



“What’s Growing On...”

Volume 17 Number 3 Fall 2014 Edition Published Quarterly

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**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
ON THE RADIO**

For agriculture news and horticultural tips, listen to me, Pam Burton, on the RCE Agricultural Program on Monday, Wednesday & Thursday on WSNJ AM 1240 at **11:30 pm** announcing local workshops, seminars, and horticultural tips.

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From The Desk of Pam Burton

It’s fall and come October I will have been back here at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County in the position of Home Horticulture/Master Gardener Program Coordinator for one whole year. I say back here because I was actually a 4-H Program Assistant for a short while as I did a gardening program with “Patches” the 4-H scarecrow. I said when I started this job that it will take one full year for me to really understand the Program and all of the events and projects we are involved in as Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County and no truer words could be spoken. Every day brings a different challenge and I have enjoyed the people I have met along the way. My most sincere thanks to the Master Gardeners and all of my friends at the Extension Center for making me feel welcome.

Fall is the time for all things scarecrow, pumpkin, spiders, mums, leaves and so much more. I love the fall season where the crisp days require an extra sweater layer and maybe a scarf and where families gather to give thanks. We were thankful of a mild summer following a harsh winter and we can only hope that as the fall leaves change color and winter winds come our way, that maybe Mother Nature will send us a kinder winter than last year! Our garden journals are brimming full of harvest totals with copious notes on what worked and didn’t work for next year’s considerations as we go through the process of beginning to put our gardens to rest for the winter.

Happy harvesting,



Blackbirds

The group of birds that are referred to as blackbirds includes approximately half dozen species of birds, including red-winged blackbirds, grackles, starlings and cowbirds. They feed on a mixed diet of vegetables and seeds, including mature fruit. Imagine your disappointment when you go out to harvest the peppers, strawberries, tomatoes or sweet corn only to find that damage has been done to it by blackbirds. In general these birds will shift to vegetative matter in late summer, early fall, just about the time our crops come to fruition. The damage may be more intense during dry periods when the birds look to fruit for moisture.

There are non-chemical blackbird control methods including the use of closely fitted netting placed over the crop or seed bed.

The choice of variety can make a difference such as consideration of planting corn varieties with long tight husks which are more resistant to bird damage than those with short, loose husks. Also, once the pollen shed is complete or when the corn silks are brown, cover the ears with brown paper bags.

With some crops the timing of the harvest is important. For instance, it can't come as any surprise that sunflowers should be harvested immediately upon maturation.

Since the blackbirds like seed, transplants are recommended versus seeds wherever possible. For example cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and lettuce will fare better as a transplant than as seeds. You may be able to find some pre-treated seed that could protect the seed long enough for it to become established.

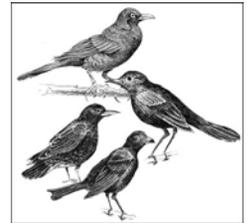
For temporary relief you can place stakes and flags 15 to 20 feet apart in all directions with strips of cloth on the tops, run string from stake to stake at 5 foot intervals, try twirlers, or shiny bright objects that flash in the sun. However, the birds will become used to them.

It should be noted that toxic baits and bird repellants are NOT labelled for use in the vegetable garden and the use of mothballs scattered over the seedbeds have shown very limited success.

Sources:

Rutgers Fact Sheet FS391: Blackbirds in the Vegetable Garden

Rutgers Plant & Pest Advisory Organic Edition June 9, 2000: "Blackbirds" and Agriculture, by Janet L. Bucknall, Wildlife Biologist and State Director, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services



Home Gardening Workshops

These workshops are open to the public and will be taught by Master Gardeners at the Education Extension Center, 291 Morton Ave., Millville, NJ for a reasonable fee! Watch your paper for additional details to follow! Pre-paid registration required to confirm reservation.

Topic: Indian Corn Wreath
 Instructor: Pat Stella
 Date: 10/8/14
 Time: 2:00 pm
 Cost: T/B/A

Topic: Christmas Wreath Making (all greens are provided)
 Instructor: Marie Nicke
 Date: 12/3/14
 Time: 10:00 am
 Cost: T/B/A

Topic: Holiday Tablescape
 Instructor: Mary Rowson
 Date: 12/10/14
 Time: 6:30 pm
 Cost: T/B/A

This list is subject to change.

2015 Master Gardener Classes

The 2015 Rutgers Master Gardener classes begin in January 2015. We are in the process of developing the curriculum and respective speakers. The classes will be held on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and will run 20 weeks ending in May with a graduation.

