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February 2023

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No. 238

## Conditioning your Roses for Longevity



Tom Castronovo/Photo

**By Tom Castronovo**  
Executive Editor/Publisher  
*Gardener News*

When you think of Valentine's Day flowers, you think of red roses, right? Not so fast. There are other colors that will wow your sweetheart

on Valentine's Day including orange, peach, pink, purple, yellow and white. Each color has a different meaning. Your local florist should be able to help you decide.

While red is a traditional Valentine's Day color, all roses basically need the same quality of care.

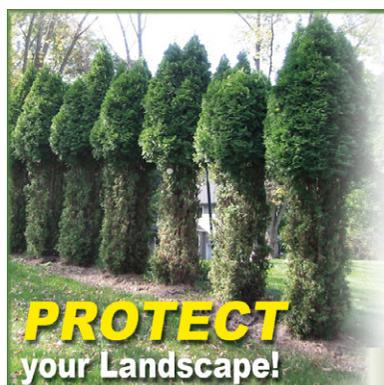
Let's start from the actual plant.

Once a rose is harvested and removed from the mother plant for cut rose use, many physiological and biochemical changes are triggered within the cut rose that need to be carefully monitored and corrected for optimum quality and longevity.

In most cases, cut roses placed

in a container should last one week, possibly longer, based on care. The life of a cut rose can depend on the type of rose, how long it went without water, and how healthy the rose plant was.

Examine roses before making your purchase, especially a premade bouquet from a (Cont. on Page 17)



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## Around The Garden

By Tom Castronovo  
Gardener News

### Protecting our Farmers, and Pantone has spoken!

First and foremost, I applaud New Jersey Legislators for always looking out for our farmers.

New Jersey State Senator Steven V. Oroho and New Jersey State Senator Troy Singleton have introduced legislation in the Senate in the 2022-2023 Legislative Session to allow commercial farmers to be awarded reasonable costs and attorney fees for defending against bad faith complaints under the "Right to Farm Act." These two Legislators are the S2011 prime sponsors. The legislation awaits a hearing in the Senate Economic Growth Committee.

Here is the statement of the bill.

This bill would strengthen the legal protections provided to farmers under the "Right to Farm Act." Specifically, the bill would allow farmers to recover reasonable costs and attorney fees incurred in the defense of bad faith complaints against commercial agricultural operations, activities or structures when a county agriculture development board or the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), as applicable:

- 1) finds the farmer is entitled to the irrebuttable presumption established under the "Right to Farm Act"; and
- 2) determines, supported by a preponderance of the evidence, that the complaint was brought in bad faith and all or a portion of the costs and attorney fees are reasonable.

Under the "Right to Farm Act," the established irrebuttable presumption is that a commercial agricultural operation, activity or structure or specific operation or practice does not constitute a public or private nuisance, or does not otherwise invade or interfere with the use and enjoyment of any other land or property, if:

- 1) the commercial agricultural operation, activity or structure conforms to agricultural management practices recommended and adopted by the SADC, or the specific operation or practice of the commercial agricultural operation has been determined to constitute a generally accepted agricultural operation or practice, either by the appropriate county agriculture development board or the SADC, as applicable; and
- 2) the commercial agricultural operation, activity or structure or specific operation or practice complies with all relevant federal and State statutes and regulations, and does not pose a direct threat to public health and safety.

Under the bill, a farmer seeking an award of reasonable costs and attorney fees would submit an application therefor to the county agriculture development board or the SADC as applicable, after being found entitled to the irrebuttable presumption. The county agriculture development board or the SADC would then determine, whether a preponderance of the evidence supports a determination that the complaint was made in bad faith and if the costs and fees, or a portion thereof, are reasonable. If so, the county agriculture development board or the SADC would issue an order for the person filing the complaint to pay the reasonable costs and fees to the farmer.

There is an identical bill in the Assembly. It is A2315.

This version passed on 03/24/2022. Yes: 75. No: 0. Not Voting: 5.

Every state in the country has its own version of Right to Farm. In New Jersey, the Right to Farm Act is designed to help address conflicts among farmers, neighbors, municipalities, and counties regarding a farm's practices. If a conflict cannot be resolved informally, such as through Agricultural Mediation or other discussion by the parties, the Act provides for a formal review process. Under the Act, anyone aggrieved by the operation of a commercial farm is required to file a complaint with the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) prior to filing an action in court. This is what makes New Jersey's Right to Farm Act so strong – commercial farms cannot be taken to court by neighbors and local governments first. Rather, these complaints must first be heard by the CADB or State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), agencies that have special expertise in the agricultural industry and understand the needs of farm operations.

According to the latest USDA/NASS State Agricultural Overview, New Jersey has more than 750,000 acres in active farmland, and the annual market value of agricultural products sold exceeds \$1 billion. There are more than 9,900 farms in New Jersey, and together they make the state a top 10 producer nationally in many crops, including cranberries, bell peppers, spinach, peaches, and blueberries.

I love farmers. They are the backbone of the Garden State. I hope this legislation moves forward without any hesitation, and I also hope Governor Murphy signs it into law immediately after its passage.

#### And the 2023 color is...

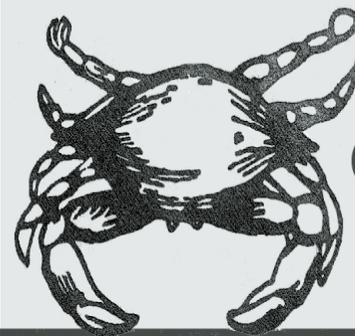
Pantone's new Color of the Year is Viva Magenta 18-1750. It is a shade rooted in nature descending from the red family and expressive of a new signal of strength. Viva Magenta is brave and fearless, and a pulsating color whose exuberance promotes a joyous and optimistic celebration, writing a new narrative. The color is powerful and empowering. It is an animated red that revels in pure joy, encouraging experimentation and self-expression without restraint, an electrifying, and a boundless shade that is manifesting as a stand-out statement.

According to the Pantone Color Institute, the color merges the richness, warmth, and strength of natural matters with the rich, open horizons of the digital world. The result is a shade of red that expands our horizons of authenticity. The metaverse creates new opportunities for us to express ourselves, and the raw fortitude of Viva Magenta inspires us to do so with confidence and bravery.

Florists wait for this color announcement every year. Floral designers are thinking about birthday, anniversary, new love, or simply just to make someone smile arrangements incorporating the 2023 color. There are plenty of different flowers that already contain this hue naturally. Ranunculus, roses and tulips are popular examples that work perfectly for any type of arrangement.

The Pantone Color Institute originally created the Pantone Color of the Year educational program in 1999 to engage the design community and color enthusiasts around the world in a conversation around color.

**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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When it comes to food – what we should consume or how much would be good for us – there is no shortage of advice, especially in the Internet age.

In the media, in all its multiple streams, the information is coming at us. From every direction we are plied with diet regimes, sometimes plain, sensible recipes, and at other times, decadent concoctions.

Then there are online trends with influencers peddling someone's product that you, "have to add to your daily food intake." You are always going to be subjected to changing viewpoints and perspectives and ultimately, I posit, folks just have to sort it out for themselves. Disclaimers and warnings and caveats appear at every turn because of possible liability.

I would like to focus on an ancient food that has not really been talked about at an intensive level until recently, but which now is sort of all the rage. Mushrooms. Exploding on the scene now, we see mushroom capsules and supplements and teas and so on. However, I think buying them in their raw state would make the most sense.

Mushrooms grow in the wild and in our lawns, all over, and many folks



## NJ Dept. of Agriculture

By Douglas H. Fisher  
Secretary of Agriculture

# Out of the Shadows

understandably, I would venture to say, have a fear of foraging these random mycelium. Until now, they have purchased just the white buttons at the supermarket for the most part, often from farms devoted to growing them.

That was the norm for decades and mushroom consumption per capita was not a robust number.

Now we are learning so much about the really extraordinary properties of mushrooms. Eating your fruits and vegetables has forever been a clarion call, and even getting people to really consume more is a constant struggle, given the massive carbohydrates marketing machine that permeates every media outlet.

The companies making those foods have billions of impressions at work to make you fall off the wagon of really good and balanced nutrition. Fruits and veggies and, yes,

mushrooms just don't have the marketing budgets to tell their amazing stories about health.

There are approximately 14,000 varieties of mushrooms that have been catalogued throughout the world. Now, as has been mentioned often, many types of mushrooms can't be eaten by humans. And some can be ingested but at the risk of hallucinogenic effects. Those are not the kinds of mushrooms we're discussing here.

Here, we are more interested in the many edible varieties that are becoming more and more popular in our supermarkets, restaurants, even in the meals we make at home.

One of the most popular varieties is the button mushroom. These well-known, white-colored mushrooms can be purchased whole, with the familiar round "cap" and short stalk both still attached, with the

cap cut into slices, or the caps and stalks both chopped into smaller pieces. They are equally appetizing chopped fresh and added to a salad or sauteed in a pasta or meat dish.

Cremini mushrooms, with their mild, earthy flavor and meaty texture, are excellent for soups and stews. Related to button mushrooms, but harvested at a different age, they resemble button mushrooms but with a darker cap. They also are related to portabella mushrooms, which previously had been found only as imports from Italy but are now widely available here. Eaten alone or in a meat dish, they are larger than their relatives, the button or the cremini.

Some other varieties you might see available now are maitake (which grow at the base of oak trees and are perfect on pizza); shitake (familiar from their use in Asian cuisine); porcini

(excellent in cream sauces for fettucine); and morel (which are harder to find and have an exotic, nutty flavor).

Beyond how delicious they are, mushrooms also have significant health benefits. A 2022 UCLA study enumerated them. They decrease the risk of cancer; are low in sodium; promote lower cholesterol; protect brain health; are high in vitamin D; and support a healthy immune system.

It's worth doing some research on your own. For more information, visit [https://www.medicinenet.com/what\\_are\\_the\\_4\\_types\\_of\\_mushrooms/article.htm](https://www.medicinenet.com/what_are_the_4_types_of_mushrooms/article.htm) or <https://southmill.com/blog/everything-about-mushrooms/>.

