

Gardener News

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December 2022

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No. 236

Are You Ready for Winter?



By Tom Castronovo

Executive Editor/Publisher
Gardener News

The salts sold as ice melters are sodium chloride (rock salt), calcium chloride, potassium chloride, and magnesium chloride. These all work the same way, but work at varying temperatures

and have an impact on the environment.

Factors like ground temperature, wind, and accumulation—how quickly the snow is piling up—affect a snow melt's effectiveness and ice build-up.

The active ingredient in most ice melt products is salt. Salt harms the environment, burns the paws of pets,

leaves residue on driveways, roadways and sidewalks, and rusts snow blowers, vehicles and other equipment. It also kills lawns, shrubs and trees.

When purchasing de-icing material, take special note of the material and melting temperatures.

When it begins to snow or ice, apply the product as soon as you can to prevent

ice from forming. Be sure to shovel and/or plow before the first application.

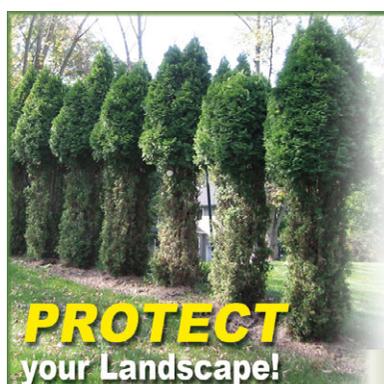
If you have your driveway plowed, make sure the operator uses composite or rubber blades, or if you use a snow blower, raise the blade height.

Ice melters can irritate your skin, so wear gloves and any additional safety

gear specified by the manufacturer.

If you plan to use “pet friendly” ice melts, be sure to lead pets through a “rinse tray” after a walk. Salt irritates their feet.

So which ice melter is best for pavers? All three types of deicers work great at melting ice on pavement at extremely low (Cont. on Page 22)



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Around The Garden

By Tom Castronovo
Gardener News

The Votes Have Been Tallied. Congratulations. And a Tribute!

Next month, the *Gardener News* "Person of the Year" will be revealed.

Gardener News began the annual "Person of the Year" cover story in 2008. *Gardener News* annually bestows our "Person of the Year" award to a person who performs exemplary outstanding service to the agricultural, farming, gardening, landscaping and/or Nursery communities.

Please allow me to reintroduce the inductees who have performed exemplary outstanding service to the agricultural, farming, gardening, landscaping and/or nursery communities.

The past recipients include:

- 2008 – Carl Nordstrom, Executive Director, New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association
- 2009 – New Jersey Senator Nicholas P. Scutari
- 2010 – Professor Jan-Marie Traynor, County College of Morris
- 2011 – New Jersey Governor Chris Christie
- 2012 – Jeannie Geremia, Garden Club of New Jersey
- 2013 – Craig Korb, Executive Chef, The Crab's Claw Inn
- 2014 – New Jersey Senator Christopher 'Kip' Bateman
- 2015 – New Jersey Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Al Murray
- 2016 – Jeff Morey, Producer, Independent Garden Center Show; co-director of Garden Centers of America
- 2017 – Kathleen Gagan, Lady Farmer and Owner of Peonies Envy Nursery and Display Garden
- 2018 – Nelson Lee, President, New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association
- 2019 – David DeFrance II, New Jersey Nurseryman and New Jersey State Board of Agriculture Member
- 2020 – New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher
- 2021 – Raj Sinha, New Jersey Farmer and Owner of Liberty Farms
- 2022 – You will have to wait until the January 2023 edition.

Congratulations

One of New Jersey's great landscape contractors and nursery operations needs special recognition.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Torsilieri Inc., a family-owned company in

Gladstone, Somerset County, NJ, harvesting and delivering the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree.

Dad Carl and sons Guy, Marc, and Dean, and the Torsilieri Inc. crew have meticulously tied up each branch of a giant Norway spruce annually and safely transported it on a one-of-a-kind custom-made trailer to Manhattan, NY. Sadly, Carl and Marc have passed away. Guy's son, George, is now a principal member of the team. A special thank you goes out to the family for allowing me to tag along over the last several years.

This year also marks the 90th anniversary of a Christmas tree gracing the plaza in Rockefeller Center. Erik Pauze, the head gardener for Rockefeller Center, is at the center of the operation. He is extremely instrumental in the scouting, logistics, and nurturing of the perfect specimen tree.

A Tribute

On a sad note, Jim Prevor, founder of Produce Business and CEO of Phoenix Media Network Inc., died from heart failure after being stricken by a heart attack and stroke. He was 61.

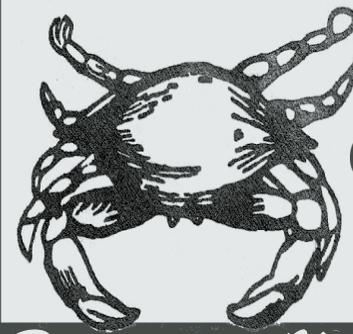
Jim, first and foremost, was a friend. He was well-known and respected, and he was extremely enthusiastic about his work as a thought leader. For almost four decades, Jim served as the voice and visionary icon of the fresh foods market, from the retail as well as foodservice standpoint, notably in produce.

I remember sitting down with Jim and fellow members of the Eastern Produce Council in 2009 to discuss a produce show in New York City. Paul Kneeland, vice president of the Eastern Produce Council, and at the time a featured columnist in the *Gardener News*, asked me to sit on the inaugural committee.

On November 9-10, 2010, the New York Produce Show & Conference launched, in partnership with the Eastern Produce Council. Subsequently Jim created the London Produce Show and the Amsterdam Produce Show.

The New York Produce Show and Conference is now the 2nd largest produce trade show in North America. With 5,000 attendees meeting 400 exhibitors in one day, there's a lot of business to be done in a very short amount of time.

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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A subject that is not brought up enough in America today is the loss of farmland and the precious soils on those properties. This is because we have always had more than enough soil to fit our society's needs.

The United States has always had the capacity to house, feed, and clothe itself without limitations. Our abundance of natural resources has always been astoundingly reliable and helped to make us a powerful country, largely because we could take care of our own needs.

The soils in which we grow our crops vary in so many categories. They suit certain crops around the state by virtue of their makeup in organic materials, nutrient composition, and drainage potential.

Most farmers can tell you loads of information few others realize about the ground they turn to produce the fabulous nursery stock, fruits, vegetables, and so on.

These folks can educate you about whether the soils are heavy or light, sandy or loamy, full of clay, etc., and which crops will do better in some places than in others. They will mention the organic matter and how rich or, in some cases, deficient the ground



NJ Dept. of Agriculture

By Douglas H. Fisher
Secretary of Agriculture

Getting Dirty

is for agriculture.

Good earth is a major indicator of how successful the farmer will be today and in the future.

Not that long ago, I was on a 90-acre farm where all the topsoil was sold off and then the farm was sold without this precious commodity.

The new owner wanted to continue operating but could only attempt to be successful by bringing in truckloads of organic matter to begin growing on the now almost sterile landscape.

It was and continues to be a monumental effort to reclaim soil once it is removed from a farm, not to mention an overwhelmingly expensive effort.

Most farmers, though, strive to be good stewards of the land. Realistically, it is to continue the success of the farm operation so they can take care of their

families. But there's also an altruistic element for the benefit of humanity.

There are, as we all know, places around the globe where lands have been strained to their capacity due to overpopulation or stripped to the pan/bedrock because of greed or political power plays.

People refer to the Mark Twain adage about land prices being high because "they're not making it anymore." Nowhere is this more true than in farming. Good agricultural lands are being gobbled up for housing, industry, warehousing, etc. But it does not have to be this way.

I mention all this because I, along with lots of others, believe that productive soils need to be protected enough to remain productive. That's certainly true on the farms we preserve for

agriculture. However, tolerances must be considered for farmers to continue in the business of farming.

All of us during COVID saw what can happen when supply chains are frayed or severed and we need our fruits and vegetables, good protein, and horticultural materials for our properties. All those things stem from the soil on which we walk.

This brings me to concepts you will hear about from the Department of Agriculture regarding soil protection, agricultural development areas (ADAs), solar arrays on farms, and impervious cover limitations.

All these expressions spring from a desire to ensure that not only those now on this earth will be able to partake in a bountiful future, but those who walk behind us will as well.

Ten years ago, Lester Brown of the World Policy Institute wrote, "Welcome to the new politics of food scarcity. As food supplies tighten, we are moving into a new food era, one in which it is every country for itself. The world is in serious trouble on the food front. But there is little evidence that political leaders have yet grasped the magnitude of what is happening. The progress in reducing hunger in recent decades has been reversed."

In New Jersey, we do understand and want to do our part. It all begins with the land and those who farm it.

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>

December always conjures up images of rushing about for the Holiday season. With cookies to bake, packages to wrap, and family visiting from afar, there is little time to focus on the outdoors, no less the garden. It is a shame, since there are a number of plants that look seasonally fashionable and remain fashionable throughout the winter.