If you are interested in the Master Gardener program, please call for an application and we will be sure to send you one as soon as the class syllabus is confirmed. You will be asked to fill out the application which includes information about yourself and your vision of your role as a potential Master Gardener. Program interviews will be scheduled on a first come basis. The Master Gardener program is part of Rutgers Cooperative Extension and was developed to help service the public with a non-biased source of horticultural information. Thanks to the Master Gardeners, the Cooperative Extension currently offers lawn and garden advice to homeowners who call or stop by the office.

After receiving the formal training and passing the final exam, students are required to return 60 hours of volunteer service. At least 20 of these hours must be spent on a "horticulture helpline", answering garden questions from the public. The helpline is located at the Cumberland County Extension Education Center and is open Tuesday thru Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon March through October. It is expected that you will fulfill this "helpline" obligation in its entirety within eighteen months. If your current schedule or situation will not allow you to attend all of the classes and complete the 60 hours of volunteer time, please know that it is anticipated we will hold a training class yearly, so you should reconsider applying when your schedule clears.

Once you successfully pass the course and complete the required volunteer service you will become a Certified Master Gardener. Master Gardeners are required to stay involved through continued education and volunteer work. There are also many learning opportunities, as well as field trips and other fun activities.

The course cost is \$210.00. This one-time non-refundable fee covers the cost of MG manual, copying and other fees and expenses associated with the training. The course fee will be due at the time of interview upon notification of acceptance into the 2015 class. The class size is limited to 15 and acceptance is determined on a first come basis.

Rosemary

Many Rosemary plants did not overwinter with the very harsh conditions that we experienced this past winter. Rosemary is considered a tender perennial in Zone 7, but I have had it survive a mild winter in a protected area. Rosemary is native to the Mediterranean region, so the site planning is crucial when planting rosemary. It likes very good drainage, is drought tolerant and prefers full sun.

Rosemary is one of my favorite herbs for its versatility as an evergreen shrub. It's available in upright rigid forms to a wonderful trailing form of rosemary that I have used against stone walls. Rosemary can be used in rock gardens, herb gardens, as an informal hedge or can even be pruned as a topiary. Rosemary has a wonderful scent so every time you brush against it, you get the added bonus of fragrance so I always try to plant one by my entrance door. The flowers are most well known as blue, but there are varieties of other colors. Rosemary grows slow to moderately fast and can reach 2 to 8 feet tall depending on the cultivar and growing conditions. The tallest that I have had them reach in my garden is about 4 feet tall.

Rosemary has been used as a companion plant to cabbage, beans, carrots and sage because it helps deter cabbage moth, bean beetles and carrot fly. Rosemary is also considered a culinary herb and is used with meat dishes, jams, butters and in bread dough. I have seen fine restaurants use rosemary as a skewer in their dishes for presentation purposes. Easy idea and it looks really special.

The history of rosemary is quite interesting and includes some ideas that are both fun and fanciful. It was thought in ancient Greece that rosemary would improve memory so they wore garlands of rosemary while studying for tests. Rosemary was thought to possess powers of protection, so in the Middle Ages people would place sprigs of rosemary under their pillows to ward off evil spirits. During the 16th century, wealthy men would pay perfumers to scent their homes with rosemary incense. However, rosemary may be best known as a symbol of remembrance and because of that I plant one in my Gram's honor every year.

Resources:

Arizona State University: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~camartin/plants/Plant%20html%20files/rosmarinusofficinalis.html>

Texas A & M University: http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/newsletters/hortupdate/hortupdate_archives/2003/Jul03/art2jul.html

Rodale's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs; Claire Kowalchik & William H. Hylton, Editors; 1987
Rodale Press

'Northwinds' switchgrass

Panicum virgatum

The Perennial Plant Association has deemed *Panicum virgatum* 'Northwinds' as the perennial of the year. *Panicum virgatum* is commonly referred to as switchgrass. The 'Northwinds' cultivar reaches 5-6 feet in height with a very upright clump growth habit. It's reported that Northwind is particularly drought tolerant and seems to be somewhat deer resistant. The taller cultivars of switchgrass such as Northwinds make excellent background plants in the garden.

Switchgrass can be found in marshes, lakeshores, and meadows. This plant can also be effectively used along pond edges and around water gardens. It is known to tolerate salt spray and prefers moist well-drained soils in a sunny location. It's hardy in zones 4-9. Switchgrass is a warm season clumping grass that can often be found in planted wildflower meadows and is an excellent wildlife attractor.