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

## USDA Developing New Tools to Identify COVID Virus in Wild and Domestic Animals

U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists are developing new tests and tools to identify and track the COVID virus and its variants in wild and domestic animals.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is currently implementing a \$300 million provision in the American Rescue Plan Act to monitor susceptible animals for the COVID virus. Through this initiative, APHIS is partnering with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) on five research projects to improve understanding of the virus and to help USDA accomplish its goal of building an early warning system to potentially prevent or limit the next zoonotic disease outbreak or global pandemic.

"This investment ensures we are taking the steps necessary to safeguard our nation's animal health—and further, public health," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Scientific

research undergirds USDA's programs and policies. The new tools and data generated from this research will provide the insights necessary to accelerate our understanding of the COVID virus and help us build a more resilient national capacity to address future disease threats."

Two of the projects call for developing easy-to-use field tests to quickly identify COVID infection in wildlife and domestic animals. In two other projects, field and laboratory studies will determine how long the virus persists in deer and whether deer or elk can serve as an intermediate animal host in which COVID virus can survive in the wild and potentially mutate into new variants. The fifth project is developing a cell line model that will let researchers better predict which animal species may act as hosts or reservoirs for COVID virus.

Through these and other efforts, USDA is working to implement a risk-based, comprehensive,

integrated disease monitoring and surveillance system domestically, and enhance collaborations with national, regional, and global One Health partners to build additional capacity for zoonotic disease surveillance and prevention.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America.



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

## Houseplant Care and Maintenance During the Winter

As we approach Valentine's Day, don't forget to give your houseplants some love. This time of year—when perhaps we most need their green leaves as reminders of warm days to come—is particularly tough on houseplants. Some special attention to your watering practices and surrounding environment this season will help keep your houseplants flourishing.

**Water:** We start with water, as it is most commonly implicated in a houseplant's demise. With the reduced light and temperatures found in late winter, the plant's growth and water use are also reduced. It's therefore very easy to overwater plants. The amount of water your houseplant needs will also depend on its type, and the size and type of container. First, you'll have to get your hands dirty to be sure it needs water by feeling the planting mix. For larger potted plants, poke a hole to feel a couple of inches below the surface. For smaller potted plants, feeling the surface is sufficient. If the potting media feels humid or moist, it is not yet time to water, so wait until it feels dry. A houseplant's water requirement may be different from week-to-week due to variations in relative humidity and sunlight intensity. Adjust for the decrease in water needs by reducing the frequency and by slowly pouring a generous amount of water to ensure you're reaching the lower roots. Once you notice water coming out of the drainage holes, stop watering and wait a few minutes before emptying the excess. Fertilizing should be done sparingly, if at all.

Avoid putting rocks or gravel in the bottom of your pot. There is a common belief that it will improve drainage, but rocks in the bottom shorten the soil column and result in the water perching higher. The water perch is the water that's accumulated and held in the planting mix's pore spaces at the bottom of the soil column and held against the pull of gravity just above the rocks. As perched water accumulates, deeper roots may lack sufficient air, and this could impact root growth and promote decay, eventually leading to the plant's decline. If you have this problem, it's not necessarily too late. Carefully remove the container and examine the roots, which should be white or tan, and the potting media should have an 'earthy' smell. Trim dead or decaying roots and repot in new, porous potting mix.

**Location:** As houseplant owners, it is our job to know our plant and provide an

environment that best suits its growing requirements. With some exceptions, most houseplants grow naturally in tropical and subtropical climates where the relative humidity is much higher than what exists in our New Jersey homes and offices.

You can take advantage of the humid microclimate immediately surrounding the foliage created by plants transpiring moisture by grouping houseplants together. Furthermore, setting the plants in a shallow pan with a quarter inch of water and gravel to hold the bottom of the pots above the waterline will be most effective. Misting plants is impractical as it needs to be done multiple times throughout the day, every day, to be effective.

The cooler temperatures in our homes at this time of year are recommended for resting plants and some houseplants that require cool temperatures, between 50 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and as low as 50 degrees at night. Most other house plants fare best between 70 and 80 degrees during the day and around 65 degrees at night. Flowering houseplants can be especially sensitive to extreme temperature fluctuations, so keeping them protected from drafts and away from heaters and windows where temperatures can change significantly is beneficial.

When purchasing your plant, be sure to consider its light requirements and how much light it will receive in the desired location during these short days. If you already have the plant, and you find that it's becoming leggy or otherwise failing due to low light levels, you can use specially designed plant lights to be sure it gets the amount of red and blue light required for photosynthesis, if relocating the plant is not possible.

**Pests:** This is a prime time of year for houseplants to accumulate dust on their leaves. Give the leaves an occasional sponge bath to remove the dust, and while you're doing so, be sure to scout for some of our most common indoor pests, including fungus gnats, spider mites, and mealy bugs.

The Rutgers Master Gardener Helpline in your county is a valuable resource to help identify pests and provide research-based solutions to manage them. More than this, Rutgers-trained Master Gardener volunteers are on hand to find solutions for all of your home horticulture needs, both indoors and out.



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*Editor's Note: This month's contribution was written by Rebecca Magron, who is a horticultural consultant and research associate with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Hunterdon County.*

# LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY NEWS

## SEBS-NJAES Scientists Lead \$3.2 Million USDA Grant to Develop Disease-Resistant Basil

Scientists from Rutgers University-New Brunswick are leading a new \$3.2 million study that aims to continue developing sweet basil plants resistant to downy mildew and an emerging bacteria that has decimated the crops of the culinary herb for more than a decade.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture provided funding to develop genetic tools over the next five years to combat the genetic vulnerability of sweet basil, a widely grown and economically influential herb used in foods as an antioxidant and as a source of essential oil for flavors and fragrances.

A plant pathogen known as basil downy mildew (BDM) was first discovered in the United States in 2007 and quickly spread throughout the nation and the world, destroying the global sweet basil industry. More recently, sweet basil has been threatened by a disease called bacterial leaf spot (BLS), in which small water-soaked lesions appear on leaves and quickly darken with age, impacting the uses of the plant.

“The USDA-NIFA grant will allow us to conduct the needed research to allow us a better understanding of the BDM pathogen and the genetic complexity of sweet basil,” said James Simon, a Distinguished Professor of Plant Biology at Rutgers–New Brunswick. “With this opportunity, basil researchers, industry, and farmers will be able to address the ever-changing disease pressure that comes with climate change and impacts growers daily in many parts of the world.”

Simon, who studies the genetics of the plant, leads the Rutgers basil breeding program along with Andy Wyenandt, an extension specialist in the Department of Plant Biology. In 2010, Rutgers researchers were the first to identify potential sources of basil (*Ocimum*) germplasm that carried BDM resistance, which could be used in breeding programs.

The two lead a team of scientists from the University of Massachusetts, University of Florida and Bar Ilan University in Israel. The consortium of basil researchers includes

scientists who specialize in basic plant genetics, breeding and plant pathology. Along with generating new sweet basil lines, the researchers are studying genetic markers associated with resistance genes that can help develop new and stronger disease-resistant plants and improve other traits such as leaf size, shape and aroma.

Current BDM-resistant basil sweet basils, including those developed at Rutgers, have begun to display a breakdown in resistance in the U.S. and Europe, demonstrating how BDMs can already adapt and develop new races.

One clear objective is to develop more BDM-resistant sweet basils and identify and breed BLS resistance into commercially acceptable cultivars. Currently, there are no commercial cultivars that reduce both BDM and BLS infection in commercial production operations, the researchers said. Developing new sweet basils with BDM and BLS resistance would greatly benefit growers in the U.S. and globally and provide solutions to commercial growers struggling with these problems.

In 2011, and 2018, USDA-NIFA funded grants worth almost \$4 million that brought these and other scientists and students together. The grants led to breakthrough research, the development of the first BDM-resistant basil breeding line and management strategies to control BDM. A separate grant of \$103,000, supported by the U.S.-Israel Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund in 2020, enabled further research into next-generation sequencing in sweet basil.

“Without innovation, emerging races of BDM and other disease threats such as BLS will again imperil the U.S. and global basil industry,” concluded Simon. “This beautiful, attractive plant is economically important to so many different people, cultures, and agricultural industries worldwide.”

*This article first appeared in Rutgers Today.*

## Rutgers Offers Online Gardening Education Series, Beginning Feb. 9

Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) is once again offering a 16-week, online educational program for the public on gardening, beginning Feb. 9 and running through May 25.

The cost to enroll is \$250 per person. The program is open to anyone interested in gardening, an activity that provides moderate exercise, stress relief and healthy food and beautiful landscapes for persons who engage in taking on the task of planting a seed.

What can this series do for you? Is gardening something you love? Have you ever gardened? Do you feel you would like to learn more about gardening on a beginner level and progress to learn more about technical aspects of soil, plant care and pest control in gardens?

Topics will include botany, soils, entomology, plant pathology, pruning, lawn care, vegetables, small fruits, tree fruits, ornamental plants and composting.

Participants will have the convenience of learning all of these topics wherever they are, whether on a home computer, a tablet or smartphone. The series was created to make learning about gardening more accessible to everyone and especially to those who find it difficult to meet during the day and at in-person classes.

At any age one can garden. Whether it be in a yard, on a terrace, or in a raised bed or planting bench gardens come in all shapes and sizes. There has been a resurgence in gardening – possibly due to the pandemic slowing life down a bit and more people working at home. Vegetable and fruit gardening also adds a sense of food security for some and can promote healthy eating habits, especially for children.

“When children are involved in vegetable gardening and pick something they helped grow, they are more willing to try new foods like tomatoes or peppers,” says Michelle Infante-Casella, RCE agricultural agent, who specializes in vegetable crops.

“Over the past few years, the option of this online gardening series has been a popular choice for people who work during the day and for those who cannot travel to an in-person class,” says Stephen Komar, RCE agricultural agent, who developed the program.

“It gives people the opportunity to network with plant scientists and others interested in gardening. The course also provides a tremendous amount of science-based resources about growing plants and maintaining landscapes.”

The 16 online classes also include additional webinar content and resources for in-home study. Classes will be recorded for later viewing for students to review what was taught or in the event students have a conflict and need to miss a live session.

The program will be hosted by multiple RCE offices across the state. Sessions are taught by Rutgers faculty and staff in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and other Rutgers units.

To find out more and to register, visit <https://go.rutgers.edu/hb11nnbk>. For more information, contact your local Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office.