A tree I have always deemed most appropriate for the season is the Coral Bark Japanese Maple or *Acer palmatum* 'Sango-Kaku'. Still unbeknownst to most, its beautiful red stems bring masses of seasonally appropriate color to the Garden!

Maples are a member of the Sapindaceae or Soapwort family, with roughly 132 species found throughout North America, Asia and portions of Europe. The French botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1676-1708) was among a small number of botanists who advocated using a 'genus' for a group of related plants. This concept was furthered by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) who conceived of binomial nomenclature whereby a plant is described by the genus followed by one species name. In



Morris County Park Commission

By Bruce Crawford
Horticultural Manager

A Seasonably Fashionable Maple for the Holidays

1700 Tournefort coined the genus *Acer*, most likely from the Latin *Acuti* meaning sharp. The genus was properly described in 1753 by none other than Linnaeus! The pointed leaves typical to the genus were most likely the inspiration for the name although Roman soldiers were known to craft sharp pointed spears from Maple.

Japanese Maples are found throughout the countries of Japan, Korea, China and southeastern Russia. The species was validly described and named in 1784 by the Swedish physician and botanist, Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828). During the years of 1775-1776, Thunberg visited Japan where he exchanged medical treatments with local physicians and collected plants. The species name is from the Latin *Palmātus* meaning palm-like or handlike. The name

aptly describes the foliage which features a palm-like portion at the leaf base with 5-9 fingerlike pointed projections. The common name 'Maple' has its roots in the Old English *mapulder* for Maple Tree.

Acer palmatum 'Sango-Kaku' has incredibly ornamental bark on new growth, although it does not reach its peak of interest until December and the cold of winter. The cultivar name means Coral Tower, as *Sango* means sea coral and *Kaku* means upward growing. When the plant is young, it has a strongly upward or coral-like growth habit, which slowly transitions into a gracefully spreading habit of 30' wide by 20' tall with maturity.

Throughout the summer the 2" wide leaves retain a light green color, before igniting into a warm yellow with highlights of

orange for autumn. However, it is with the onset of cooler weather and leaf drop that the real show begins. The stems from the past eight or so years of growth turn a brilliant red, with the most intense coloration appearing on the growth from the past 3-4 years. It truly appears like a tree you would expect to see surrounded by Elves at the North Pole, although it is only hardy in zones 5-8. The color looks even more intense when provided with a backdrop of green, the complimentary color to red. Consider planting evergreen plants like American Holly, Arborvitae or Eastern Red Cedar as a backdrop. The glow of the stems lasts until the onset of warmer weather in spring, when the stems once again return to a more subdued red.

Plants will grow well in full sun, providing they receive protection

from late day winter sun that can result in bark splitting. Since they are typically understory plants in the wild, trees will also thrive where they can receive the filtered sunlight of woodlands. Providing a layer of mulch or an attractive groundcover beneath will aid in keeping the soil cooler and the moisture more uniform.

Acer palmatum 'Sango-Kaku' is a wonderful plant for the garden, providing attractive foliage throughout the warmer months and a brilliant accent of red stems for December and the winter months to follow. Make a note this December to add this Maple to your Holiday 'must have' list. It will make your garden seasonably fashionable for many winters to come. Happy Holidays!

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



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

Holiday Horticulture: Add Beauty and Color to the Festive Season

With the anticipation of the holiday season, plants such as poinsettia, amaryllis, and Christmas cactus are everywhere. They brighten our homes during the darkest time of the year and are great gifts for holiday hosts or the plant lover in your life.

The following tips will ensure these festive flowers last throughout the seasonal celebrations.

Poinsettia

Euphorbia pulcherrima, found on the hillsides of southern Mexico, is a perennial shrub reaching heights of 13 ft in the wild. Identified by its bright red pigmentation, what some may interpret as "flower petals" are not actually flowers at all but modified leaves called bracts, which change color depending on light conditions. The actual flowers are the tiny yellow florets in the center of the colorful bracts. Poinsettia breeders have released compact hybrids in a range of colors, from winter white and cream to assorted shades of dusty pinks and deep reds with flecks of white. Offbeat varieties like those with streaking variegation, bract shapes displaying pointy leaf margins, and puckered or ruffled textures can add a festive look.

Instead of throwing out your poinsettia after the holidays, plants can be saved and the bracts can be induced to "re-bloom" year after year. To do this, place the poinsettia in a dark location, such as a closet or under a box, from the hours of 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. in uninterrupted darkness for 14 hours a day. Start the process around the fall equinox and allow the plant only 10 hours of light a day until Thanksgiving. This will induce the bracts to change color. As for general care, the soil should be moist. Water the plants when the top inch is dry and keep them in a sunny, draft-free area of the home.

Pro Tip: When bringing a new plant home, remove the decorative foil to prevent the plant from sitting in water as this can lead to root rot. Alternately, place the poinsettia in an attractive pot.

Christmas Cactus

Schlumbergera spp. is a long-lived perennial houseplant native to the coastal rainforests of Brazil. It is an epiphytic plant, meaning it can be found growing on shady, mossy tree trunks. Although not a true cactus, as the name implies, the Christmas cactus is a succulent and can endure longer stretches between waterings. The plant's environment of origin hints at the best growing practices

for Christmas cactus. Creating a cool, humid environment will help the plant to thrive and encourage flower production. Keep the plant away from heating vents and in an area with indirect light. Water the plant thoroughly and wait until the top inch of the soil is dry before watering again.

To determine whether a plant is a true Christmas cactus, a hybrid of the Thanksgiving cactus, *S. truncata*, or an Easter cactus, *Rhipsalidopsis gaertnerii*, one can look at the "leaves," which are actually modified stems called cladodes. The cladodes of the Thanksgiving cactus have very pointed and "claw-like" margins while the Christmas cactus has smoother, scalloped margins, and the edges of the Easter cactus are rounded with a raised vein in the middle of the cladode.

Pro Tip: To create a humid environment, simply place the potted plant on a shallow, pebble-filled dish where water hits just below the top of the pebbles.

Amaryllis

Hybrids of *Hippeastrum spp.* are another tropical plant native to South America. It is popular around the holidays and praised for its large flowers borne on an elongated flower stalk. With colors ranging from red and white to salmon, rose, and even bicolor, the flower stalk can produce two to six large, trumpet-shaped flowers, making this stately plant a festive gift.

Planting amaryllis bulbs for the holidays is simple: order bulbs from a reputable bulb company and use pots with a drainage hole and well-draining potting mix. Since they like to be kept slightly pot-bound, plant bulbs in pots that are about one-inch larger than the bulb itself. Before planting the bulb, firmly pack moist potting mix in the bottom of the pot, leaving the top half of the bulb exposed and allowing one-inch head space below the rim of the pot. Water thoroughly and keep soil moist until the flower stem emerges. A good indicator of watering needs is to let the top inch of the soil dry out between each watering. Bulbs will grow best when placed in a bright, south-facing window and temperatures range from 65-70°F. Flowers will bloom roughly six to eight weeks after potting. Once the plant blooms, place it in a cooler location to prolong bloom time.

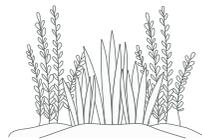
Pro Tip: Larger amaryllis bulbs will produce more flowers creating that 'wow' factor.

Happy growing this holiday season!

Editor's Note: This month's contribution was written by Angela Monaghan, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Coordinator, Middlesex County.



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LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY NEWS

Spice Containers Pose Contamination Risk During Food Preparation

A government-funded study on the potential for cross-contaminating kitchen surfaces with pathogens during food preparation has pointed to an unlikely culprit for spreading sickness: spice containers

Detailing findings in the *Journal of Food Protection*, Donald Schaffner, a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Food Science at the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences who co-authored the study in collaboration with North Carolina State University colleagues concluded that when consumers are preparing meals, spice containers can easily become cross-contaminated with health-threatening microorganisms. Cross contamination is the process by which microbes are transferred from one substance or object to another, often with harmful effects.

The study was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"In addition to more obvious surfaces like cutting boards, garbage can lids and refrigerator handles, here's something else that you need to pay attention to when you're trying to be clean and sanitary in your kitchen," Schaffner said. "Our research shows that any spice container you touch when you're preparing raw meat might get cross-contaminated. You'll want to be conscious of that during or after meal preparation."

Foodborne illnesses such as non-typhoidal *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* account for nearly 2 million infections per year in the U.S., according to studies by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A significant portion of those illnesses are derived from USDA-regulated food products, including chicken, turkey, beef, pork, and game, according to the Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration, a group formed in 2011 by the CDC, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Scientists said they believe proper handling of food – including adequate cooking, consistent handwashing and sanitizing of kitchen surfaces and utensils – can combat cross-contamination.

"The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence and degree of cross-contamination across a variety of kitchen surfaces during a consumer meal preparation event," said Schaffner, who also is the Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station's Extension Specialist in Food Science

Researchers monitored the behavior of 371 adults cooking an identical turkey burger recipe in several kitchens of various sizes,

ranging from small apartment-style kitchens to larger teaching kitchens, in extension centers and food banks. Participants prepared a meal consisting of raw ground turkey patties with a seasoning recipe, along with a prepackaged salad. To simulate the movement of a pathogen across a kitchen, researchers inoculated the meat ahead of time with a bacteriophage known as "MS2" to serve as a safe tracer. Bacteriophages are viruses that infect bacteria and have no effect on humans.