The seeds of Switchgrass provide food for various species of waterfowl, upland birds and songbirds. Switchgrass offers good wildlife habitat. The leaves and stems are used as nesting materials and birds have been known to build nests in clumps of this perennial grass. This plant produces excellent hay and along with other grasses can be utilized for erosion control on blowing sands. Switchgrass reproduces in three ways: by seeds, by shoots called tillers, and by rhizomes.

I found it interesting that during the days gone past of the great buffalo hunts, Indians avoided laying their meat near switchgrass because it would adhere to the meat and cause it to stick to a person's throat when eaten. Fast forward to the 21st century where Switchgrass is also being studied as a biofuel with higher yields found in the southern and mid-latitude US.

The history of the 'Northwinds' cultivar is also interesting. Mr. Roy Diblick collected seed from the wild *Panicum virgatum* plants growing along railroad tracks in Illinois. In 1983, he noticed one plant with wider leaves and an upright growth habit and was able to isolate and build up stock of that plant.

Resources:

Perennial Plant Association: <http://www.perennialplant.org/index.php/component/k2/item/141-2014-perennial-plant-of-the-year>

Ohio State University: <http://bygl.osu.edu/content/perennial-switchgrass-panicum-virgatum>

Northern State University: <http://www3.northern.edu/natsource/GRASSES/Switch1.htm>

University of Illinois: <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/hortanswers/plantdetail.cfm?PlantID=613&PlantTypeID=3>

Fairfield County Public Schools: http://www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/switch_grass.htm

Perennial Plant Assn.: <http://www.perennialplant.org/index.php/education/plant-of-the-year>

Moss in Lawns

Mosses are opportunistic in that they do not kill the grass but they fill in spaces where grasses have died out. There are a set of factors that are associated with conditions not favorable to the growth of grass. Put simply, moss in a lawn is an indication that the turf is not growing well. In many instances it is a combination of conditions that will need to be addressed by the homeowner to encourage turf growth which will naturally deter moss.

The first suggestion is to do a soil test for pH and major soil nutrients. I've mentioned the importance of this before, and again, it certainly is a factor in the moss in lawns situation. Most lawn grasses grow best at a pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Acid soil may be associated with poor fertility when acidic conditions bind up the availability of certain nutrients. A soil test will reveal the pH and you can follow the recommendations for liming the area. The soil test will also test for major soil nutrients and make recommendations accordingly in the case of low soil fertility.

Ask yourself how much sun or shade the area is getting. As a general rule, mosses are more tolerant of shade than many grasses. If moss is growing in a sunny area, it may be due to mower scalp. Also consider the drainage of the area and the watering methods. Poor drainage can interfere with the growth of grass allowing the moss an opportunity to enjoy the damp moist soils. Excessive amounts of over-watering can lead to problems with growing grasses and give the moss another chance to thrive. Lastly check for soil compaction as grasses have a hard time penetrating compacted soil allowing moss to take over.

All in all, the best way to discourage moss in lawns is to encourage good growing conditions for your grass. Remember if the problems limiting turf growth are not solved, the moss will bounce right back following treatment. The moss is not driving out the turf, but the absence of turf vigor allows the moss to expand its area. Another possibility is to give up and grow moss as a ground cover.

The success of growing moss as your lawn is largely dependent upon the environment and site characteristics. There are specific requirements for soil, moisture, light, and limited traffic which must be met if you are to grow moss as a wonderful alternative to turfgrass in shaded landscapes.

The advantages of growing moss include a lower maintenance regime than turf. It doesn't need to be watered, fertilized or mown. It looks green year round and provides a level of water retaining power that helps reduce soil erosion by slowing down the rain and snow run-off. Consider mosses as part of your landscaping for areas under large shade-loving trees and shrubs like oaks, ashes, maples and tulip poplars. It has been found that moss may not hold up as well under conifers.

The disadvantage is that moss will not tolerate foot traffic, so if you want to have a path through a moss lawn, you have to avoid regular foot traffic by using walkways, stepping stones or diversions. Additionally, a mat of fallen leaves will kill the moss, so removal of the leaves is essential. You have to take care when removing the leaves, as the moss will easily rake up, so it's recommended that you use a leaf blower. Moss prefers a low acidic soil with a pH of 5.0 to 5.5. Moss prefers shade and a higher moisture content. If moss already exists in your yard, you are off to a good start with environmental conditions which are favorable for moss to grow. Keep in mind that once your decision is made to go with a moss lawn, it can take several years for a moss lawn to become well established. The payoff is a year round lush carpet of green moss.