## Dina Fonseca Appointed Chair of the Department of Entomology

*Announcement from Laura Lawson, executive dean, SEBS, and executive director, NJAES*

Dear SEBS and NJAES community,

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Dina Fonseca as chair of the Department of Entomology. She has been serving in this role since July 1, and now it is official. We are very fortunate to have Dina serve in this important leadership role.

Dina Fonseca is an active scholar. She was the first to develop the population genetic tools to demonstrate the occurrence and epidemiological consequences of multiple introductions of the same mosquito species. At Rutgers, she spearheaded the USDA-ARS funded Areawide management of the Asian tiger mosquito. The 30+ peer reviewed publications from that project have become the basis of best practices for controlling urban *Aedes* mosquitoes. Dina has also fostered urban mosquito control by residents through Citizen Action Through Science (Citizen AcTS), an approach that aims to provide communities with scientific support to develop projects that directly benefit them. She is a founding member of Innovative Strategies for Invasives

using environmental DNA (eDNA) and risk analysis to detect and contain invasive species.

Dina joined Rutgers in 2007 as associate professor and became a full professor in 2014. In addition to her Rutgers role, she is a research associate in the Center for Conservation Genomics at the Smithsonian Institution. She earned a bachelor's degree in Biology and Geology from the University of Coimbra, Portugal, and a doctoral degree in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Pennsylvania.

She undertakes leadership of the Department of Entomology, which was established in 1888, and has a long history of studying a wide variety of important insects, including mosquitoes and the pathogens and parasites they transmit. Besides mosquitoes, current externally funded projects spearheaded by Entomology faculty focus on ticks and the Lyme disease bacterium, bedbugs, brown marmorated stink bugs, spotted lanternflies and spotted wing drosophila, all species that have tremendous impact on NJ's economy and public health.

Thank you, Dina!

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*Thank you for a wonderful  
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## MANTS Attendance Returns to Pre-Pandemic Levels

The 2023 Mid Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) welcomed more than 11,000 attendees, including exhibitors in Baltimore from January 11 through 13 at the Baltimore Convention Center.

Known as the Masterpiece of Trade Shows™, MANTS jump-started the 2023 green industry trade show season on a high note bringing together horticulture industry leaders from around the country. A sold-out trade show floor showcased more than 900 exhibiting companies in more than 1,530 booths. Attendees from 42 states and 14 foreign countries spent three days connecting with colleagues, discovering new products, and seeking new plants, nursery stock, landscape and garden items, heavy and light-duty equipment, tools, outdoor living essentials, and other allied industry products.

“The energy on the trade show floor was electric this year as our exhibitors and attendees reconnected with one another,” said MANTS Executive Vice President Vanessa A. Finney. “Business was booming, and it was easy to see that all in attendance were excited to be back full force.”

MANTS 2023 continued to mean business, enticing well-qualified buyers with high levels of purchasing power to solidify partnerships. More than 84.5 percent of MANTS attendees identified as either the final decision-makers or those who influence their companies’ purchasing decisions, while more than 76.3 percent are categorized as owners, vice presidents, managers, buyers, or sales and marketing professionals. By the end of the final show day, more than half of this year’s exhibitors had already renewed their exhibit space for the 2024 show.

“MANTS 2023 has been the busiest we’ve seen in over a decade. It’s called the masterpiece of trade shows, but it really should be called ‘THE’ show in the horticulture industry,” said Tree Seather, Sales Vice President, Greenleaf Nursery Company. “If you miss out on MANTS, you miss out on all the new innovative and necessary products you need to grow your green business.”

“As a first-time exhibitor, our global team was thrilled to ‘roll’ into the horticulture market and share our newest nursery tools at MANTS 2023,” says Scott Britton, Global Attachments Marketing Manager, Caterpillar. “This has been an outstanding experience with a positively engaged audience and the perfect opportunity to establish partnerships. We’re looking forward to venturing back to Baltimore in 2024 to introduce more B2B products that are helping to ease the skilled labor shortage.”

“This show was established 53 years ago to encourage the development and cultivation of partnerships, and from what we saw on the show floor this year, we successfully met that goal,” concluded Finney.

MANTS returns to the Baltimore Convention Center January 10-12, 2024.

## 2022 Census of Agriculture Underway

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) mailed the 2022 Census of Agriculture paper questionnaires to all known agriculture producers across the nation and Puerto Rico. Any producer who did not respond online now has the option to complete the ag census at [accounts.usda.gov](https://accounts.usda.gov) or by mail. Producers who have already responded to the 2022 Census of Agriculture online do not need to respond again. The deadline for response is Feb. 6, 2023.

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small plots of land - whether rural or urban - growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year. The Census of Agriculture, taken only once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income and expenditures. For America’s farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity.

Responding to the Census of Agriculture is required by law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113. The same law requires NASS to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and only publish in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation. NASS will release the results of the ag census in 2024.

To learn more about the Census of Agriculture, visit [www.nass.usda.gov/agcensu](https://www.nass.usda.gov/agcensu)

Hello *Gardener News* readers! The new year is upon us and Punxsutawney Phil will soon be making his winter prediction and will hopefully be announcing an early spring. Do you have your 2023 farm plan ready yet? If not, don't worry, FSA is here to help.

Last year was one of the most challenging years NJ Agriculture has experienced in quite a while. Farming has always come with challenges and risks. However, with new technology, better farming practices, and insurance programs, that risk is drastically minimized. One of the easiest things that you can do to protect your farm and your profits is to enroll in FSA.

FSA has numerous programs to help in the event of disaster. Our most utilized program is our Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). NAP covers crops that are not covered by traditional commercial insurance, such as corn, wheat, soybeans, and most specialty crops. NAP also allows for you to purchase buy-up coverage for added protection. There are a few ways you can enroll in NAP. You can enroll by calling your county FSA office and completing enrollment over the phone, or by



## USDA Farm Service Agency

By Bob Andrzejczak  
State Executive Director

### Program Participation and Acreage Reporting

visiting your county FSA office where an FSA agent will be happy to walk you through the process, or by making an appointment over the phone and we will come out to you.

At FSA our mission and #1 priority is to make sure our farmers are educated, aware, and have the necessary resources needed to succeed. Acreage reporting is hands down one thing in which every single farmer should be participating. Many farmers already record and/or report their acreage for farmland preservation or for best business practices. However, once you share your acreage reporting with FSA, you open a window of opportunity. In the event of major disaster years, congress will often pass legislation for emergency funding and ad hoc programs, for example the

current Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) and the Emergency Relief Program (ERP). The primary eligibility for emergency programs is program participation, and acreage reporting is the simplest way to participate. Going into 2023, I ask for your help in sharing the positive benefits of acreage reporting with your agriculture neighbors and friends to make sure that they do not miss out on future opportunities that may be incredibly impactful to their operation and lives.

#### Convention

The pandemic negatively affected the way we operated and interacted with one another over the past three years. NJ FSA is excited to return to the Fruit & Vegetable Grower/State Agriculture Convention in person

this year. When you see our FSA team members, please do not hesitate to come over to say hi or ask any questions.

On Tuesday (February 7th) during the convention, FSA will be holding a NAP listening session (similar to the session held during the Farm Bureau Convention). FSA is always trying to improve our programs and tailor them to the needs of our farmers. The most efficient and effective way to find out what those needs are is to hear them directly from you. Do we need to adjust planting date deadlines? Are there specific crops that should be added? Is the application process too long/burdensome? These are the types of things we want to hear from you. If you are unable to attend the convention but would still like to submit your issues

and recommended changes, you can email them to me at bob.andrzejczak@usda.gov or text them to 609-226-2459

In closing, I just want to remind everyone that we are all on the same team. Unfortunately, we see more and more farms disappearing every day. As an agriculture community we may be small, but we are tight knit. I challenge the community to help your neighbors in need. They are not your competition, they are your industry partners. Their survival is our survival. FSA is incredibly passionate about our work, and we care for our farmers and their families. Let's make sure that we work together in making 2023 successful for all of us.

**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>**

I know it's still the middle of winter and I hope the weather is showing signs of warming up. That December storm was brutal! What could we possibly talk about concerning your lawn in February? Let's find out.

Have you used any ice melters on your sidewalks and driveway? If so, depending on the types you used and the volume, including repeated applications, you may experience some turf damage once spring arrives. Rock salt is the harshest on lawns and concrete, calcium chloride may damage some turf, and magnesium chloride is the most gentle on both lawns and concrete. Remember to not use ice melt products on concrete less than one year old. Magnesium chloride is sometimes used in fertilizer blends. Be sure to tape any leftover bags of ice melter products or put them in a trash can in order to keep them safe from children and pets. Any exposure of ice melt products to air will create a useless hard-as-rock blob!

Last fall, when you stopped mowing your lawn, did you properly clean your mower,



## Turf's Up

By Todd Pretz  
Professional Turf Consultant

### Spring is coming!

perhaps change the oil, drain the gas and sharpen the blade before putting it away in the shed? If not, I would do it this month before you need it in March. If you do not feel comfortable or safe doing these tasks, please utilize a qualified lawn mower repair shop near you before they get overwhelmed with the spring rush for mower repairs. Remember, a sharp mower blade delivers a cleaner cut and reduces grass blade shredding. A dull mower blade can result in increased stress to your lawn from insects and disease.

What about your spreader? Same as above, did you clean it properly after your last use? A complete wash out and drying after each use is critical to keep a spreader operating properly.

Did you use spray lubricant on all moving parts or fill grease fittings if your spreader has any? If not, why not do these maintenance chores in February before you need it this spring?

Take an inventory of the products you have left of both fertilizers and grass seed. Grass seed should be stored in a cool, dry space, perhaps in a trash can in the garage or basement to keep critters from finding it. Fertilizer should also be taped securely for safety and to keep moisture in the air from turning it hard as rock like ice melters above. Consider an early purchase of your spring lawn care needs before the maddening spring rush comes along. Make sure your favorite store has all the products you

need. Do you need to test your soil pH?

I thought I would give you an update on the grass seed and fertilizer markets. What do we know right now? This past summer's grass seed harvest was much better than the disaster of 2021. The crops where not exposed to excessive heat and drought during harvest time. The yields per acre where normal, but we did not see any significant changes in market prices. The many rainy weekends during spring of 2022 reduced the demand for grass seed. I suppose the inflation effect of high priced grass seed also reduced demand and left many Pacific Northwest grass seed warehouses with too much grass seed to sell. The outcome

of this is no real drop in grass seed prices yet. Perhaps once we get next summer's harvest in the barn we'll see some lowering of prices.

