gray. When mature you can see that each thimble is composed of hundreds of small fruits (achenes) packed tightly into a cylinder sort of like a small, elongated pineapple. Each achene is covered in a densely wooly coat, as is the end of the fruit stalk. The wooly achenes look like they could be used to make a fairly good pillow if you gathered enough of them, and the fruit stalk, minus the achenes, looks like a cheap cotton swab with just a minimal amount of wooly cotton at the tip.

By spring these thimbles look like mops or swabs which have been neglected outdoors all winter. The

long lasting thimbles and the wooly fruit stalks can be used for novel dried plant arrangements.

Thimbleweed anemone plants often have three leaves in a spiral arrangement on the lower half of the stem. Each of these medium sized leaves is divided into 3 major deeply cut lobes, which in turn are cut into lobes and have toothed borders. This gives the plants a rather pleasing fern-like appearance.

In NJ thimbleweeds bloom in June through August; the ¾ inch greenish-white flowers are borne individually (on long stalks). Although anemone have no petals, the flowers are formed from five showy sepals which surround hundreds of anthers, with hundreds of pistils at the center. Bees, small butterflies, and small flies visit this anemone, but deer and plant-eating insects avoid the plant because it has natural repellants (e.g. protoanemonin) which blister

the mouth and irritate the gut.

For sensitive people, close contact with the plant may cause a rash; however, I have been raising the plant for 20 years or so and have never had a problem. Native Americans used this plant for a number of diseases, as a love potion, and also as protection against witchcraft. However, given that it is considered a moderate poison and that it can cause major GI problems, it should not be experimented with for medical conditions.

Thimbleweeds grow best in partial shade in slightly acid, moist, rich soil. They are very tolerant of drought, full shade, black walnuts, liming, full sun, clay soil, and are generally insect, deer, rabbit, and disease resistant. Reproduction is by seeds which are easy to germinate and the seedlings grow freely. These anemone also form rhizomes which often produce offsets that can be cut off to produce new

plants.

Thimbleweeds release their natural repellent protoanemonin into the surrounding soil where it inhibits rival seed germination and seedling growth especially for legumes. However, I have not noticed any strong zone of inhibition around the plant and grow it freely mixed with most of my other native plants such as asters, *Amsonia*, phlox, ferns, sedges, and May apple.

Consider adding this unusual, tough plant to your garden. For a native wildflower it has a long blooming period, showy flowers, attractive foliage, and a unique fruit head which lasts all fall, winter, and into the spring.

Editor's Note: Hubert Ling is Horticultural Co-Chair of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey. He can be reached at milhubling@verizon.net

Bobcat Expands Grounds Maintenance Lineup with New Commercial Walk-Behind Mowers

Bobcat Company ("Bobcat") is pleased to unveil its all-new WB700 commercial walk-behind mower lineup. First displayed at the 2021 GIE+Expo show, the WB700 is an ultra-maneuverable, powerful solution equipped to tackle tough turf jobs. The WB700 comes in three width options (36", 48", 52") to allow contractors added versatility in rounding out their grounds maintenance equipment lineup.

"Owners will be able to shred grass and tough turf with ease thanks to the ultra-powerful Kawasaki FS series engine, operator-friendly controls, and updated hydraulic transmissions," said Ron Scheffler, senior product manager at Doosan Bobcat North America. "The durability and quality of Bobcat's zero-turn lineup is infused throughout these new commercial walk-behind mowers, and contractors will be able to build a fully rounded-out fleet to tackle any turf job."

Maximize Uptime for your Whole Day, and your Whole Season

The WB700 is uniquely designed with a commercial floating deck, which allows the operator to adjust the height without the need to

unbolt any components and saving significant time. With ease of maintenance in mind, the WB700 comes equipped with a tool-free oil drain and deck access, as well as a handy external oil filter location and easy battery access. The 5-gallon fuel tank means many hours of mowing before a fuel-up is needed.

Experience Superior Comfort and a Commercial-Grade Cut, Job after Job

Thanks to easy-to-use ergonomic controls, the WB700 is built from the ground up to maximize operator comfort, day-in, day-out. With a unique bullhorn design and reliable TufDeck cutting system, the mower allows grass to pop up quickly for an outstanding quality of cut, increasing efficiency with fewer passes.