Participants weren't informed that researchers would be examining their food safety behaviors until after they had prepared the meal. Once the meal had been prepared, researchers swabbed kitchen utensils, cleaning areas and kitchen surfaces to test for the presence of the MS2 tracer. Based on observations of participants' behavior during cooking, researchers decided to take samples from some new categories of surfaces, such as spice containers and sink faucet handles.

The researchers found the most frequently contaminated objects were spice containers, with about 48 percent of the samples showing evidence of MS2 contamination. This prevalence of contamination was significantly different from many other surfaces sampled. Cutting boards and trash can lids were the second and third most contaminated. Faucet handles were the least contaminated object studied.

"We were surprised because we had not seen evidence of spice container contamination before," Schaffner said. "Most research on the cross-contamination of kitchen surfaces due to handling of raw meat or poultry products has focused on kitchen cutting boards or faucet handles and has neglected surfaces like spice containers, trash bin lids and other kitchen utensils. This makes this study and similar studies from members of this group more comprehensive than previous studies."

Researchers involved included Benjamin Chapman, professor and department head, Agricultural and Human Sciences, and Lee-Ann Jaykus, the William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor, Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences, both of North Carolina State University; Margaret Kirchner, Savana Everhart, Lindsey Doring, Caitlin Smits, Jeremy Faircloth, Minh Duong, Rebecca Goulter, Lydia Goodson, Lisa Shelley and Ellen Thomas Shumaker, all of NC State University; Sheryl Cates of RTI International; Christopher Bernstein of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; and Aaron Lavalley, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This article first appeared in Rutgers Today.

Rutgers NJAES Research Puts Autumn Leaves to Good Use

Autumn leaves brighten and beautify our communities before falling in abundance as fall advances. About 300,000 tons of shade tree leaves are collected by municipalities across New Jersey every fall season.

In 1988, the state of New Jersey banned the dumping of shade tree leaves in landfills and combustion facilities. Existing landfill capacity is limited, and combustion destroys a valuable resource that can otherwise benefit soils in the Garden State.

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) was called upon to develop best practices for on-farm uses of shade tree leaves. Over the last 35 years, many field and greenhouse studies have been conducted by Rutgers Cooperative Extension horticulturalists, agronomists and soil scientists in an effort to understand the chemical composition of shade tree leaves, their effect on soil properties and potential uses as an agricultural resource. A review and summary of the research findings were recently published in *HortTechnology*.

Numerous ways were found to use community collected shade tree leaves as a beneficial resource on local farms. Leaves used as a mulch on the soil surface in orchards and mulching of vine crops provide excellent weed control without herbicides, help to conserve soil moisture, prevent soil splash onto fruit, and protect against soil erosion.

The chemistry of shade tree leaves suggests they have the potential to cause a nitrogen deficiency in crops in the first year of use, but this problem can be avoided by good crop rotation and timely application of fertilizer. In the second and third year of use, the organic residues from leaves supply valuable amounts of essential plant nutrients for crop production. In most years, plant growth and crops yields were enhanced with use of shade tree leaves. The years of field research helped to correct the myth that land application of shade tree leaves would cause soils to become acid. Instead, soil test data exhibited a slight upward trend in pH following repeated annual applications.

Besides keeping this organic material out of landfills, use in agriculture helps build community relationships between urban centers and farmers. In the process, nutrients are recycled to restore fertility and soil organic matter content and soil health is enhanced.

It is important to note that farmers accepting this material for use as a soil amendment want nothing in the bag except shade tree leaves. Thus, landscape workers and homeowners who rake and collect the leaves have a role in excluding trash, including items like food wrappers, bottles and cans.

Considering these NJAES research findings, responsible land application of collected shade tree leaves should be considered by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection when regulating the use of shade tree leaves.

Joseph Heckman, extension specialist in the Department of Plant Biology.

Like always, there are two sides to each story. What am I talking about? As I drive around New Jersey, I see big piles of leaves from lawns at the curb waiting for pickup.

By now you have already started to struggle with the many leaves on your lawn. What are you supposed to do with them? Let's explore some options together.

This summer's drought probably accelerated the leaf dropping cycle of trees. The beautiful season of fall foliage and many colored trees seemed to be disturbed a bit and not as colorful as usual. I went on vacation in New England the week of September 26th and was disappointed that I saw very little color. Some friends went the same weekend to Niagara Falls, no sign of great fall foliage, too bad! I guess it was 1-2 weeks too early. Mother Nature and deciduous trees have been working together for centuries. Deciduous is defined as "shedding its leaves annually." We cannot stop this process unless we are willing to get rid of every tree on our property. That would



Turf 's Up

By Todd Pretz
Professional Turf Consultant

Should I leave my leaves or not?

be harsh and you would still get leaves blowing into your yard from your neighbors anyway. We remove leaves traditionally because we want a "clean" looking yard and they can really build up to large piles if left alone. They become slippery and dangerous when wet, they blow into your garage, and they track into the house and car stuck to your shoes.

Usually we spend hours blowing or raking up leaves to get to the curb for DPW to take them away. Some of us hire professionals for fall clean-ups because this job can become overwhelming. The obvious reason to remove leaves from your lawn is that they can mat down and kill areas of the lawn if left there

until spring. Leaves left on the lawn for many years will decompose and contribute to slightly acidifying the soil. If your leaves are not too deep and you use a mulching mower, this can help add moisture and organic matter back into your soil which is good.

Many new developments are built on vast forests that are cleared for homes. This soil has had leaves dropping for many years and sometimes the soil pH is too low for healthy grass growth. Have you ever noticed new homes built on forest lands have lawns that do not establish very well? If the builder is not willing to spend some money on quality topsoil, new sod or grass planting

will suffer from low pH soil values.

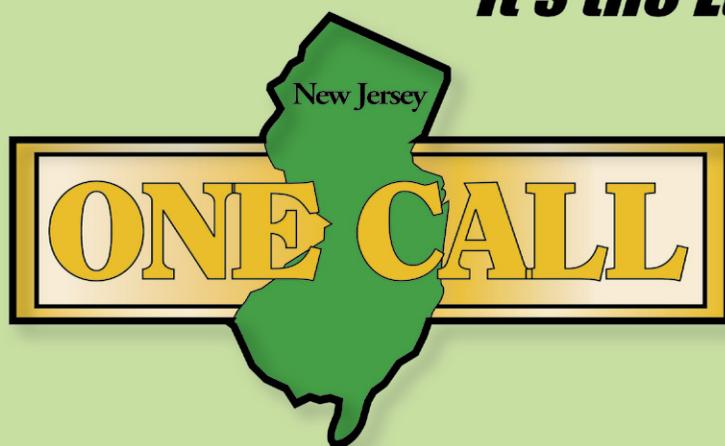
Recently new ideas on leaf removal have emerged. Why remove the leaves when they contribute greatly to our landfills? The methane gas build up is not good for the environment. Piling up leaves on the curb allows more waste to enter our waterways. Why remove the leaves since birds can find food in them? Why not let the organic matter return to the soil? Well, if you want a good, healthy lawn, you must remove some level of leaves since heavy matting can kill large portions of your lawn. It would be impossible to reverse this trend of beneficial trees dropping their leaves since they can kill your lawn.

Millions of trees were here before we started growing lawns. If you do not remove leaves from your mulch beds, more insects and critters can harbor in the leaf litter and potentially get into your home. Remember after some long-term winter snowfall cover you see small voles rummaging through the grass surface, perhaps leading into your home since it is warm.

To leave or not to leave leaves (is that a pun?) on your lawn is your choice, unless your local municipal authority prohibits it. If you want a healthy growing lawn, unless you use a mulching mower for your last month of cutting, excessive amounts of leaves really need to be cleared from your lawn. Time to put the mower away, winter is on the way.

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

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Hello *Gardener News* readers! I am Bob Andrzejczak and I am the State Executive Director (SED) for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in NJ. I want to thank *Gardener News* for allowing me a monthly column to discuss all that the FSA has to offer and how we help our farming community.

Growing up in Cape May County, I was introduced to agriculture at a young age. My grandparents lived next to a farm and I spent a lot of time exploring the fields and eventually making friends with the farmer. As I got older, that friendship turned into an opportunity to learn and help on the farm. It was easily the hardest job I ever had. Through that experience I developed a great work ethic and an appreciation for agriculture.

After high school, I joined the Army. During my second deployment, my convoy was attacked and a grenade was thrown at my truck, leading to the amputation of my left leg. There were many injuries that day, but thankfully we all survived.

I spent the next two years recovering in Washington. During that time, I received a remarkable amount of support from home.



USDA Farm Service Agency

By Bob Andrzejczak
State Executive Director

Helping Our Farming Community

That support motivated me to get better and gave me a new mission: to give back to my community.