The fertilizer market is of course dependent on worldwide markets and the volume demands for agriculture. The world needs to eat, and the supply chain for fertilizer is still upset due to the Ukraine war, China reducing exports, high farm input costs including diesel fuel, equipment and labor, etc. Prices are stable for now, but higher than last year. Perhaps we'll see some prices dropping this fall.

Remember in New Jersey you cannot apply any lawn fertilizers until March 1<sup>st</sup>! When you read this article it should be Super Bowl time, I hope your favorite team takes home the trophy and if not, at least my Eagles!

**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](http://www.jonathangreen.com)**

Here we are and it is February already! The month of hearts, chocolate and flowers! Instead of a bouquet this year, why not purchase a gorgeous new potted plant for your significant other? It will last the whole year through and remind them of you every day.

Or better yet, why not put a deposit on a stunning new landscape for 2023? Now is the time you should be talking to your landscape and hardscape professional about projects you want to create this year, if you haven't already. Speak to them early in order to get on their project calendars for 2023!

It has been an exciting start to 2023 for the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association. During January and continuing into February, we have been offering our members and guests hands-on and interactive educational workshops to assist them in following best practices, earn industry and required certifications, and better their business acumen and customer service skills. We like to call our winter workshops "NJLCA-U" where we provide speakers of the highest caliber, including successful contractors, consultants and industry experts, to increase the knowledge and skills of outdoor living industry professionals throughout the state.

Additionally, a few weeks ago, the NJLCA's incoming Combined



## The NJLCA Today

By Gail Woolcott  
Executive Director

# February is for Planning!

Board met for our January meeting and annual planning session. During this session, we review our current offerings and member benefits to determine which are successful, useful and provide something of value to our members. We review the legislative initiatives we plan to focus on, whether it be to support or oppose them, or if we can be a resource for our legislators to help create bills that are beneficial to our members' businesses and their employees, as well as the public. Furthermore, we plan for educational conferences and events as well as social events, which are most enjoyed by attendees. These include our golf outings, member mixers, holiday gala and more (stay tuned for some very cool experiences). We also plan out our monthly membership meetings and review the previous year's successes and opportunities to improve (there are no failures in our

book, just the chance to learn and grow). Finally, the Board reviews our benefits to members and discusses what else we can provide to make their membership work for them and pay for itself. It's an excellent opportunity for us to take the feedback we receive from members and apply it to our annual plan each year.

Next up for NJLCA is Landscape New Jersey 2023 Trade Show and Conference. This annual event is now in its 45<sup>th</sup> year and will be held at the Meadowlands Exposition Center on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Our largest event each year, thousands of attendees come out for this incredible one-day show, featuring everything one would need for the upcoming landscape, hardscape and nursery season. From weed eaters to excavators, plant material to fertilizers, insurance to financial services, pest control options to

mowers, Landscape New Jersey has it all! Pavers, soil amendments, building materials, wheelbarrows, snow and ice control products, trucks, trailers, and gadgets, oh my! Further, we provide educational sessions throughout the day which provide pesticide, fertilizer, tree expert and other credits needed to maintain industry certifications and licenses. In addition, we hold classes to discuss business practices, vehicle regulations, sales training and more. As we have for the past several years, this year's show will have a theme featuring Star Wars vs. Star Trek. We hope our vendors (and attendees) will participate in this fun theme as they have in the past. Don't be surprised if you run into Captain Kirk, Darth Vader and others on the trade show floor! Visit the NJLCA website for more info on this event!

I hope to see everyone at the upcoming show on March 1<sup>st</sup> and

wish you a wonderful Valentine's Day! Happy planning for your 2023 landscape, hardscape and plant installations. I'd love to see what new projects you're diving into this year!

**Editor's Note: Gail Woolcott is the Executive Director for the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association. Gail received the New York State Turf & Landscape Association 2022 "Person of the Year" award on December 1, 2022. Gail also received a proclamation from the Westchester County, New York Board of Legislators proclaiming December 1, 2022 as "Gail Woolcott Day" in Westchester County. Gail has also been presented with a community service award from the Borough of Fairview, New Jersey 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 can be reached at 201-703-3600 or by emailing gwoolcott@njlca.org.**

Recently, while on a vacation in Costa Rica, my sons and I were playing golf. While doing so, I noticed two young boys, the oldest of whom could not have been any more than eight years old. They were walking along the side of a small river that cut through the golf course collecting golf balls. The area in which they were searching was certainly a good spot for it because I had just deposited one there myself.

At first I did not think too much of it, but then a couple of holes later, as we crossed over that same river, we were approached by the two boys who offered to sell us some very nice golf balls. In somewhat broken English, the older one stated, "One dollar, one ball." As anyone who plays golf certainly knows, that is a bargain for a Titleist Pro V1, so I quickly accepted their offer and purchased five or six. As our transaction was taking place, I noticed that a groundskeeper had started working in our area. The kids noticed him as well because they made sure to keep our cart between themselves and the groundskeeper to keep from being seen. We then



## The Town Farmer

By Peter Melick  
Agricultural Producer

# Hustle

went our separate ways and I probably lost half of the balls I had purchased before the round was over.

I could not stop thinking about these kids and how this would never happen here in the United States. First of all, there wasn't another parent, adult, or even another older kid in sight. If I had to guess, their family was probably at a beach area located a few hundred yards away. These kids were roaming around, through water, over rocks, in some steep terrain, completely unsupervised. I know Americans like to picture themselves as being from the land of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, but when was the last time anyone observed any kids roaming around anywhere, while also completing business

transactions with total strangers? Nowadays, children are so heavily monitored and supervised that they are programmed to be afraid of their own shadows. And if somebody did see them, their first call would probably be to the police or to DYFS.

Also, I could not stop marveling at the business acumen and hustle shown by these kids at such a young age. This was commerce at its purest form. Through a little work they found golf balls, and then were able to find willing customers to purchase them. That's it. It's that simple. They didn't need four years at a prestigious college coupled with an M.B.A. to figure this out. Heck, they had probably just graduated from afternoon

naps. In the United States, when many kids are in their late teens, they go from having a babysitter one summer to finding a job the next. And most are woefully unprepared to enter the workforce. Sure, they might have some book smarts, but most have no meaningful work experience or ability to fend for themselves and be a productive member of society.

Jack Simplot dropped out of school in the eighth grade, in rural Idaho. He couldn't work with his father, so he went out on his own and started growing potatoes. He kept growing his farm and his potato business. He came up with a process to freeze, store and ship frozen French fries and eventually made a deal to

become the primary supplier of McDonald's. When he died, he was one of the wealthiest men in the United States. There are other examples of men and women who share similar stories

I get it, though. I fully realize that it is not in anyone's best interest to turn eight-year-old kids loose in their neighborhoods and tell them to go out and fend for themselves. A good education is still extremely important and there are child labor laws for a reason, but a good work ethic and having some common sense is also important.

**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.**

# NJ Landscape Association Hosts Special Guests at Holiday Gala

Each year the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA) hosts a Holiday Gala Landscape Achievement Awards Dinner. The 2022 event was held on December 13 at The Venetian in Garfield, Bergen County.

It was the first year the association created a theme for the event to make it more festive. The inaugural theme was the 70's and attendees were encouraged to wear 70's attire.

During the cocktail hour a band played 70's music.

The highlight was the grand entrance of Felipe Rose, the original co-founder and original Native American/Latinx member of the world renowned Village People from 1977-2017. Village People is an American disco group known for its on-stage costumes and suggestive lyrics in their music.

Rose entered the dance floor under a shower of sparks that shot over four feet in the air as he performed a version of the 1978 disco years hit songs "Macho Man" and "Y.M.C.A." to over 275 attendees.

During the award ceremony, New Jersey Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari received the association's "Legislator of the Year" award for supporting and helping to professionalize the New Jersey Landscape Industry. In the 2022-2023 Legislative Session, Senator Scutari has sponsored Bill S3010 that provides for licensure of landscape professionals and registration of professional landscaping businesses.

The Landscape Achievement Awards program was created to recognize the outstanding work designed, built and maintained by NJLCA members. The program also encourages greater public awareness of the aesthetic and environmental benefits

of landscaping. Typical entries include: residential, commercial, streetscapes, campuses, institutions, industrial, green roofs, public spaces, sustainable landscapes, water features, foundation plantings, etc.

The awards were classified into two main categories: Design/Build and Maintenance. These categories are then broken down into various subcategories, providing companies of all sizes and experience an opportunity to win an award. There are three potential awards for each subcategory: the Award of Excellence, the Award

of Distinction, and the Award of Merit, all of which are very prestigious.

The New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association (NJLCA) is a proven resource to the landscape contractor, outdoor industry service provider and supplier as well as the consumer. They are a community of industry professionals who are dedicated to advancing the integrity, proficiency and continued growth of the landscape industry. They do this through education, training and legislative advocacy.