In addition, the WB700 comes equipped with a hydraulic drive and innovative Hydro-Gear ZT-2800 hydrostatic transaxles, which deliver smoother, simpler operation with heavy-duty torque output and comfortable ground speeds up to 6.5 mph.

Go Anywhere the Toughest Jobs Take You

The WB700 has a 1.5 in. x 2.5 in., 11-gauge

structural tube frame. It also features a 7-gauge engine mounting plate and reinforced box section. The frame accepts a sulky to easily transform the WB700 into a stand-on mower for increased comfort. The 20-inch drive tires provide ample ground clearance to minimize ground disturbance and enable smooth, easy maneuverability on tough terrain.

About Bobcat Company

Since 1958, Bobcat Company has been empowering people to accomplish more. As a leading global manufacturer of compact equipment, Bobcat has a proud legacy of innovation and a reputation based on delivering smart solutions to customers' toughest challenges. Backed by the support of a worldwide network of independent dealers and distributors, Bobcat offers an extensive line of compact equipment, including loaders, excavators, compact tractors, utility products, telehandlers, mowers, attachments, implements, parts, and services. Headquartered in West Fargo, North Dakota, Bobcat continues to lead the industry, all while helping people succeed and build stronger communities and a better tomorrow.

NY DEC Announces Northern Expansion of Southern Pine Beetle

New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) announced that southern pine beetles (SPB) were found farther north than previously documented and in greater numbers, suggesting their range is expanding and populations are on the rise. SPB are destructive forest pests that pose a significant threat to the State's pine forests, particularly pitch pine forests like those found in the Albany Pine Bush and Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

DEC, OPRHP, the Albany Pine Bush, and other partners have been monitoring SPB movement for several years in the areas of the State north of the known infestations in New Jersey and Long Island. Since 2016, SPB had been detected in low numbers in insect traps in the Hudson Valley but the recent increase in trapped beetles may mean they will soon be established north of Long Island.

Trapping efforts in Schunnemunk, Minnewaska, and Taconic State Parks produced SPB numbers only previously seen on Long Island.

Native to the southeastern United States, SPB was first discovered infesting pitch pines on Long Island in 2014. Since that time, it has killed hundreds of thousands of trees on Long Island alone. SPB attack primarily pitch pine and red pine but will attack additional conifers when outbreaks occur. DEC encourages the public to report any signs of SPB that they encounter in pine forests (outside of Long Island) by emailing pictures and location information to foresthealth@dec.ny.gov. The signs of an infestation include discolored needles (yellowing to brownish-red), popcorn-sized clumps of resin called pitch tubes anywhere along the trunk, tiny holes in the bark in a scattershot pattern, and s-shaped galleries under the bark. For more information, visit DEC's Southern Pine Beetle webpage.

Applications Now Available for Therapeutic Garden Grants

Once again, National Garden Bureau (NGB), American Meadows and Sakata Seed America are uniting to provide \$5,000 in grant money for three well-deserving Therapeutic Gardens in North America. In addition, Corona Tools will generously provide a set of quality gardening tools to each of the three winning therapeutic gardens.

National Garden Bureau launched this philanthropic program in 2014 and to date, has given more than \$45,000 to support the growth of therapeutic gardens, furthering its mission to inspire, educate and motivate gardeners and non-gardeners alike.

The application form, and the necessary photos must be submitted to the NGB office by July 1, 2022. A group of horticulture therapy experts will narrow down applications to three finalists. Those three finalists will then be asked to submit a one-minute video featuring their program which will be posted on social media. Voting by the public will be open from September 15-30, 2022. The top vote-getter will receive \$3,000, second and third place will receive \$1,000 each.

For more information please visit: www.ngb.org



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NORTHEAST DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEWS

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Connecticut Department of Agriculture Announces Permanent Protection of 400th Connecticut Farm Contributing to Environmental Sustainability

Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt today celebrated Earth Day and agriculture's commitment to environmental sustainability by visiting Fort Hill Farms in Thompson, CT, to announce the milestone achievement of the state's 400th permanently protected farm.

"Marking this historic milestone on Earth Day highlights the important contributions of agriculture, and our agricultural producers, to ensure that our most valuable resources are protected," said Commissioner Hurlburt. "We are pleased to add Fort Hill Farms to the growing list of farms in the Farmland Preservation Program and thank our federal, state, and local partners who are committed to providing support throughout the process to make it happen."