When I made it home, I did exactly that by joining multiple community-based organizations and volunteering. I had made an impression on state leaders and was approached with an opportunity to fill a vacancy in the New Jersey General Assembly. Without hesitation I accepted, and knew that this would be my way of giving back to the people who supported me during the toughest time of my life.

While serving in the Assembly, my passion for agriculture was reignited when I became Chairman of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. The committee had been neglected and not given proper attention for many years. I changed that

by regularly going out into the fields and meeting with farmers to find out their needs. After a brief term as State Senator, I lost my election and began looking for other opportunities to serve.

Little did I know, the agriculture community that I cared so deeply for had not forgotten me. With a vacancy in the FSA SED position, the community came together and gave endorsements on my behalf. It was incredibly humbling and something I will never forget. In February of 2022, I was sworn in as the NJ SED.

From day one I pledged to take care of our farmers and ensure they receive the assistance they need. Farmers face difficult challenges every day. We continue to lose multi-generational farms to developers and to major corporations who turn pristine

farmland into warehouses. However, FSA is here to help!

FSA's mission is to provide effective and efficient programs to beginning farmers, multi-generational farmers, and everyone in-between. FSA is a safety net during hard times with programs like NAP. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program provides financial assistance to farmers who grow crops that are not covered by traditional insurance. FSA also has many low interest loan programs to help farmers grow their operations, purchase a new farm, or make emergency repairs caused by natural disasters.

Some farmers may be unsure how to access these programs. At NJ FSA, we pride ourselves on the level of customer service that we provide. We have six offices

throughout the state, each staffed with helpful team members, with locations in Vineland, Woodstown, Columbus, Freehold, Hackettstown, and Frenchtown. Our team members can also come to you!

The FSA team is here to help. We are dedicated to our farmers and to ensuring that NJ remains the "Garden State". I look forward to continuing to work closely with our farmers and building relationships. If you have any questions or would like for the FSA team to visit your operation to see how we can help, please do not hesitate to call or text me personally at 609-226-2450 or email me at bob.andrzejczak@usda.gov. **Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!**

Editor's Note: Bob Andrzejczak is the State Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in New Jersey. He can also be reached at 609-587-0104 during regular business hours. For more information, please visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/New-Jersey/sed-biography/index>

Now that the bulk of the 2022 harvest has been completed, it is time to start planning for the 2023 growing season. As long as the ground stays above freezing and is free of snow cover, December is an excellent time to get soil tests completed.

Hopefully, a cover crop or sufficient crop residue is in place to keep the soil from eroding, but if it is not, there is still time to establish a fast growing crop such as winter wheat or rye. Not only will a cover crop protect the soil from erosion, it can also add some nutrients to the soil. When we get into the spring season, as the cover crop grows, it will help to pull some moisture out of the soil. This is always helpful, because in many years we need all the help we can get to dry out the soil, allowing it to be worked up and prepared for planting.

When testing soil in the fall, the three obvious areas of focus are PH, Potassium, and Phosphorus. If the PH is lower than the level needed for the next season's crop, lime can be applied almost immediately. In fact, most liming materials take some time to work, so it



The Town Farmer

By Peter Melick
Agricultural Producer

Managing Soil Fertility

is advantageous to make that application sooner rather than later. Here in New Jersey, we generally have a choice of limes, which comes down to those that are either high in Magnesium (high Mag), or high in Calcium (high Cal). Because of this, it is a good idea to also test for other micronutrients when doing soil tests. This way, you can make an informed decision on what type of lime to apply. And depending on the crops that will be grown, that will also influence the type of lime to be selected. For example, certain apple varieties are susceptible to a physiological disorder that is exacerbated by low Calcium levels. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain

high levels of Calcium in both the soil and foliage of apple trees. Especially in crops such as tree fruit where the soil is not worked every year, it is important to get the needed lime applied as early as possible so that it has a chance to get down into the root zone of the trees.

When evaluating Phosphorus and Potassium (or P and K), a soil analysis is again necessary to determine how much of those nutrients are already present. Once those levels are known, it is time to dovetail those numbers with the levels that are required to produce the next season's crop. And if one detail needs to be stressed here, it is that different crops have vastly

different nutrient requirements. For example, a crop such as spinach will need three times the amount of Potassium as snap beans. And asparagus will need twice as much Phosphorus as cucumbers. And while it is not as important to get these two nutrients on as early as lime, it is still helpful to do it as early as possible. There is no real risk of losing either of these two nutrients if they are applied during the winter months, unless they are spread directly on top of a snow cover. But if time is of the essence in the Spring (and it usually is), any task that can be completed over the course of the winter is one less thing that has to be done when it gets busy after the weather breaks

in the Spring.

It can also be beneficial to check for micronutrient levels as well. Boron, Calcium, Magnesium, Sulphur, Copper, Iron, and Manganese should also be checked so that they can be adjusted if necessary. It is interesting to note that we never used to have an issue with Sulphur levels here in New Jersey. But with less pollution in the air, that translates to less Sulphur Dioxide in the rain, which translates to lower Sulphur levels in the soil. I guess we shouldn't complain about having to apply Sulphur! Happy Holidays!

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.

In many parts of the region, we are experiencing nearly peak fall color.

Our composition of fall color includes many of our great native trees such as sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*; red maple, *Acer rubrum*; many hickory species, *Carya*; the American sycamore, *Platanus americanus*; *Fagus grandifolia*, American beech; tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera* and one of my favorites that parades under many vernacular names including tupelo, sour gum, pepperidge and bettlebung, *Nyssa sylvatica*.

In our native mixed deciduous woods it will be found growing on slopes, but also along water ways where it can tolerate wet soils. In Cape Cod or on Martha's Vineyard where it is called bettlebung, it is often found in thickets on the edge of lakes and ponds. It is called bettlebung there because "bettle" was the name for a mallet and "bung" was the cork in the side of the cask. Both were made from the wood of *Nyssa sylvatica*. *Nyssa* has a vast native range from Canada to Florida and west to Louisiana and Texas, and it even extends down into Mexico.

Fall color can vary from yellows to a suffusion of orange and yellow, to an



Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

By Andrew Bunting
Vice President of Horticulture

Tupelo, Sour Gum, Pepperidge and Bettlebung

amazing fire engine red. Of all the trees with exceptional fall color, the sour gum's color is the most intense. In our region it is also one of the first trees to start to exhibit fall color.

Nyssa sylvatica has an interesting transformation over the course of its life. For the first 30-40 years, when it is young, it is fairly pyramidal in habit, but over time it becomes a fairly tall, towering tree with a decent spread and the upper branches become twisted. At maturity it can grow to over 100 feet tall, with the national champion in Louisiana being over 140 feet tall.

Many great selections of *Nyssa sylvatica* have been made for exceptional form and fall color. In my front yard I have 'Wildfire' which has a very pyramidal habit in its youth. As the leaves emerge in the spring, they have flushes of scarlet and then in the fall the foliage is a

vibrant red. Green Gable™ also has fantastic red fall color, and like most of the selections of the sour gum makes an excellent street tree. This is particularly so with Green Gable™ because it is more upright than wide at maturity, reaching 50 feet tall with a spread of 25 feet. Because of all its attributes, this selection is receiving the 2023 Gold Medal Plant Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. A complete list of Gold Medal plants can be found online at the PHS website. Red Rage® has a strongly pyramidal form like 'Wildfire'. In the fall the foliage turns vivid oranges before turning to red. 'Zydeco Twist' is an interesting form with contorted branches.

Nyssa sylvatica is a great native tree that also supports ecological functions. In the late summer it will be covered in an abundance of small, fleshy, blue to black

fruits that are an important food source for migrating birds, especially robins and some mammals. In the spring and fall I often see migrating warblers perched in my *Nyssa*.

There are a few cultural considerations to be mindful of when cultivating *Nyssa*. Transplanting or planting is best in the spring. Because they have a taproot, they will need the entire growing season to recover from planting and to start re-establishing a root system. Many *Nyssa* are grafted so there are likely to be "suckers" from the understock that will emerge at the base of the tree. These can simply be pruned off. Sour gums are tolerant of many kinds of soils and soil conditions, from city and urban conditions to literally growing in standing water. They are one of the most adaptable of all the trees. Best fall color and fruiting

will occur in full sun.

They combine beautifully with a backdrop of evergreen such *Thuja* 'Green Giant' and can be planted with many fall interest shrubs including winterberry holly, *Ilex verticillate*, and Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet'.

Editor's Note: Andrew Bunting is Vice President of Horticulture 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>

NJ Botanical Garden Events

NJBG welcomes visitors to its annual Holiday Open House on December 1-4, a glittering and colorful celebration of "A Holly Jolly Holiday." It's sure to get your season off to a great start! And to get the New Year going in beautiful, healthy and historic style, be sure to join the First Day Hike and Skylands Manor tours on January 1, 2023.

The New Jersey State Botanical Garden is open every day, and Garden admission is always free. Parking is also free. NJBG/Skylands is located on Morris Road in Ringwood, New Jersey. For more information, please call 973-962-9534 or visit njbg.org.