Tom Castronovo/Photo

**Richard Goldstein, left, President of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association, chats with New Jersey Senate President Nicholas P. Scutari, after he received the associations "Legislator of the Year" award, in the front lobby of The Venetian.**



Tom Castronovo/Photo

**Richard Goldstein, left, President of the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association, chats with Felipe Rose, the original co-founder and original Native American/Latinx member of the world renowned Village People from 1977-2017 in The Venetian's Hospitality Suite.**

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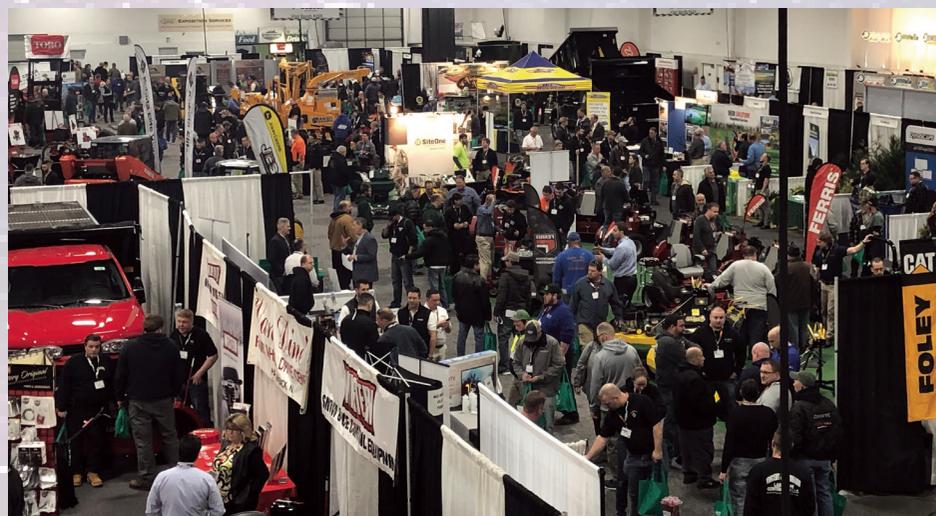
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## In the Chef's Corner

By Andy Lagana  
Chef

# Rack of Venison with Garlic Button Mushrooms

Greetings *Gardener News* family. As we continue with the blustery cold days of winter, I long for comfort food – and venison is one of my go to dishes. Venison originally referred to the meat of a game animal but now refers primarily to that of antlered, hooved species such as elk or deer. The term ‘venison’ can be used to refer to any part of the animal, so long as it is edible.

The state of New Jersey has one of the nation’s longest deer hunting seasons, from mid-September to mid-February, and a licensed hunter can hunt deer virtually anywhere with a public or private property owner’s permission, unless the land has anti-hunting restrictions.

I like venison in that it is a low fat source of protein that can easily replace beef and pork in many recipes, and is similarly categorized into specific cuts including roast, sirloin, and ribs. Some shy away from venison due to its reputation for being gamey, but there are ways to prepare it in which the strong flavor is diminished.

One of my favorite recipes at this time of year is smoked, and then seared, Rack of Venison. The ingredient list may seem like a long one, but you likely have most of them at the ready. Start with one rack of venison frenched (meaning that the bones have been scraped clean of meat and connective tissue so they stand out from the body of the meat). Gather 2 tsp of smoked paprika, 2 tsp of

brown sugar, 2 tsp of kosher salt, 1 tsp of black pepper, 1 tsp of garlic powder, 1 tsp of dried oregano, 1 tsp of dried thyme, 1/2 tsp of cayenne and canola oil.

The baste ingredients are simple and consist of 6 oz. of coffee and 1 1/2 tbsp. of Worcestershire sauce. The wild herb butter requires 2 1/2 tbsp. of melted butter, 1 1/2 tbsp. of minced garlic, 2 tsp of chopped parsley, 1 tsp of chopped sage, 1 tsp of chopped tarragon, 1 tsp of chopped rosemary, 1 tsp of flakey salt, 1/2 tsp of chopped juniper berries, 1/2 tsp of red chili flakes and 1 lemon, juiced and zested.

To start, rub your venison rack with canola oil and mix the seasoning in a bowl. Season thoroughly on all sides, then set aside until ready to use. Preheat your smoker to 225F indirect cooking. Then, add the rack of venison to the smoker and cook until it reaches 120F internal (about 30 minutes). Mix the coffee and Worcestershire, then baste the rack of venison every 10 minutes until done.

Right before the venison is done, preheat a high heat fire or oven (400F+). Pull the venison off the smoker and sear off each side for 1-2 minutes. When done, pull the venison and let it rest. As the venison rests, mix the wild herb butter in a bowl. After 10 minutes of resting, pour the butter over the top, slice, serve and enjoy.

I like to serve Garlic Button Mushrooms as a side

with this dish. This dish can use button or cremini mushrooms, with the only difference being their ages. Button mushrooms, which are white, are the youngsters while brown cremini mushrooms are an older variety. The ingredients needed are 4 tbsp of unsalted butter, 1 tbsp of olive oil, half of a chopped onion (optional), one pound of mushrooms, 2 tbsp dry white wine (optional), 1 tsp of fresh thyme leaves chopped, 2 tbsp of chopped fresh parsley and 4 cloves of minced garlic, and salt and pepper.

Heat the butter and oil in a large pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Then, sauté the onion until softened (approximately three minutes). Add the mushrooms and cook for about four to five minutes until golden and crispy on the edges. Pour in the wine and cook for two minutes to reduce slightly. Stir through the thyme, 1 tbsp of parsley and garlic. Cook for another 30 seconds, until fragrant. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with the remaining parsley.

For a starch, I like to serve a simple stuffing using French bread, roasted red potatoes or wild rice. With regard to a beverage pairing, my recommendation is a red wine with earthy or smoky flavors big enough for the meat’s taste and richness (Syrah or Cabernet Sauvignon) or a strong beer (Porter or Double Stout). Enjoy!

## Trademark Registration Increases Cost of Misusing the USDA Organic Seal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it has registered the USDA organic seal trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The USDA seal trademark is specifically described in the Organic Foods Protection Act (OFPA) and is currently protected by federal regulation. Registration of the organic seal grants additional intellectual property rights to further restrict the use of the trademark or a confusingly similar one, by uncertified farms and businesses. The trademark registration works in conjunction with OFPA and the organic regulations, providing another enforcement tool against misuse of the seal.

“While we have always had the authority to enforce against fraudulent use of the organic seal, registering the seal with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office significantly increases the cost of fraud and helps us better protect U.S. consumers and farmers” said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt.

As the trademark owner, USDA can seek additional civil remedies such as injunctive relief and monetary damages under the Lanham Act. Operations trafficking in counterfeit organic goods or otherwise willfully misusing the USDA organic seal may be subject to fines and imprisonment under the Trademark Counterfeiting Act. This also means the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can now detain, reject, or re-export imported products confirmed to be fraudulently using the USDA organic seal. Trademark authority and penalties for misusing the seal are in effect regardless of whether the ® is included.

Certified organic operations are authorized to use the organic seal to identify the composition of their products and receive a premium for those products. For consumers, the organic seal registration is just another way USDA is protecting the organic brand and strengthening organic enforcement.

Certified organic operations are not required to change their labels to include the registration mark ® of the seal, and certified organic products currently in the marketplace still meet the requirements of certification. Operations may choose either version of the seal and existing labels do not need to be revised or discarded.

If operations choose the updated version of the organic seal with the registration mark ®, it is available for download in multiple file formats on the AMS website. As always, certified operations are to seek approval from their certifier before making any product label changes.

The USDA National Organic Program works with accredited certifiers and law enforcement partners to continually strengthen farmer and consumer trust in products that display the USDA organic label. The Organic Integrity Database (OID) remains a key tool for confirming that imported and domestic products are in fact certified organic. Anyone who suspects a violation of USDA organic regulations should submit a complaint using our online complaint portal.

Winter interest is a personal topic. What one gardener finds attractive another may find mediocre at best. I have long been a fan of tan foliage in winter, a color most people probably do not associate with the term attractive.

For some plants, the tan foliage of winter has a touch more red, giving the foliage a more lively glow for the winter garden. A low maintenance groundcover I have long appreciated for this trait is *Persicaria affinis*, commonly called Himalayan Bistort.

Might I first mention, unlike many of its ill-mannered relatives *Persicaria affinis* is not invasive! It is a member of the *Polygonaceae* or *Buckwheat* family with around 130 species native to nearly all regions throughout the world. As the common name implies, Himalayan Bistort is native to the mountainous regions of Afghanistan and Eastern Nepal into China at elevations of 9,500-15,500 feet! For well over a century, the plant was known as *Polygonum affine*, with the genus name described in 1753 by the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778). The name *Polygonum* comes from the Greek *Polu* for many and *Gonu*



## Morris County Park Commission

By Bruce Crawford  
Horticultural Manager

### A Colorful and Cohesive Tan for the Winter Garden

for knees, referring to the many swollen joints along the stem.

*Polygonum affine* was initially described in 1825 by the Scottish Botanist, David Don (1799-1841). Although he never traveled to the Himalayas, he studied plants collected by the Scottish physician and botanist Francis Buchanan Hamilton (1762-1829) and from the Danish physician and botanist Nathaniel Wolff Wallich (1786-1854). The epithet of *Affine* is from the Latin meaning 'related' or 'similar to', describing how this low growing species appears similar to the traditional *Polygonum* Linnaeus described.

This name remained unchanged until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it became apparent the genus had not one but several different 'family trees' under the umbrella of the

one genus. In 1988 some of these family trees were teased apart by the Belgian botanist Louis Ronse de Craene (1962- ) and Himalayan Bistort was renamed *Persicaria affinis*. The name comes from the Latin noun *Persicum* for peach, referencing how plants in this genus have leaves resembling that of a peach tree.

*Persicaria affinis* is a garden workhorse. It has trailing stems allowing it to creep along the ground, with the basal foliage reaching heights of 4-6". It spreads at a moderate rate, expanding from 6" to 18" in diameter over the course of several years. As expected, the 3-4" long foliage is shaped much like a peach with the elliptical leaves coming to a point at either end. Come the heavy frosts of autumn, the foliage develops a

showy spectrum of orange, green and red colors. The central midrib of many of the leaves, even those that are still green, turns red as well, making for an awesome autumn display. Come late fall, all the leaves transition to a reddish tan and remain firmly attached to the stems, covering the ground throughout winter. Come spring, the fresh green foliage emerges from the jointed stems, concealing the previous year's tan foliage. This benefits the gardener since nothing needs to be cut back, none of the previous year's foliage needs removal and the older foliage serves as mulch!

Come June through September, plants develop 10-12" tall floral spikes with the top 2-3" bearing dense displays of flowers arranged radially around the stem. As the flowers age, they transition to a deep attractive red,

providing the plant with a two-tone appearance as new spikes of light pink flowers continue to be produced. Plants grow best in full sun and in moisture retentive yet well-drained soils in zones 5-8. Plants will tolerate light shade, especially in more southern regions where the cooler locations of the shade prove beneficial.

Clearly, *Persicaria affinis* has a lot to offer the garden throughout the year, including the winter. To me, the winter garden should be a blend of various shades of tan complimented with evergreens. Himalayan Bistort provides a magical touch of texture and color that will convince even the most questioning of gardeners that tan is far from mediocre, but a cohesive color for the winter garden!