Permanently protecting prime and important farmland soils ensures a food and fiber producing land resource base for long-term availability of local, fresh farm products. In addition, farmland provides food and cover for wildlife, helps control flooding, protects wetlands and watersheds, and maintains air quality – all contributing to environmental sustainability and biodiversity.

For more information on Connecticut's Farmland Preservation Program, visit www.CTGrown.gov.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Vermont's First 'Turkey-Tick Survey' Finds Many More Turkeys than Ticks

The VT Agency of Agriculture's Environmental Surveillance Program conducted a Lone Star Tick (*Amblyomma americanum*) surveillance effort on harvested wild turkeys in collaboration with VT Fish & Wildlife over Youth Turkey Weekend (4/23 and 4/24) and Opening Day of regular turkey season (5/1) at 6 check stations located around Vermont. Volunteers staffed the stations from at least 8 am to 12 pm on all three days and inspected all reported birds for ectoparasites with hunter permission. Harvest location and hunter tag information was recorded for all birds.

Volunteers inspected about 100 wild turkeys and only one tick was found (in Addison County), a Black-Legged (Deer) Tick, (*Ixodes scapularis*). Most turkeys also had lice. No Lone Star Ticks were recovered from any turkeys.

The study was designed to find Lone Star Ticks. Our previous surveillance efforts, including dragging, flagging, and citizen- and veterinarian-submitted ticks, have produced very few Lone Star Ticks in Vermont, although neighboring states report having them. Wild turkeys are a known host of Lone Star Ticks. These ticks are of interest because they are capable of transmitting diseases of human concern, including ehrlichiosis and alpha-gal syndrome (red meat allergy).

Check stations included those that were as close to areas where we have found any ticks in the past, and an area of Caledonia County that was believed to have a population of Lone Star Ticks in past decades, according to a previous State Entomologist. Selected check stations were located in Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Rutland, Washington, and Windsor Counties.

Questions about the study can be directed to Patti Casey at Patti.Casey@Vermont.gov

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Secretary Fisher Visits Salem County Farm that Grows Asparagus, Distributes Seeds Globally

New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher and other state and local officials kicked off the Jersey Fresh season by visiting Walker Brothers Inc., in Salem County, which grows asparagus as well as other crops, and is known for sending its asparagus seeds across the globe. Jersey Fresh items are now appearing in farmers markets and stores around the state.

"What the Walker Brothers have done with their operation is a superb example of how growers in New Jersey provide produce locally while making an impact globally," Secretary Fisher said. "As temperatures begin to warm, Jersey Fresh asparagus and other early greens are becoming available in supermarkets and farmers markets. The Jersey Fresh brand has a well-earned reputation for peak freshness and we encourage all buyers of food to support the local economy by purchasing Jersey Fresh wherever it is sold."

New Jersey ranks in the top 10 in the U.S. in the production of several crops, including fourth in

asparagus. According to the USDA, in 2021 the New Jersey asparagus crop was valued at \$11 million, and the overall production of fruits and vegetables in New Jersey was valued at approximately \$350 million.

"It's always great to be part of the Jersey Fresh season and we are excited and hopeful for this year," Walker Farms President Scott Walker said. "Along with supplying our local customers, we are proud of the development and progress we have made in recent years with our international seed program."

Walker Brothers is a fifth-generation operation that was established in the 1800s. The farm has over 40 years of experience in fresh market asparagus production, 30 years in asparagus crown production and 25 years in hybrid asparagus seed production and marketing. Along with growing their own asparagus sold in their on-farm market, their green and purple hybrid asparagus varieties are grown on every continent except Antarctica. Within the last two years, trials in 17 countries have been

established to test new hybrids from the Walker Breeding Program.

They also have two international employees, one that travels around the globe to perform educational sessions and marketing for Walker Brothers seeds, and another who is a representative in South America.

Walker Brothers is the only asparagus breeder in the U.S., and one of 10 in the world. The Walker Breeding Program is currently focusing on developing new hybrids that offer high marketable yields, consistent spear size and quality, disease resistance and good flavor, while also looking to the future trends of asparagus production.