Toro Launches New Home Lawn Care Equipment

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Available to consumers in spring 2023, the new robotic, battery-powered mower represents the latest in smart, connected technology for homeowners and their yards.

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Toro is also thrilled to introduce consumers to its first-ever lifestyle product, the Flex-Force® Impulse Endeavor Inverter. This 330W inverter with a peak 400W capacity is designed to power electronic devices or be used as a portable power source to recharge customers' most valuable equipment.

NEW Attachment Capable Trimmer System

Homeowners can now take on all their lawn care projects with Toro's new 60V Max* Attachment Capable Trimmer powered by the Flex-Force Power System. The 60V Max Attachment Capable system's versatile power head can also be used with a number of tool attachments — including a string trimmer, cultivator, stick edger, pole saw or pole hedge trimmer — to make quick work of any lawn care job.

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For more information on these exciting new homeowner products from Toro, please visit Toro's website at <https://flexforce.toro.com/>

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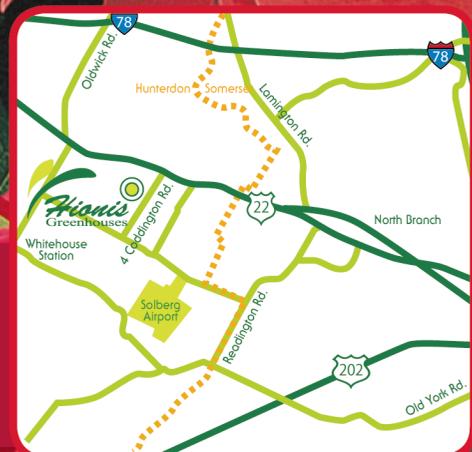
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Happy holiday season to all! It is the time of year when I look back at all we have done during the year, and I'm amazed at the diverse ways that the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association interacted with our industry and community.

You see, during the year, we are in the midst of the chaos (just like most contractors are) and just making sure to get everything done. But when I look back and see all the accomplishments and strides we have made, and see the whole picture, it always makes me thankful. The following are a few of those that I am most honored to be a part of!

Membership meetings in 2022 are mostly back to pre-pandemic frequency, but as the year continued, they continued to grow in attendance. Luckily, many of our meetings are held outdoors and therefore people are generally more comfortable. The meetings we held have had excellent speakers and topics. From weed and pest control to paver manufacturer tours, important updates on the "dirty dirt laws" to money saving employee retention credits, and a two-part series on knowing your numbers, there have been meeting topics that were valuable to all members.

Our service project was performed at Wyckoff Fire Engine Co. #2, which took



The NJLCA Today

By Gail Woolcott
Executive Director

A Time of Reflection

an area that housed a flagpole and dedication bricks and turned it into an area of serene reflection in front of the firehouse. The completed project includes two benches, a raised paver patio with steps, lighting and an amazing water feature dreamt up by NJLCA Board Member Rich Andreu. The water feature consists of two fire hydrants spilling water like a pondless waterfall in a basin. The gratefulness of the first responders and firefighters for this beautiful area to rest and reflect was worth the challenging work completed by the five member companies that came together to install the project and more than ten donors of supplies.

In the legislative arena, we had many interactions with our representatives, senators and their offices. Whether it be leaf blower or gas-powered lawn equipment bans or temporary worker visas, landscape professional licensing or snow service contractor rights, tax credits or duplicative state

and municipal registrations, NJLCA continually watches local, regional, state and federal issues to ensure our members are getting a fair opportunity to do what they do best, and that their customers are protected from unprofessional bad actors that purport to represent the outdoor living industries.

Earlier this year, the 2022 Landscape New Jersey Trade Show & Conference broke records for attendance, and we filled classrooms with contractors eager to learn and earn their recertification credits. To keep our attendees at the top of their game, we help them keep up with industry standards and learn the latest best practices. Attendance in these sessions prove that the outdoor living and landscape industry want to be the best and increase their professionalism. The next show will be held on March 1, 2023, at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, NJ.

The NJLCA trade shows

and golf outing benefit our scholarship program. This year we were able to give away over \$7500 in scholarships once again. These scholarships help our members pay for their family members' education, as well as help to build an educated and professional workforce for the outdoor living and green industries.

Then the NJLCA hosted its 2nd annual Northeast Outdoor Industry Showcase (formerly NGIS). The show's demo area was a hit, with contractors from NJ, NY and PA trying their hand at new equipment, including battery powered mowers, remote control excavators and drone pesticide application sprayers.

Finally, we are so excited for our upcoming Holiday Gala and Landscape Achievement Awards Dinner on December 13th. This year we are having a 1970's theme and planning on partying on down! For the awards program we are completely switching up the format, and guests can

expect to spend more time networking and having a great time together celebrating the amazing projects that our members create throughout the year.

Take a few moments today to look back on all you have done this year and be thankful for the opportunities you have had. I wish you only joy and prosperity this holiday season and am looking forward to another momentous year of mayhem in the office, creating amazing events and opportunities in 2023! We are always searching for great programming, so if you have any ideas, speakers, or topics you'd like to see us cover, please reach out any time! Have a wonderful December and New Year's celebration!

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.

USDA Opens Registration for the 2023 Agricultural Outlook Forum

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that registration is now open for the 99th annual Agricultural Outlook Forum (AOF), USDA's largest and premier annual event. The two-day event will be held in-person at the Crystal City Gateway Marriott on February 23-24, 2023, and all sessions will be livestreamed on a virtual platform.

The 2023 Forum will feature a keynote address by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, a presentation on the 2023 agricultural economy by USDA's Chief Economist Seth Meyer, a plenary panel of distinguished guest speakers, and 30 breakout sessions organized by agencies across USDA and covering a range of timely issues impacting the agriculture and food sector.

More than one hundred government, industry, and academic leaders will share insights on a

wide array of topics including commodity and food price outlooks, U.S. and global agricultural trade developments, supply chain disruptions, and innovations to mitigate impacts of climate change.

Participants can attend the Agricultural Outlook Forum in person or virtually. Registration is required for both virtual and in-person attendance. There is no cost to attending the Forum virtually.

To view the 2023 Forum program and register, visit the USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum website at <https://www.usda.gov/oce/ag-outlook-forum>

About USDA's Outlook Forum

USDA's Agricultural Outlook Forum began in 1923 to distribute and interpret information

developed through economic forecasting to farmers so they had the tools to read market signals and avoid producing beyond demand. Since then, the event has evolved into a unique platform where key stakeholders from the agricultural sector in the United States and around the world come together every year to discuss current and emerging topics and trends in the sector. More than 4,500 people attended the 2022 virtual Forum.

The Agricultural Outlook Forum, which is organized by USDA's Office of the Chief Economist together with other USDA agencies, is independent of commercial interests and aims to facilitate information sharing among stakeholders and generate the transparency that supports more, better, and fairer markets for producers and consumers alike.

Impacts On Lettuce Supply

There has been recent attention on the limited supplies of lettuce and leafy greens. The supply issue has been largely attributed to crop damage associated with an aggressive pest and disease complex of INSV and soil-borne diseases.

What is INSV or thrips-vectored Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus? Lettuce fields are infected by INSV via thrips migrating from infected host plants. Plants infected by INSV can have dark spotting and yellowing, which resembles the effects of sunburn on the leaves. Another plant disease, Pythium wilt (PW), often accompanies INSV infections and causes the plant to wilt or collapse making this truly a complicated pest/disease issue for farmers.

In 2022, disease pressure was exacerbated by unseasonably warm weather stretches which caused prolonged stress on the plant making the lettuce more susceptible to disease impacts.

But there is hope for solutions. Through the Grower Shipper Association's (GSA) INSV/PW Task Force established in 2021, scientists, farm advisors and farmers are working jointly to learn more about this disease complex and determine preventative and curative control methods. And the results so far seem encouraging.

One of the best ways to control plant diseases is via varietal tolerance. Through the GSA Task Force, researchers are assessing disease resistance of lettuce and some initial findings were presented at an industry forum on November 3. Early data revealed that while Pythium Wilt was present in all 53 lettuce varieties studied in the trial, approximately 20% were asymptomatic with no discernable damages to the plant above the soil surface. And 7.5% of the varieties assessed were asymptomatic, showing no signs of discoloration or wilting. Researchers shared that when there is a co-infection, namely the plant is infected with both Pythium Wilt and INSV, the lettuce plant will almost always show symptoms.

However, the overall conclusion that some currently available varieties performed relatively well when judged for tolerance against wilting from Pythium Wilt and browning and yellowing from INSV suggests that when farmers are making planting selections (especially for late season romaine crops) there are better performing varieties for mitigating disease effects.

Another area of importance in combating INSV is thrips control through cultural practices. Farmers are encouraged to reduce weed pressure in around their farms since weeds are hosts and provide harborage for thrips. State and local agencies are also needed to lower thrips populations by controlling weeds along highways and roadways. And residents and business owners in our community can help reduce disease incidence too by controlling weeds in their yards and landscaping areas.