**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](mailto:BCrawford@morrisparks.net)

## Big Flower - Little Plant

By Hubert Ling  
Contributing Writer

Native plants are often thought of as having small flowers on large plants. This is true certainly of Maryland figwort with ¼ inch brown flowers atop 7 foot plants. But how about raising a native lily, only 2 feet tall, which sports clusters of 2-4 shocking red flowers which are 2.5 inches across? These blooms may last for up to 4 weeks.

In contrast to the ubiquitous Asiatic day lily, our native lilies are relatively rare and slow growing. NJ has three native lilies: the spectacular Turk's cap lily *Lilium superbum* which grows 4-11 feet tall and can have 50+ flowers; the demure 4-7 foot Canada lily *L. canadense*; and the bright, cheerful 2 foot wood lily, *L. philadelphicum*.

Wood lily has the largest range of any native North

American lily and has been found in 33 US states and five Canadian provinces. However, this range is rapidly shrinking due to human encroachment and deer browsing. BONAP lists wood lily as rare in about half of its range. In NJ and RI it is listed as a S2 (very rare), and S1 (endangered) in GA; we have only seen it once in the wild in NJ.

Wood lilies come in a variety of colors: they are bright red, red-magenta, red-orange, hot pink, pale orange, or yellow with six tepals (the petals and sepals are almost indistinguishable). Each wide tepal is about one inch long and has a narrow, long stem. This gives the flower an airy, whimsical look. At the lower half of each tepal are generally 1-3 dozen small brownish-red or maroon spots similar to what you expect in a tiger lily. Another unusual feature of the flower is that it faces straight up at the viewer.

This is rather unique since, as you may recall, Easter lilies face sideways or even slant down. Why wood lilies face up and expose the anthers and stigmas directly to wind and rain is an unanswered mystery. Wood lilies can compensate for this since they can temporarily close their anther pores in bad weather. Two other lilies, which look similar to wood lily, are pine lily, *Lilium catesbaei*, a native of southeastern US, and fire lily, *Lilium bulbiferum* from Europe. Both these lilies also face up. The sessile narrow leaves of wood lily are generally alternate at the base of the stem but switch to whorled near the terminal flowers.

In earlier times when wood lilies were common, Native Americans used them for food, medicine, and witchcraft. The bulbs were used for food and, after cooking, also applied to wounds, and used to

treat assorted ailments in a tea form. Lilies were also thought to help deliver the afterbirth, and the Chippewa used it to treat dog bites; it was also thought to make dog fangs drop out. The whole plant was used as a romantic aid, and if sun-dried wood lilies twisted together as they dried, that was an indication that one's wife was unfaithful (no comments about husbands). Currently it would be a crime to use wood lilies for anything but adding color to your yard. Never remove these uncommon plants from the wild, and choose a reputable source when you purchase them.

A warning to cat owners! Cats are very sensitive to lily toxicity. Apparently any part of the lily, even the pollen, can cause problems for cats. Rapid treatment is necessary and kidney damage and death are very real possibilities.

Wood lilies actually grow best in meadows; regularly maintained power

line rights-of-way are ideal habitats. The plants like full sun and well drained, fertile soil. Wood lilies supply both nectar and pollen to their pollinators. Swallowtail, monarch, and great spangled fritillary butterflies appear to be the primary pollinators, but the flowers are also visited by hummingbirds, hummingbird moths and bees.

Propagation is by seed or by planting bulb scales. Development is slow, so expect several years of growth before flowering. The plants and seeds are available commercially. If you want a spectacular addition to your yard, consider adding the beautiful wood lily to your spring plans.

**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](mailto:milhubling@verizon.net)

# Gardener News

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# Conditioning your Roses for Longevity

(Continued from page 1)

supermarket, big box store, or a street vendor. Gently squeeze them at their base, where the petals come together at the stem. If they feel squishy, the roses are old and you should avoid them. If they feel firm, the roses are fresh. Also, examine the tips of the petals to make sure they aren't bruised or brown.

Once the roses arrive in your home or office, keep them in a cool spot and away from direct sunlight. The cooler the better, usually 55-65 degrees. Refrain from placing them near heating or air vents.

Now, let's jump into a little cut rose science here.

First and foremost, roses and all cut flowers need water and food to survive.

Cut roses lose water through the stomata on their leaves. If the lost water is not replenished through the cut end of the stem, the water balance will be disturbed. The uptake and delivery of water to the rose can be maintained by clean stem ends, where the water-conducting vessels within the stem (xylem) have an unobstructed path for carrying water to the leaves and the flower.

Once you have received your cut roses,

the important thing is to provide water immediately. The stem needs to take up as much water as the rose is using and losing. This natural loss of water is called transpiration. Most rose petals are lost through wilt or dehydration because moisture is transpired out of the flower quicker than it is taken in through the stem. A high level of moisture in the petals (turgidity) is necessary for the flowers to develop from a bud into a mature blossom.

Another important consideration is the quality of the water. Factors such as fluoride, pH and total dissolved salt can play an important role in determining the vase life of cut roses. Tap water is generally fine for the container, unless you have a water softener. Soft water, which has high amounts of sodium, is not good for flowers. Distilled water will work better.

It is best to use a ceramic or dark green or blue glass vase. Clear vases allow sunlight to reach the water, and this can cause rose stems to decay quicker. If you only have a clear glass container, be sure to keep it somewhere out of the sun.

(Cont. on Page 22)



Tom Castronovo/Photo

**Amy Craig, a floral designer at J&M Home and Garden in Madison, Morris County, NJ, inserts a water tube on a rose stem, as she creates a beautiful bouquet. Water tubes will help hydrate and pro-long the life of roses from the florist to their final destination. Water tubes are small plastic cylinders shaped like a test tube, which you can fill with water to keep your cut flowers hydrated.**

A parent arrived at a winter gardening session in our school wildlife habitat garden to volunteer for the first time with his child. While standing in the center of our quarter-acre pollinator garden of fall plants after a frost, I explained what a wildlife habitat garden is and described how we *leave most of the perennial plants standing through the winter* to benefit wildlife.

We only trim back stems blocking our walking paths. The plants' seed heads are left standing to provide food for the birds. For example, we leave our echinacea (purple coneflower) standing. Its seeds are preferred by winter birds. *Different layers of plant life, including dense shrubs, make ideal conditions for birds to raise their young.* The garden sections are thick with long-stemmed plants that provide insulation and protection for other plants that are sensitive to frigid temperatures. These plants are important nesting sites for beneficial insects. Our new garden volunteers now understand why we had not cleaned out our garden beds like people often do where they live.

*Teaching gardening to children continues year-round in a wildlife habitat garden.* When the first frost hits, outlining the plants in shimmering ice crystals, nature has announced that the time has come to teach *Growing Gardeners* about winter gardening. *A wildlife habitat garden includes shelter for cover, food, water, and space to raise young, while gardening sustainably* without chemicals to keep soil, water, and air healthy. There are numerous winter



## Growing Gardeners

By Diana Dove  
Environmental Educator

# How Leaves, Rocks, Logs & Roosting Boxes Help Wildlife in a Winter Garden

garden activities for young gardeners and some things that should be left alone. We instruct the children not to rake the leaves out of the garden beds. There is an enormous white oak tree at the lower end of our garden dropping thousands of leaves directly into our garden beds. It is important to leave the "leaf cover" after removing diseased leaves. The leaves blanket the ground and protect some of the plants and life in the soil during wintery days and nights. We leave the plant stalks, stems, and seed heads in the garden until March, when we schedule volunteers to help prepare the garden beds for spring gardening.

*Gardens need rock piles and logs.* Children love making these piles to provide cover that benefits ladybugs, toads, centipedes, and snakes... all predators of garden pests. Each pile becomes a mini microclimate. According to "Growing with Nature" ([www.growingwithnature.org](http://www.growingwithnature.org)), the rocks may absorb heat during the day and release it at night helping to warm the plants in the rock's immediate area.

*Consider adding some well-made roosting boxes* to your

wildlife habitat garden designed to protect birds from the cold winds, frigid temperatures, and predators. Before winter, organize woodworking workshops engaging woodworking teachers and their students in making winter roosting boxes with perches at several levels inside the box. If you have a Woodworking School in your area, coordinate a workshop using their facility. Nature centers might be interested in adding this activity to their programs as a family activity. If you prefer to purchase some, your local plant nursery, arboretum, and online sights may have some for sale. Etsy offers some that are five-star rated.

*A roosting box is different from a nest box.* It is described by [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) as a box with less ventilation to hold in the birds' body heat. The front panel is inverted so the entrance hole is near the bottom of the box. This holds the rising warmth inside the box and keeps it from escaping.

*Providing food and a water source is critical, including water in the winter that is not frozen.* Native food sources could

include plants with berries, seeds, nuts, fruit, and nectar. Selecting plants without neonicotinoids is vitally important to protect pollinators. Solar water heaters, designed for bird baths, could keep water from freezing.

*Native plant diversity is a goal.* Research your garden plants. Though perennials should be left standing, plants with mildew, or damaged or diseased plant material, must be removed. Remember, do not deadhead your perennials, but do allow your leaves to be a winter blanket for your garden. Your garden will feed wildlife and the stems will serve as winter protection for insects.

*Think about ways to educate others.* Our youth gardeners display educational exhibits at town wide events, teaching the public about gardening for pollinators and other wildlife. As we garden with youth, they learn that gardening for wildlife not only benefits birds and other wildlife, but *it promotes biodiversity and improves the overall environment* of the area. Consider sponsoring a grant in your area for a community or school wildlife habitat garden.

Thank you to all who garden and maintain a wildlife habitat garden, and especially to those who teach youth to garden so that they may become *Growing Gardeners*.

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

## Virtual Tour of The Gardens at Ball Now Available

The Gardens at Ball may be taking a Winter nap, but you can still enjoy the colorful 2022 Summer trial season through a NEW 3D Map experience using Matterport® immersive tour photography and 360 camera technology. Ball Seed®, North America's leading horticultural distributor, captured The Gardens at the height of its Summer color and is sharing this unique map perspective with the industry to help the trials live on and continue to inspire.