Other crops with an early harvest becoming available daily throughout the state include kale, lettuce, radishes, and spinach. Strawberries and beets are expected to be widely available in about two weeks.

Consumers can find what Jersey Fresh produce is in season and where it is being sold by going to FindJerseyFresh.com.

Improving Nutritional Health

(Continued from page 1)

with increased levels of beta carotene, anthocyanin and other phytonutrients.

His team is leveraging the latest genomics tools and techniques to identify the specific gene or gene regions for these health-promoting compounds in germplasm collections of onion and carrot so that they can be passed into elite commercial varieties, benefiting farmers in the field and consumers at the dinner table.

On one front, Simon is working to increase the beta carotene content of carrot varieties now grown, which, along with other carotenoids, ranges from 45 to 200 parts per million. Beta carotene is a key pigment that gives this root crop its appealing orange

color. But when carrots are consumed, the beta carotene in them becomes something even better: a leading dietary source of vitamin A, which is critical to human health and wellbeing. Indeed, vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in 250,000 to 500,000 children worldwide. Vitamin A deficiency in these children also hinders their ability to fight off infection. Anthocyanin, another pigment which gives rise to purple-colored carrots, is credited with antioxidant activity among other benefits.

Onions, which belong to the genus *Allium* along with garlic, are also rich in phytonutrients—quercetin

and thiosulfates among them. Thiosulfates give allium species like onion their pungent aroma and flavor. Cutting or crushing onion and garlic bulbs releases the thiosulfates and exposure to air causes their breakdown into secondary compounds called organosulfates. That's not a bad thing, however. According to Simon, there's some evidence dietary sources of organosulfates help minimize the risk of heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer.

Fructan, a carbohydrate-storing polymer, is also of interest for its health-promoting potential in the human body (though some individuals are sensitive to it and may experience bloating

among other symptoms). Onions are second only to wheat as a leading source of fructan, which the body cannot digest but which helps nourish populations of beneficial intestinal bacteria.

Using genomic mapping techniques, Simon's group is hunting for so-called markers that can flag the presence of the specific gene or genes that ratchet up the production of these phytonutrients in carrot and onion. With these markers figuratively in hand, breeders could use marker-assisted selection to check for the presence of these genes in the progeny of two parent varieties without waiting for the young plants to fully mature, saving time, money and resources.

The researchers are also looking for markers linked to agronomic traits like pest and disease resistance, opening the door to new varieties that reduce production costs for growers and improved nutritional health for consumers.

Editor's Note: The Agricultural Research Service is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency. Daily, ARS focuses on solutions to agricultural problems affecting America. Each dollar invested in agricultural research results in \$17 of economic impact.

Removing daffodil foliage, and moving bulbs?

Daffodil foliage should not be removed until it has turned brown and died. The length of time it takes the foliage to die back depends on bulb type, weather and other factors. The foliage of daffodils usually dies back four to six weeks after flowering. The foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs is performing a vital function, manufacturing food for the underground bulbs. Premature removal of the plant foliage reduces plant vigor and bulb size, resulting in fewer flowers next spring. After the foliage has turned brown, it can be safely cut off at ground level and discarded.

Daffodil bulbs can be dug up and replanted as soon as the foliage dies back (turns brown) in early summer. Daffodils can also be dug up and replanted in fall (October). If you would like to move daffodil bulbs in fall, mark the site when the foliage is present so the bulbs can be located in October. Daffodils perform best when planted in well-drained soils in full sun. The planting site should receive at least six hours of direct sun per day.

National Potato Council Applauds First Shipments of U.S. Fresh Potatoes to Mexico in 25-plus Years

The National Potato Council welcomed the news that the first shipments of U.S. fresh potatoes crossed into Mexico on May 11, 2022. The successful crossings signal the start of Mexico's process to restore full market access for U.S. fresh potatoes after decades of disputes and legal obstructions.

"This is an important moment for the U.S. potato industry and our partners in the federal government who have fought for decades to restore access to this vital market, but we know the work is not over if we are to keep the border open," said NPC President and Washington state potato grower Jared Balcom.

The shipments come after more than 25 years of regulatory and legal obstructions by Mexico, and one year after the Mexican Supreme Court ruled unanimously that U.S. fresh potatoes were legally authorized to be imported.