In addition to varietal assessment and identification of cultural prevention practices, the GSA Task Force is also examining treatment strategies and treatment efficacy trials and will continue to conduct grower education and outreach programs specific to these diseases.

We understand frustration concerning recent limitations on lettuce supplies originating from the Salinas region. However, GSA wants to reassure consumers that farmers are resilient and they have consistently found solutions to the production challenges Mother Nature often presents. While we have already seen progress, through the combined knowledge of farmers and scientists, we are optimistic that successful strategies will be found to combat this pest/disease complex to ensure lettuce supplies reach consumers.

By The Grower-Shipper Association of Central California



In the Chef's Corner

By Andy Lagana
Chef

Holiday Pheasant Stuffed with Locally Grown Kale

Greetings *Gardener News* family. I am excited that the holidays are underway. It is one of my favorite times of year, and as a tradition, I enjoy preparing certain dishes for family and friends.

One of my go-to recipes for the season is holiday pheasant stuffed with locally grown kale, which is easy to make and requires minimal clean up.

The main ingredient for this dish is two large pheasant breasts. Common pheasants, also known as ring-necked pheasants, can be found throughout New Jersey in forests, swamps and areas near farms. If you are not a hunter or are not friends with a hunter who is willing to share, you can purchase farm raised pheasant, or if you prefer a less gamey flavor, you can substitute chicken breasts in this recipe.

The other main ingredient is four cups of chopped kale. This green (or purple) leafy vegetable is in the group of vegetables called *Brassica oleracea*, or wild cabbage. It is highly nutritious and fibrous, and is one of my favorite foods this time of year since it can still be procured from local growers. Kale that is planted or transplanted into gardens in mid to late summer will reach maturity around the first frost of fall, but this hardy plant can survive well into winter through a number of hard frosts. In fact, many are of the opinion that kale tastes sweeter in winter, since the cold causes the plant's starch to convert into sugar.

Onto the other ingredients. Set aside four slices of cooked and crumbled bacon, two cloves of minced garlic, four tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, one cup of shredded cheddar cheese and four ounces of cream cheese (I prefer Philadelphia brand). Then, you will need one tablespoon of chopped fresh parsley, one teaspoon of garlic powder, one teaspoon of smoked paprika, one cup of panko breadcrumbs and two eggs.

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Using a mallet, pound the pheasant breasts to the same thickness. Then, in a large skillet, heat two tablespoons of oil, and add the garlic and kale. Sauté all until cooked for about 5 – 7 minutes.

In a bowl, combine the cheddar cheese, cream cheese, bacon, garlic powder, smoked paprika, and parsley. Then, add the sautéed kale and mix by hand until it is well combined. Stuff each breast with this tasty mixture and roll the pheasant until it is sealed. It is best to use a toothpick to hold the bird closed. Next, take a pie plate and add two whipped eggs, seasoned with salt and pepper. The panko breadcrumbs will go in another pie plate.

Heat an iron skillet and add olive oil. Dredge the pheasant rolls in the egg, followed by the breadcrumbs, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Sauté and turn them until they become a golden brown. Then, transfer the pan to the oven and cook until the internal temperature reaches 160

degrees. Remove and let it set for a few moments.

Some ideal accompaniments to this dish are risotto, whipped potatoes, polenta or rice. I like to serve this dish with risotto, and here is a very easy recipe you can use. Bring 32 ounces of chicken stock to a simmer in a saucepan over medium heat. Reduce heat to keep it warm. Then, melt a tablespoon of unsalted butter and heat a tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet or a wide-bottomed pot. Add one cup of Arborio rice and stir for one minute to coat all the grains.

Add one ladle of broth, stir, and leave it alone until the broth is nearly absorbed, about 2 – 3 minutes. Stir, add another ladle of broth, and stir again. Cook undisturbed until the broth is absorbed, about 3 minutes. Repeat until about one ladle of broth remains, which is 15 to 18 minutes of total cook time for the rice. Then, turn off heat and add ¼ teaspoon of kosher salt, the remaining broth and a ¼ cup of Pecorino Romano cheese. Stir gently for two minutes. Plate immediately with the pheasant and kale dish.

With regard to wine pairings, pheasant calls for spicy richness in the wines that accompany it. Though not as assertive in flavor as other feathered game, the character of a Rhône Syrah or a Sangiovese works well. Given my heritage, my pick is the Italian. Enjoy!

Editor's Note: Andy Lagana is a 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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Essential, Super Milkweeds

By Hubert Ling
Contributing Writer

NJ is fortunate to have 12 native species of milkweeds which are adapted to all types of soil and different levels of light. Most of our milkweeds thrive in dry, well drained soils and in full sun, but red milkweed and swamp milkweed grow preferentially in swamps, and orange milkweed grows in brackish saltwater marshes.

Besides growing in almost every type of habitat, you might wonder what's so special about milkweeds. Many of you know of course that milkweeds have great ecological value to many types of insects, including many of our most spectacular butterflies such as the monarch, American copper, hairstreak, sleepy orange, Eastern comma, fritillary, red admiral and the swallowtails.

Indeed over 450 species of insects feed on some part of common milkweed. These

insects include aphids, ants, bees, beetles, bugs, flies, moths and wasps. Milkweed aphids are not a big problem since lacewings, lady bugs, parasitoid wasps, and syrphid fly larvae generally attack large aphid infestations. If you grow milkweeds you can watch this fascinating world of host plant vs prey vs predator play out before your very eyes. It is also a good visual and a good tale to tell your grandchildren.

Most insects only utilize milkweed nectar and avoid munching on the leaves because of very toxic cardenolides, but others such as the well-known monarch not only obtain nectar but also use milkweeds as their sole caterpillar host plants. A series of metabolic mutations allows monarchs and a few other species to block the action of the toxins.

Another super thing about milkweeds is their unique mode of pollination. Milkweed flowers reward insect visitors with a generous

supply of nectar which collects in an upright unique vase-like structure called a hood. There are five hoods in a ring inside the circle of petals of each milkweed flower. As prospective pollinators visit the flowers to sip nectar, their legs are led by structural features of the flower into vertical slits in a central column called the gynostegium. Inside the gynostegium are numerous pollen grains packaged together in a structure called the pollinium. If an insect leg penetrates one of the five vertical slits, it is likely to snag a pollinium. If the insect is fairly strong like a bumble bee, it will pull its leg out of the gynostegium slit with the attached pollinium. However, smaller insects may not be able to free their legs and may lose a leg or may be stuck to the flower and die. Bumble bees with an attached pollinium may then visit a second flower and may again stick their legs into a gynostegium slit. In the gynostegium, besides pollinia,

there are five receptive stigmatic surfaces near the slits. A pollinium touching a stigmatic surface will result in pollination. While this whole process may seem improbable, the large number of swollen milkweed pods often seen in a field attests to the fact that in spite of this complicated process pollination frequently occurs, and this process makes a great educational video project. Only the orchids have a pollination process as complicated, and interestingly enough orchids also employ pollinia even though orchids and milkweeds are not closely related to each other. For photos and details of these unique plants check out: https://www.awesomenativeplants.info/photo_galleries/photo_pages/asclepias_syriaca.html

Milkweeds generally grow well from seeds. Be sure to allow them to be cold-treated naturally by sowing the seeds in fall and leaving them outside overwinter. As an alternative, place seeds in moist newspaper

(or paper towels) in plastic bags in the refrigerator for three months. Water these seeds if the newspaper starts drying out. Late April or early May is a good time to start the cold-treated seeds outdoors, so plan ahead.

You can seriously upgrade the ecological value of your garden by planting often spectacular but always important milkweeds in your yard. Consider common milkweed, white, red, purple, butterfly, swamp and blunt-leaved milkweeds, which grow best in full sun but also do well in partial shade. In addition, poke milkweed, with its large, thin, broad leaves, naturally grows best in the shade. These eight milkweeds are all available commercially.

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 Company Advances Automated Operations with Autonomous Mower

Bobcat Company, a leader in the global compact equipment industry, is accelerating its innovations in the landscaping and grounds maintenance industries with the announcement of its new autonomous mowing system. The company is also announcing the advancement of its autonomous technology and operations through a strategic investment in Greenzie, an industry-leading autonomous software company for commercial lawn mowers and outdoor power equipment.

"Innovation is part of the Bobcat DNA. We invented the compact equipment industry more than 60 years ago, and we continue to

reimagine the future of the industry today," said Joel Honeyman, vice president of global innovation for Bobcat Company. "Through this investment with Greenzie, we can accelerate our development of operator-assisted and automated solutions to help our customers be more productive on the jobsite or their backyard."

The collaboration supports Bobcat's introduction of its new autonomous, zero-turn mower, which offers game-changing efficiency and productivity by completing repetitive mowing tasks without the need for an onboard operator.

Designed to operate with software developed by Greenzie, the Bobcat

autonomous mower has a ride-and-repeat feature, where operators can plot a course and mark areas for the mower to avoid during autonomous operations. Able to detect objects, known or unknown, the zero-turn mower travels its prescribed path while the operator can take on other tasks and maximize their jobsite efficiency. The machine utilizes mapping to execute an exact route that can be repeated; all of which can be managed or edited on a simple smartphone app.