Map users can choose from several garden stations in an overhead map at [www.ballseed.com/gardens](http://www.ballseed.com/gardens). From there they can journey through each space using map tools, including product markers for additional plant information, as well as video icons that pop-up product experts highlighting key introductions for the 2023 selling season. The tour experience works on all types of devices, including tablets and mobile phones, as well as

Oculus VR headsets for an even more immersive view.

"The Gardens at Ball have been a must-see destination of the industry for nearly 90 years. Now you can revisit the trials anytime you wish in this unconventional but impactful way," says Stephanie Vincenti, marketing manager for Ball Seed. "We're excited for what this new map technology means for next-level service as we educate our customers on plant performance and offer ongoing product support."

Ball Seed chose camera and software technology from Matterport Inc. to digitize this important space and preserve it at its height of color for all to enjoy. The Gardens at Ball have been the evaluation and testing grounds for the horticulture industry since 1933. It is a beloved feature of the Ball Horticultural Company West Chicago, Illinois, campus and spans more than 12 acres of landscaped displays.

Each Summer, more than 145,000 plants go into The Gardens at Ball representing over 1,800 different varieties from +200 genera and 80 breeding companies. Four acres of The Gardens are re-designed each year, so there's always something new to explore. Planting begins in April/May and timed for peak color during the annual Ball Seed Customer Days event the last Friday in July.

Ball Seed is North America's leading wholesale horticultural distributor. It combines extensive experience, innovative thinking and world-class customer service to ensure professional growers have the best products, most efficient tools, and dynamic growing solutions. Visit [www.ballseed.com](http://www.ballseed.com) for more information and check live availability and order through Ball Seed WebTrack®.

To begin your virtual tour experience, visit [www.ballseed.com/gardens](http://www.ballseed.com/gardens).

As I drive around Delaware County and beyond, I don't have to drive far to spot ever expanding vestiges of bamboo devouring the landscape. Most of these, if not all, were once intentionally planted as an accent to the garden or in many cases as a "miracle" plant that would quickly screen neighbors.

There is no doubt that most bamboos have an elegant quality, tall green stems that are often arching with delicate evergreen leaves. However, bamboo has now become the bane of many property owners due to the extremely invasive nature of many species, so much so that many municipalities like Swarthmore, Radnor, etc. now have ordinances in place that bans the planting of the "running" types of bamboo, and in some cases puts the responsibility on the homeowner to keep their bamboos contained.

China is the center for bamboo diversity. Hundreds of native species occur there, but they are also found throughout Asia, as well as other parts of the world. There are even some bamboos native in the United States. Throughout the Southeast and even into parts of Pennsylvania is the giant cane bamboo, *Arundinaria gigantea*, which can be found often arching over streams.

Many of us have been



## Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

By Andrew Bunting  
Vice President of Horticulture

# "Bamboo"zled

tempted by bamboos over the years, thinking we can contain them and reap the ornamental benefits they do possess. Probably 20 years ago, I planted a very attractive low growing bamboo, *Shibataea kumasaca*, between my garage and my neighbor's property. Reaching only three feet tall, I figured it was containable. It was fine for the first five years or so but then started creeping and consuming adjacent beds, so I was forced to remove it. Just the other day at Longwood Gardens, in the beds in the parking lot, I observed the low growing attractive *Sasa veitchii* which has edges of the leaves that turn beige giving it a variegated look. This entire bed is encircled with asphalt, but even so I have seen instances where the bamboo will start to penetrate the asphalt. At the Scott Arboretum, there is a handsome stand of *Phyllostachys nigra* which has stunning black, smooth,

sinuous stems and green foliage above. This planting is basically surrounded by cement edging that goes probably two feet into the soil to contain this otherwise very aggressive species.

Essentially, there are two groups of bamboos. Most species are the "running" types such as *Phyllostachys*, *Bambusa*, *Pseudosasa*, *Shibataea*, *Sasa*, *Sinarundinaria* and many more. There are some species that don't "run" and are manageable in the landscape and these are considered "clumping" types and these would include *Fargesia*, which is hardy in this area.

In this area, the most ubiquitous and aggressive of the bamboos are any number of *Phyllostachys* including *P. aurea* and *P. aureosulcata* which would have hints of yellow and gold in the culms, which is the technical term for the stems. There are many species of the most typical

green bamboo, which is characterized by green stems and foliage. One of the most common is Bisset's bamboo, *Phyllostachys bissetii*.

Any of the "running" types of bamboo become problematic very quickly in the garden and landscape. They spread by horizontal spreading stems and colonize the adjacent ground with both surface stems and stems just below the surface of the soil. There are products that can be purchased and inserted into the ground to help contain bamboo, or trenching along the edge of the clump and creating a metal or concrete edge can help as well, however it just takes one stem to escape the barrier for the bamboo to run rampant. There are many local instances of what was thought to be contained bamboo escaping and invading adjacent neighbors' properties and wreaking havoc. Once a mass of the "running" types of bamboos is

well established, eradication can be time consuming and often very expensive.

In recent years, some of the clump forming bamboos have gained in popularity. *Fargesia rufa* 'Green Panda' forms a tight cascading clump to ten feet tall, and the Chinese fountain bamboo, *Fargesia nitida*, can reach ten to fifteen feet tall.

**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>

## 2023 PHS Philadelphia Flower Show Returns to Convention Center

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) is thrilled to bring the Flower Show back to the Pennsylvania Convention Center at 1101 Arch Street in Philadelphia from March 4 - 12, 2023. This year's Show celebrates the start of spring and invites guests to experience all the spectacular and decadent floral displays that the award-winning Flower Show is known for.

This year's theme, 'The Garden Electric,' ignites that spark of joy that comes while giving or receiving flowers. From the dazzling array of colors, unique shapes and textures, and rich fragrances of gorgeous floral displays and gardens come feelings

of excitement and celebration. This year's theme brings the electrifying presence of today's most dynamic designers of floral arrangements, lush gardens, and landscapes to visitors from around the world.

The 2023 Flower Show has taken the most beloved aspects of the past 2 outdoor Shows and incorporated the festival-style elements into the indoor event for the first time. This integration of outdoor elements into the indoor format creates a familiar, yet fresh approach to experiential activities for guests to enjoy in addition to the stunning floral and garden exhibits.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural

Society (PHS), an internationally recognized nonprofit organization founded in 1827, uses horticulture to advance the health and well-being of the Greater Philadelphia region.

The PHS Philadelphia Flower Show is the nation's largest, and the world's longest-running horticultural event and features stunning displays by some of the world's premier floral and landscape designers. Started in 1829 by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Show introduces diverse and sustainable plant varieties and garden and design concepts. In addition to acres of garden displays, the Flower Show hosts world-renowned competitions

in horticulture and artistic floral arranging, gardening presentations and demonstrations, and special events.

Your Flower Show ticket provides support for PHS's year-round work in the Greater Philadelphia region to advance the health and well-being of our shared community. The Flower Show helps fund the thousands of trees PHS plants each year, the design and maintenance of our free public gardens for all, and the support of more than 170 community gardens throughout the region.

To purchase tickets, visit <https://tickets.phsonline.org/events?category=Admission>

# 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.*

## PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Agriculture Secretary Releases Guidance for Farms and Rural Communities Considering Solar Energy Production

Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding released guidance for landowners considering solar production on farmland and in rural communities in Pennsylvania. The guidance outlines Wolf Administration support for technologies that create jobs and generate farm income without compromising food and fiber production. Solar energy is climate-smart technology that meets those goals while reducing emissions and helping reduce the negative impacts of climate change.

“Pennsylvania’s farmland is a precious resource for producing food, protecting our environment, and feeding our economy,” said Redding. “Solar energy production holds tremendous potential for generating electricity to power farm operations and furthering Pennsylvania’s transition to a clean-energy future. If carefully planned, well-situated and properly maintained, solar production will not compromise or diminish valuable farmland resources, rather it will enhance them.”

Issues to guide business decision-making include:

- Sustainable site selection placing priority on roofs, parking lots or brownfields rather than agricultural or forested land, avoiding premium quality soil locations altogether.
- Maintenance that protects soil and pollinators through native vegetation free of invasive species; gives priority to grazing vs. mowing, compensating farmers for the service; and includes decommissioning plans to fully restore any soil at a project’s completion.
- Integration of energy and agricultural production in a way that is complimentary rather than competitive.

The guidance outlines additional considerations for owners of farmland including the impact solar production would have on the farm’s enrollment in preferential tax programs, preserved farm status, local zoning, environmental permits and conservation plans and other issues.

Complete guidance, including a list of frequently asked questions and additional resources for going solar, can be found on the department website, [agriculture.pa.gov](http://agriculture.pa.gov).

## NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### 2023 Ldd (Gypsy Moth)

### Treatment Program Announced

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) is seeking to treat 5,100 acres of residential- and county-owned properties in Burlington, Cape May, and Ocean counties this year to combat the tree-killing *Lymantria dispar dispar* (LDD – formerly called the gypsy moth).

“By treating these areas now, it will help prevent the spread of this insect and significantly reduce its populations for years to come,” New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher said. “This program has been very effective over the last several years and helps preserve the valuable trees and plants that are a food source for this destructive pest.”

The NJDA held an informational session in Ewing on Wednesday to outline its 2023 Aerial LDD Suppression program. Egg mass surveys were conducted from August to December in 2022.

A combined eight municipalities in Burlington, Cape May and Ocean counties are recommended for treatment. Participation in the program is voluntary. If the towns agree, treatments will take place in May and June. To qualify for the program, a residential or recreational forest must have an average of more than 500 egg masses per acre and be at least 40 acres in size. A single egg mass contains up to 500 eggs.

Approximately 8,961 acres were recommended for treatment in 2022 in Burlington and Cape May counties. The previous year, only 50 acres were treated in Cape May County and one municipality in Burlington County opted to not to treat 120 acres. There were no areas of the state recommended for treatment in 2019 and 2020. From 2017 to 2018, the NJDA’s program included approximately 3,900 acres of residential and county owned properties in Burlington, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren counties. That was about an 80 percent reduction from what was treated in the 2016 program. The population decrease was the result of effective treatments and sporadic *E. maimaiga* (an LDD moth fungus) activity.

The NJDA and Department of Environmental Protection use *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) to combat the LDD moth. It is a biological insecticide that kills the LDD caterpillar when ingested.