Mexico is the largest export market for U.S. potatoes and products valued at \$394 million in 2021. Despite the previous restriction to the 26-kilometer border region, Mexico was the second-largest market for fresh potato exports in 2021, accounting for 124,449 metric tons valued at \$60 million last year. The U.S. potato industry estimates that access to the entire country for fresh U.S. potatoes will provide a market potential of \$250 million per year, in five years.

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USDA NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE NEWS

New Jersey Cranberry Yield Leads Nation

Cranberry growers produced over 588 thousand utilized barrels from 2,900 acres.

The 203 barrel per acre yield led the Nation and was the highest since 2016 according to Bruce Eklund, state statistician of the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, New Jersey Field Office. Value of utilized production was \$23.3 million. The average price was \$39.60 per barrel, second Nationally and a dime behind the Nation's price leader Wisconsin.

New Jersey blueberry growers harvested 41.2 million utilized pounds from 7,500 acres. The value of utilized production was \$77.9 million for 2021. Average price was \$1.89 per pound, third Nationally.

New Jersey peach growers harvested 13,690 utilized tons from 3,600 bearing acres. New Jersey ranked first nationally in price at \$2,610 per ton. Value of utilized production was over \$35.7 million.

Record Yield for Apples in Pennsylvania, Utilized Production Up Significantly

Pennsylvania's utilized apple production in 2021 totaled 556 million pounds, up 34% from 2020 according to King Whetstone, director of the USDA's NASS, Northeastern Regional Field Office. Bearing acreage was estimated at 19,000, down 3% from the previous year. The average yield was estimated at a record high 29,300 pounds per acre, up 7,900 pounds from the previous year. Of the total utilized production, 208 million pounds were

for the fresh market and 348 million pounds were for processing. The value of the crop totaled \$130 million, up 42% from the previous season, with an average annual price of 23.3 cents per pound.

In the Commonwealth State, standard sized trees have been replaced with higher density trees and record yields are resulting. Excessive rain caused many to split contributing to more going to processing.

New York Apple Harvest Hindered by September Rains

New York apple utilized production in 2021 totaled 1.33 billion pounds, down 4% from 2020, according to Donnie Fike, state statistician of the USDA's NASS, New York Field Office.

Apple bearing acreage was estimated at 44,000, unchanged from the previous year. The average yield was 30,500 pounds per acre, down 1,000 pounds from the previous year.

Of the total apple utilized production, 753 million

pounds were for the fresh market and 576 million pounds were for processing. The value of the crop totaled \$345 million, up 5% from the previous season, with an average annual price of 25.9 cents per pound.

In New York, heavy rains in September hindered fresh harvest and may have contributed to a lower yield and an increase in the amount allocated to processing.

USDA to Gather Information About Adoption of Conservation Practices

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will mail the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey beginning May 30 to over 3,000 northeastern farmers and ranchers. The new survey is a joint project between NASS and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) aimed at better understanding conservation practice adoption and the role of technical and financial assistance. The survey results will be used to guide the implementation of NRCS programs in the future.

There are two versions of the survey this year – one requesting information on crop conservation practices and one for confined livestock conservation practices. If NASS does

not receive producers' completed surveys by June 13, they may reach out to schedule telephone interviews.

"Gathering information about farmers' and ranchers' motivation for and adoption of conservation practices allows USDA to understand the use and awareness of its programs," said King Whetstone, director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. "Effective implementation of USDA programs helps both producers and conservation efforts."

NASS encourages recipients to respond securely online at agcounts.usda.gov, using the 12-digit survey code mailed with the survey. Producers responding online will now use

NASS's new Respondent Portal. On the portal, producers can complete their surveys, access data visualizations and reports of interest, link to other USDA agencies, get a local weather update and more. Completed questionnaires may also be mailed back in the prepaid envelope provided.

Results from both versions of the survey will be available Sept. 15, 2022, at nass.usda.gov and in NASS's Quick Stats database at quickstats.nass.usda.gov.

All information reported by individuals will be kept confidential, as required by federal law. For assistance with the survey, producers can call the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office at (800) 498-1518.

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While it does not harm humans or animals, it can reduce the quality of life for people living in heavily infested areas.

For more information visit <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/pests-diseases/spotted-lanternfly/>



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