Through this investment, Bobcat and Greenzie will join forces to accelerate Bobcat's development of the autonomous capabilities and solutions across its product line-up.

"We are thrilled to close our largest investment round to date with a strategic investment by an industry leader like Bobcat," said Charles Brian Quinn (CBQ), co-founder and CEO of Greenzie. "Our customers are desperate for solutions that help them overcome their biggest challenge: labor shortages. Our software helps crews be more productive, and will run on reliable, rugged Bobcat equipment they trust."

The mower will have a limited launch in late 2023 with more details forthcoming.

Learn more about how Bobcat is transforming the industry at <https://www.bobcat.com>

Read the *Gardener News* online at GardenerNews.com



Unique Plants

By Bob LaHoff
Nursery Specialist

Gingerbread in Your Garden

The holiday season is upon us and the pressure to check everything off your holiday “to do list” may be growing. Add to this, the Christmas tree shortage continues and prices are up, as is with most commodities today. However, if I could take a step back and breathe, one of the biggest joys for me during the holiday season is homemade gingerbread cookies.

These cookies are a simple, nostalgic treat made with sweeteners and often flavored with cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon and, of course, ground ginger. A spice believed to have been brought back by Crusaders in the 11th century, ginger, *Zingiber officinale*, is a flowering herbaceous perennial whose fat, knobby rhizome ginger root enhances the pastry I love. So I got to thinking... what plants, cultivars or common names share the names “Ginger” or “Gingerbread”?

Perhaps the least “hardy” of the plants discussed here is Ginger lily, *Hedychium coronarium*. Friends in South Jersey can appreciate this perennial as its cold tolerance is zone 7. Nonetheless, the flowers of Ginger Lily are large and fragrant, held above and within a verdure that reminds me of the tropics. Appreciating hot and humid summers and moist soil types, *Hedychium* translates to “sweet snow,” possibly referencing its blooms or “the white insides of the edible, spicy tubers,” (plants.ces.ncsu.edu). This full sun to part shade perennial can reach and surpass 4 feet tall, growing a few feet wide.

One of my favorite trees, prominently planted in our front yard, is ‘Gingerbread’ (Paperbark) Maple, *Acer griseum x nikoense* ‘Ginzam’. A tree I wrote about for this

publication back in December 2010 is a cross between *A. griseum* & *A. maximowiczianum* (formerly *A. nikoense*). It is a quintessential tree with green trifoliate leaves turning shades of red and orange in the fall. ‘Gingerbread’s’ exfoliating bark shreds, tears and folds, with older bark developing a sort of crosshatch pattern. A small to medium tree overall, ours faces northwest and is picture perfect.

The spicy scent of this next deciduous tree is something I still long for. The senescing leaves of Katsura, Gingerbread or Caramel tree, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, supposedly has a cotton candy type smell, an “olfactory delight” I have been deprived of every autumn. However, something I can appreciate is its blue-green foliage with hints of red throughout its growing season. Caramel tree’s initial spring growth is purple-bronze, and the fall color is a kaleidoscope of scented clear yellow, orange, apricot, and red, which again only some can appreciate. Any soft breeze has its foliage dancing, reminding me of those magnificent aspen trees native to the cooler parts of North America. A more majestic candidate for your garden, expect heights north of 60 feet, or greater, in time. Necessary for its success are rich, moist soil, supplemental watering during drought conditions, and protection from drying winds.

A Witch Hazel type, *Hamamelis x intermedia* ‘Gingerbread’, is a harbinger of spring, complete with “curly, crimped burnt orange flowers”. Flowering in February into March, this hybrid is a cross between Japanese and Chinese types (*H. japonica* & *H. mollis*). Full sun to part shade, ‘Gingerbread’s’ early flowers

are fragrant and held in axillary clusters against bare stems. Offering a powerful punch to your landscape, standing just 8-10 feet tall and wide, additional attributes include smooth bark and quilted ovate-rounded foliage with purple tones in the spring. During warmer months, the leaf color digresses to green although finishes strong with yellow in the fall. A perfect small specimen tree or large shrub for your landscape. And should you tend to “think outside the box”, what an outstanding hedge ‘Gingerbread’ would make... as evidence of one I once saw in Pluckemin, NJ.

Finally, here are a trio of smaller plants. A daylily that has held my attention for some time, *Hemerocallis* ‘Gingerbread Man’ has mahogany and orange blooms suspended over dark green foliage. Extremely heat tolerant and able to bloom multiple times if “deadheaded”, ‘Gingerbread Man’ finishes two feet tall and wide. Another ‘Gingerbread Man’, looking good in mass, is an Iris type, *Iris x germanica* ‘Gingerbread Man’. A Bearded Iris and standard dwarf type, this perennial sports grey-green straplike leaves and ginger-colored blooms. Bearded Irises are called so because “the falls” have soft hairs down the middle. “The falls” are the three lower petals of the flower that either hang down or flare out. And last but not least, a rose by any other name... ‘Gingerbread Man.’ *Rosa* ‘Gingerbread Man’ has a petal count of 26-40 with a blend of apricot color. A dwarf type with moderate fragrance, these look great in containers.

Keep in mind that Gingerbread is different from Gingersnap. One uses molasses and the other uses sugar. Regardless, I can be bribed with either!

Nursery Industry Veteran Brings Deep Experience to Leading Sales Team

Azusa, California – Monrovia, the nation’s leading grower of premium ornamental and landscaping plants, today announced that Ted McDonald has joined the company as Vice President of Sales. A nursery industry veteran, McDonald brings a wealth of sales, operations, and leadership experience to Monrovia, most recently working with BioWorks Inc., a leading biological plant health company.

“Ted has the industry knowledge, drive, and expertise to lead the team forward,” says Jonathan Pedersen, president and CEO of Monrovia. “I know he will be a great addition to our sales management and executive leadership teams. His skills in developing relationships and achieving results will be a big asset as we continue to build the best nursery.”

As Vice President of Sales, McDonald will manage the entire Monrovia sales team serving retailers across the country, including independent garden centers and Lowe’s. Previously, he has been the VP of Sales and Marketing for BioWorks and Sales Manager for Bailey Nurseries. In those roles, McDonald was responsible for leading strategy and sales growth. His work at other nurseries included responsibilities for inventory management of packaged hard goods and logistics.

“I’m looking forward to helping support the strongest sales team in the nursery industry,” says McDonald. “Working with Monrovia as the company looks toward its 100th year anniversary is both exciting and humbling.”

McDonald started his new role on November 14, 2022.

USDA to Conduct End-of-Year Hogs and Pigs Survey

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is contacting producers for the December Hogs and Pigs survey. This end-of-year survey is a comprehensive gathering of quarterly data on market hog and breeding stock inventories as well as pig crop and farrowing intentions in every state.

“According to the most recent Quarterly Hogs and Pigs report in September, there were 73.8 million hogs and pigs in the United States,” said King Whetstone, director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. “The December survey and resulting report will continue to provide important indicators for the industry of what changes are occurring – if any,” added Whetstone.

NASS will mail the questionnaires to all producers selected for the survey in late November. To ensure all survey participants have an opportunity to respond, NASS interviewers will contact producers who do not respond by mail or online to conduct personal interviews. The data gathered in this survey allows NASS to accurately measure and report conditions and trends in the U.S. pork industry over the course of the year. The information is used by all sectors of the industry, including producers themselves, to help make sound and timely business decisions.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents and publishes only aggregate data, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified.

Survey results will be published in the Quarterly Hogs and Pigs report to be released on December 23, 2022.

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.

NORTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF STATE

The Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture convenes the following 10 states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Newly Formed Farmer Veteran Coalition of Connecticut Officially Launch

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Department of Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt, CT Farmer Veteran member and owner of Mountain View Farm Lorren Pogson, USDA Rural Development Southern New England State Director Scott Soares, Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) of CT President Jared McCool, and Executive Director of CT Resource Conservation & Development (CT RC&D) Jeanne Davies gathered to officially announce the formation of the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Connecticut and release the Homegrown by Heroes CT Grown brand logo.

The Homegrown by Heroes label (HBH) is the official farmer veteran branding program of America and is administered nationally by the Farmer Veteran Coalition. It informs consumers that agricultural products were produced by U.S. military veterans and differentiates their farm products in the marketplace.

“Through an agreement between the Farmer Veteran Coalition and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture we are able to conduct a joint marketing effort promoting to consumers that the product they are buying is both produced by a Veteran Farmer and a CT Grown product,” said Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt. “By merging these

branding tools and leveraging the cumulative power that they both bring we are able to better support these operations for long-term success.”

The Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) is a national nonprofit non-governmental organization that mobilizes veterans to feed America and transition from military service to a career in agriculture. Started in 2007, chapters have been created in various states since then to provide veterans or active-duty military service members with access to their programs including the Farmer Veteran Coalition Farming Fellowship, Homegrown by Heroes, and attendance at workshops, retreats, and webinars.