Two to three consecutive years of significant defoliation (defined as 75 percent or more) can kill an otherwise healthy tree. However, any LDD defoliation can make trees more susceptible to other damage that can lead to the death of the tree. Oak trees are the preferred host for LDD, but the caterpillars can be found feeding on almost any tree.

Regional meetings to outline the treatment plan are scheduled at 10 a.m. on January 18 at the Woodland Township Municipal Building in Burlington County, and 10 a.m. on January 19 at the Dennis Township Municipal Building in Cape May County.

For more information on New Jersey’s LDD suppression program, visit: [www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gypsymoth.html](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/pi/prog/gypsymoth.html). Also, for national LDD material, visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/the-threat/spongy-moth>.



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# DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE NEWS

## DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Arbor Day Poster Contest

The Delaware Forest Service is now seeking entries for its annual Arbor Day Poster Contest, open to all K-5 public, private, homeschool, after-school, and other organized youth groups. Designed to increase student knowledge about trees and forest resources, the contest is a great way for students to learn about the role trees play in our communities and their direct impact on Delawareans' health and well-being.

This year's theme, "Trees are Terrific...In All Shapes and Sizes!" highlights the importance of tree diversity in our community forests, which attracts a variety of wildlife and is more visually stimulating.

Arbor Day is Friday, April 28.

Posters will be judged on originality, use of theme,

neatness, and artistic expression. Each winner receives a gift card, a tree-themed book, and a tree planting at their school. Twelve winners will be selected, one from each county in four grade categories: kindergarten, grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4, and grade 5. All participating classes will receive free loblolly pine seedlings delivered to their school.

The 12 winners will be invited to the annual Statewide Arbor Day Celebration hosted by Governor Carney. A tree planting ceremony will also be scheduled at each winner's school to celebrate Arbor Day. The deadline to register is March 9, with entries submitted by April 1.

Register to Participate and Receive Seedlings: [2023arbordaypostercontest.eventbrite.com](https://2023arbordaypostercontest.eventbrite.com)

Contest Guidelines and Teacher Resources: [tinyurl.com/rzzagf6](https://tinyurl.com/rzzagf6) (Shared Google Drive)

Planting a tree is a fun activity we can enjoy today, knowing that the tree will continue to improve our lives over time. Trees planted throughout our communities not only provide beauty but help shade our streets and schoolyards and create habitat and food for wildlife. Trees planted today will also be terrific "tomorrow" as they improve air quality, muffle noise, moderate air temperatures, filter run-off into streams and rivers, and reduce energy consumption.

For more information, contact: [ashley.melvin@delaware.gov](mailto:ashley.melvin@delaware.gov)

## VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Farmers a Force in 2022: Reflections on a Year Gone By

As we pull out our 2023 calendar, we reflect on the year that was, and the year to be. Vermont Agriculture continues to grow and adapt. Farmers and all those who help them put food on our table are a creative and resilient force. No matter what 2022 threw at them they were up to the challenge. All were facing inflation and labor issues, but Vermont farmers continued to produce high quality food for our region and the nation. This effort does not happen without a strong commitment from many hands.

Agriculture faced strong head winds with substantial increases in the cost of feed and fuel, but we continued to rally. For example, organic dairies stared down menacing 50% increases in the cost of feed because of supply chain issues. While Vermont was able to stand up a \$200,000 granting program to help with on-farm needs to meet the demands of new markets, unmanageable day-to-day costs remain. Working with regional partners, the Agency appealed to USDA to see if the federal government could offer support. We hope good news will come soon.

Vermont made record investments in our rural communities. This investment will be making their way to farmers, producers and those making their living off the land in 2023. Many of the policies were proposed by the Governor's Future of Agriculture Commission. The Commission suggested investing in food related businesses so they could grow and feed more Vermonters and those in the region. A \$40 million dollar program led by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development will issue grants to businesses that need to invest in new infrastructure. For example, these investments could help with storage, distribution, waste management, and meat processing for Vermont companies. We have already seen one slaughterhouse receive substantial funding from this program as well as USDA and the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Fund. Construction is underway and we look forward to more projects like this in 2023.

The Working Lands Program also will help farmers, producers and those who work in the woods. More than \$3 million dollars will support farmers and producers so that they can make food more affordable. The Working Lands Program is proven to grow Vermont's rural economy while producing products. These dollars will be distributed in 2023, which is great news for a more robust food and forestry system.

The Commission also proposed investing in more technology to help dairy farmers manage their businesses. This could mean upgrades to help with manure management, milking equipment or infrastructure. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is committed to this priority. The Center housed at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture recently awarded more than one million dollars to dairy farmers to improve their on-farm milk storage and handling. We hope to have a second program in 2023 to protect farmers' milk and support tremendous needs related to milk storage, cooling, refrigeration, and processing of dairy. We encourage all those working in dairy to follow the Northeast Dairy Innovation Center. We are working closely with processors

and farmers to support this important industry in Vermont and our region.

This year a special focus emerged to support and attract the next generation of young farmers. Working with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Agency will deliver a report on recruiting and supporting youth in agriculture. We spent the summer talking with many partners on this important issue and we will be working with the legislature on next steps in 2023.

Farmers are also coping with climate change. They stand ready to help improve the environment by implementing Climate Smart Farming. The Agency's budget includes spending nearly \$5 million dollars more on agronomic practices that mitigate climate change. This includes planting more cover crops and improving soil health, such as reducing phosphorus losses from agricultural fields. The budget also includes dollars for the Payment for Ecosystems Program, which protects environmental health, rewards farmers for helping protect our collective environment, and provides performance-based payments to Vermont farmers. This \$1 million dollar program creates a pilot that could reward farmers for best practices that improve the environment and the climate. It will be an important year for these pilot programs as those dollars reach the field.

The Agency's lab in Randolph continues to support all our state agricultural programs. The lab protects consumers and ensures the health and safety of agriculture and water quality programs. We also are supporting other agencies like Education and Agency of Natural Resources when they need our expertise.

Also in 2022, we made significant investments in food security programs, farm-to-school programs, early educator grants, and child nutrition investments in our schools. This approach means all Vermonters can benefit from healthy, nutritious food and a robust local food system.

It was a great year for Vermont maple. After a few down years due to weather, sugarmakers produced a significant crop. Vermont continues to lead the nation in maple production with more than 50% of the syrup produced in the United States coming from Vermont maple trees. We continue to support this important and growing sector and have added staff to the agency to offer marketing and technical support. We also have employees working on compliance and quality issues ensuring integrity remains a high priority for those producing and selling Vermont maple.

These commitments to Vermont agriculture underscore its importance in our everyday lives. We are grateful for the support of Vermonters, farmers, producers, and those working in Montpelier and Washington. There is much work to do but our approach creates opportunities, while helping feed the region and keeping our land in production. We are grateful for all your support and look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2023.

Happy New Year!!

Secretary Anson Tebbetts

# Conditioning your Roses for Longevity

(Continued from page 17)

When you fill the container, don't use water that's too hot or too cold. Extreme temperatures can shock the blooms and shorten their life, so it's better to use lukewarm or room-temperature water. The amount of water to fill the vase is important too—not too much or too little—so filling the vase 3/4 full of water is just about right.

Now look closely at the stems. Sometimes roses have been without water for quite some time, and you have to trim the stems, making sure to cut off the dry part completely. Most of the time cutting off one or two inches will suffice. Use very sharp scissors or a knife to do that, and make sure your scissors or knife are clean and free of bacteria. Cut off the stems at a 45-degree angle and immediately put your roses in the container. Cutting flowers under a

stream of water is a good idea. This helps the flowers to absorb water immediately. Make sure the water level in your container is at least 6-8 inches deep.

Changing the water regularly will help keep your blooms fresh. When you change the water, be sure to remove spent leaves and petals that have fallen. Debris left in the water can rot and shorten the life of your blooms. Florists recommend changing the water every few days, especially if it's cloudy, to keep the water fresh—when you do, this is a good time to re-trim the stems and add flower food to the fresh water.

Once you've conditioned your roses, place your arrangement in a shaded, cool area that receives no direct sunlight as the colder temperature helps preserve the blooms. Windowsills and

warm, bright rooms aren't recommended for roses as they will dehydrate faster, which makes roses wilt. Also, keep them away from fresh fruit! It might sound weird, but fruit releases the natural gas ethylene that makes roses fade fast.

When your roses are starting to open, they use a lot of water. So, pay close attention to the water level, it will lower quickly in the first few days.

Every three days or so, again using clean and bacteria-free sharp scissors or pruning shears, snip about one inch from the bottom of each stem at a 45-degree angle. Doing so will allow your fresh-cut roses' stems to absorb more water and keep them alive for a longer time. Make sure to keep to time out of the water as minimal as possible.

Now we need to talk about

food. Due to the low light environment that cut roses are exposed to after harvest, they make negligible amounts of food via photosynthesis.

There are many commercial floral foods available on the market, and the retail florist, wholesale florist, and grower should take advantage of their life-extending properties for cut roses and foliage.

The three main ingredients in commercial floral preservatives are sugar (food), bactericide, and an acidifier.

It is important when using a commercial preservative that the solution be completely mixed. A lump of undissolved preservative can clog the rose stem just as bacteria and/or dirt do in unsanitary containers.

Without sounding repetitive, make sure your container is sparkling clean

so you can create a bacteria-free, healthy environment for your cut rose longevity.

In closing, I hope your Valentine's Day has warm wishes from cool places!

P.S. Happy Valentine's Day, Mom!

**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

● February 5, 2023 ○

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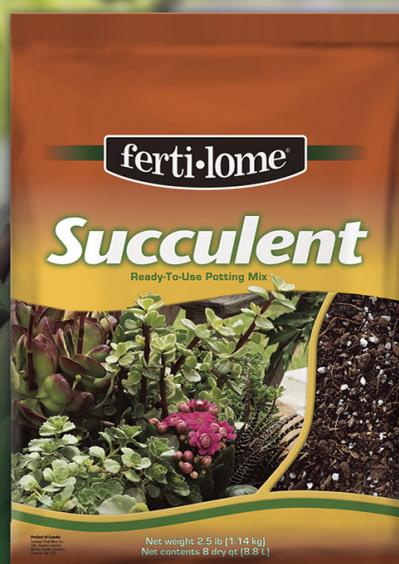
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