According to USDA NASS Census of Agriculture 2017 there are nearly 900 farmers in Connecticut with military experience. Of those, nearly half report agriculture as being their primary occupation.

The formation of this Connecticut chapter was spearheaded by a conversation between Jared McCool, a Marine Corps veteran and owner/operator of Steadfast Farms in Bethlehem and Amanda Fargo-Johnson, Agricultural Programs Director at Connecticut RC&D. The two-year process in the development was achieved through the hard work by a dedicated group of Veteran farmers.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agriculture Secretary Celebrates Pennsylvania Potato Growers Centennial on Historic Franklin County Farm

Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding joined potato growers, potato chip manufacturers and potato lovers on the historic Bender Potato Farm in Orrstown, Franklin County to celebrate the centennial of the Pennsylvania Cooperative Potato Growers and their tasty, nutritious contributions to our state economy.

“Pennsylvania and potatoes go hand in hand,” Redding said. “What would a Pennsylvania fair be without french fries, or the ‘Snack Capital of the U.S.’ without potato chips, or a Thanksgiving feast without a heap of buttery, whipped mashed potatoes?”

“Bryan Bender and the other farmers who make up the Pennsylvania Cooperative Potato Growers have fed our families and our economy for generations, and sustained our communities through their generosity,” he continued. “They continue to feed our progress, employing cutting-edge methods and equipment. Congratulations on a proud centennial and a bright future.”

With 83,000 tons of potatoes produced on 5,400 acres across Pennsylvania, the cooperative’s growers supply retail, food service and potato chip manufacturers, feeding \$15 million in annual sales. They supply the 24 chip manufacturing plants that have earned our state its “Snack Food Capital of the U.S.” title.

Since 2020, the cooperative has supplied more than 12.6 million pounds of potatoes through food service partners to food insecure families through the USDA’s Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

In partnership with the Penn

State College of Agricultural Sciences the group has conducted potato variety research, with its membership contributing \$50,000 annually to support the work that benefits consumers and potato growers statewide.

“This 100-year celebration honors the 28 hardworking potato-grower farm families in our cooperative,” said Nathan Tallman, president of the cooperative. “It also recognizes the leadership and dedication of the farm families who have come before us to keep Pennsylvania Cooperative Potato Growers operating for a century.”

Since 2019, the PA Department of Agriculture has awarded more than \$430,000 to the cooperative through Specialty Crop Block Grants, and more than \$130,000 for its work promoting potatoes through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Product, Promotion, Education, and Export Promotion Matching Grant.

The organization is a mainstay at the annual PA Farm Show every January, serving thousands of potato donuts, 12 tons of fresh cut fries, six tons of baked potatoes and

hundreds of pierogies to hungry guests. The cooperative sponsors the chef demonstrations and events on the PA Preferred® Culinary Connection stage on “Tater Tuesday Opens In A New Window,” and greeting guests with potato-centric education and entertainment in their booth every year.

Learn more about Pennsylvania’s \$132.5 billion agriculture industry and initiatives and investments to grow, protect and sustain it at agriculture.pa.gov.

DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE NEWS

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

New Jersey Department of Agriculture Announces Record for Schools in Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

As part of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's continuing efforts to improve nutritional opportunities for school children, New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher announced that a record-high 210 New Jersey schools are participating in the 2022-2023 school year's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

The United States Department of Agriculture has allocated \$5,580,688 to New Jersey for this school year's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, to provide fresh produce to approximately 100,000 students in 54 districts throughout 16 counties during the school day. The students also receive nutrition education.

Eighty-four percent of the 210 schools have agreed to link their FFVP to the Jersey Fresh Farm to School Program. The FFVP program has grown from 33 schools in 2008.

The goal of the program is to introduce children to healthy foods, increase their fruit and vegetable consumption, and encourage improved lifelong dietary habits.

"The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program encourages students to taste new offerings and to develop healthy eating habits that benefit them for a lifetime," Secretary Fisher said. "FFVP creates enthusiasm in schools and benefits farmers around the state as local produce is often featured during meals."

Additional funds will be allocated to schools for connecting their FFVP with the Farm to School Program. The schools must provide Jersey Fresh produce a minimum of two days each month from September to November and from April to June and must verify where the produce was grown.

Some of the criteria used in selecting the schools to participate in FFVP include elementary schools with 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price meals; schools that planned to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables as much as possible; all students having access to the produce offered; and plans to partner with outside organizations to enhance nutrition education.

NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

New York State Agricultural Society Annual Meeting and Forum to Take Place January 12, 2023

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball encourages members of the agricultural community to join the 191st Annual Meeting and Agricultural Forum, hosted by the New York State Agricultural Society on Thursday, January 12, 2023 at the Syracuse OnCenter. The Forum offers an opportunity for farmers and other key stakeholders to discuss some of the biggest issues facing the food system and natural resource industries. Commissioner Ball will also deliver the 2023 State of Agriculture Address and provide an update on New York State's ongoing efforts to support New York farmers and agricultural businesses.

Commissioner Ball said, "From navigating pandemic-related food supply disruptions to combatting extreme weather events, the last couple of years have been incredibly challenging for the agricultural community. I am grateful for the opportunity to gather once again at the annual Agricultural Society Meeting and Forum with partners from across the state to discuss the ways we can best prepare our industry for the future. At the 2023 Forum, we will be discussing the positive and innovative ways the agricultural industry has developed in response to multiple disruptions. I thank the New York State Agricultural Society for making this upcoming year's meeting and Forum possible and look forward to these important discussions in policy areas that are a

priority for the State."

Also at the Forum, the New York State Agricultural Society will honor individuals and businesses who have lifted the state's agricultural and food industry to new heights in the areas of environmental stewardship, leadership development, consumer outreach, farm safety, business development and the production of quality, safe food. Seven agribusinesses will be recognized as century and bicentennial farms.

The Forum will be held on Thursday, January 12, 2023, at the Syracuse OnCenter. Registration for the Forum runs through December 21. To register or learn more about the event, visit nysagsociety.org.

Established in 1832, the mission of the New York State Agricultural Society is to build a robust future for New York's food, agricultural, and natural resource industries by providing networking and educational opportunities for its strongest advocates, decision-makers, and aspiring leaders. Agriculture is a major economic driver in New York State, generating more than \$5 billion worth of annual economic activity statewide and providing a livelihood for residents across all 62 counties. More than 700 members of the New York State Agricultural Society strive to build a better understanding and positive working relationships with neighbors, consumers, and government leaders.



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Are You Ready for Winter?

(Continued from page 1)

temperatures, but they can wreak havoc on your paver's surface. Deicers work by lowering the temperature at which water freezes. Because pavers are porous, water can seep into the brick and remain suspended until it refreezes. Most manufacturers recommend sodium chloride.

No ice melters are safe for concrete. Concrete is porous, so it absorbs water. When an ice melter melts ice, some of the liquid water is absorbed into the concrete. Then, if the temperature drops, that water will freeze. When the water freezes, it expands and can crack the surface of the concrete. You can't melt the ice with anything without running the risk of damaging the concrete.

Avoid any deicing chemical the first winter. The only safe material to use to make the concrete surface

skid resistant is plain sand.

Sand provides excellent traction on top of the ice. It does not melt ice or snow. Sand is an abrasive material that can be applied to icy sidewalks, steps and roads to provide traction. It can capably create traction on ice at any temperature, whereas rock salt is not effective in extreme cold. Sand is only effective if it is on the surface of the ice. If it gets buried under snow, it needs to be reapplied.

Excessive amounts of sand can collect into drains and drainage areas, so cleanup of sand after storms is important or you can have problems come spring.

Reducing icy areas can mean less salt and sand on the ground – which is a good thing – and allows you to better manage your risk from a slip and fall.

Walk your property on a rainy day. Watch how the rain flows, pools or puddles on your property. Look for areas where downspouts are discharging water onto your driveways, sidewalks or a common path of travel. Try to redirect this discharge to a grassy area.

Landscaping or snow fences can help keep drifting snow off paved areas and reduce icy areas from forming due to wind. Try to store snow on the lowest area of your property to stop melted snow from refreezing across your driveway and/or walkways.

Now I have to mention the supply chain crisis. Everything used in ice and snow management has been turned upside down with global logistical challenges, fuel costs, regulatory restrictions, and a decreasing

number of truck drivers in the United States, just to name a few.

It was seven years ago that securing anything to treat your surfaces in February and March of 2015 was nearly impossible, and this was before the global supply chain crisis.

Shop early and store the bagged product in a dry location. Do not store them outside. When you have opened bags, ensure that you store them in air-tight containers and away from air, moisture and sunlight. If not, they will draw moisture from the air, leading it to harden and degrade in quality.

Finally, please wear footwear with heavy treads for increased traction. Walk slowly and watch the placement of your feet. High-heel shoes are a big no, no. If you plan on wearing new

shoes or boots, scuff up the soles to help provide better traction.

Hello, Spring! In 2023, it arrives on Monday, March 20.

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.

Full Moon

● December 7, 2022 ○

Eastern Daylight

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