Resources:

Virginia State University: <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-536/430-536.html>

Oregon State Univ. Ext. Service: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/got-moss-your-lawn-try-these-tips>
<http://bryophytes.science.oregonstate.edu/page22.htm>

Penn State: <http://plantscience.psu.edu/research/centers/turf/extension/factsheets/moss>

Clemson University: http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/pests/plant_problems/hgic2363.html

Rutgers Fact Sheet FS 426: Moss in Lawns.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: BUS TRIP TO BARTRAM'S GARDEN



Date: Friday, Sept. 12, 2014

Departure: Meet at Extension Center at 8:30 am.
Extension Education Center, 291 Morton Avenue, Millville, NJ 08332

Return Home: Leave from Bartram at 2:00 pm; back to Extension Center around 3:30 pm

Cost: \$55.00 for Master Gardeners; \$65.00 all others (includes transportation, driver tip, behind-the-scenes private Head Gardener's Tour & Ribboned Boxed Lunch)

Non-refundable Payment MUST be received IN ADVANCE for reservation to be considered confirmed. Stop by or mail a check made payable to: Board of Ag Research Account(No credit cards)

Contact: Pam or Tammy at 856-451-2800 Ext 1 or 4 with any questions

...Please note, this is an all-inclusive offer and options will not be offered separately...

First come, first served, so act asap! Our last bus trip sold out!

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County is offering a bus trip to Bartram's Gardens. Bartram's Garden is the oldest surviving botanic garden in North America. Located on the west bank of the Schuylkill River, it covers 46 acres and includes an historic botanical garden and arboretum. This excellent package includes a behind-the-scenes private Head Gardener's Tour that will last approximately 1 hour, a Ribboned Boxed Lunch (please chose one of the selections below) as well as transportation (directly from the Extension Center) and the bus drivers tip.

The Ribboned Boxed Lunch selections include (please chose one):

_____ *Gourmet Turkey Breast Sandwich; Includes side salad, fresh fruit & homemade dessert*

_____ *Gourmet Hickory ham & cheese Sandwich; Includes side salad, fresh fruit & homemade dessert*

_____ *Vegetarian option of Greek Salad with cucumbers, tomatoes, feta cheese, olives & hardboiled eggs; Includes roll with butter, fresh fruit and homemade dessert*

_____ *Vegetarian option of Roasted vegetable sandwich with fresh mozzarella & basil; Includes roll with butter, fresh fruit & homemade dessert*

Each order comes in a labeled, lap-sized box tied with a colorful ribbon and includes plastic ware, napkin, salt & pepper, condiments, dressings, wrapped candy, mint toothpick & a moist towelette. A variety of beverages are included. Lunch is served in one of Bartram's historic buildings.

Crape Myrtles

On my way to work I watched as the crape myrtles came into bloom and stayed in bloom for a long time. I also noticed some of the pruning techniques used on crape myrtles and will talk a bit about that today. Rutgers Fact Sheet 1221 called Pruning Flowering Shrubs gives information on when to prune and the techniques of pruning.

One of the reasons we use crape myrtles in the landscape is because of their multiple functions for four season appeal. We get a long blooming time followed by an interesting seed head, but also have the value of peeling bark, fall color and their natural graceful form in winter months. One method of pruning crape myrtles that has become commonplace is also referred to as crape murder in the agricultural industry.

Some people have adopted the practice of chopping the tops off of the crape myrtle otherwise known as "topping". Although topping requires less skill, there are various reasons that people have chosen this method, but there are as many reasons to consider an alternative way of pruning rather than chopping off their tops.

Topping is detrimental to the plant because of the removal of large diameter stems which means the removal of large amounts of starches and food reserves. By removing the large diameter stems it also decreases the ability for the plant to produce food since the plant canopy is decreased. The exposed wood that is the result of topping is subject to disease and insect infestations. As well as negatively affecting the overall health of the plant, topping results in a shorter bloom time, and delayed flowering.

Numerous vigorous shoots originate from the top of the cut stems which ruins the natural form of the plant. The shoots are poorly attached and can break off in heavy winds or snow. If you do not have the joy of having a crape myrtle as part of your landscaping then consider your site location before buying the plant. There are many cultivars available in dwarf and compact sizes along with ground covers and shrubs as well as crape myrtles that can be grown in containers or hanging baskets.

Resources:

Clemson Cooperative Extension: <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/trees/hgic1009.html>

NC State University: <http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/02/how-do-i-prune-crape-myrtle/>

University of Florida: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep399>

Virginia Tech; Virginia Cooperative Extension: <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/430/430-451/430-451.html>



Sailing and Birding on the Cohansey River and Delaware Bay

I love to sail in the fall when there aren't many bugs, the days are crisp and cool and you generally get good wind. I checked in with some sailing friends that have a passion for bird watching and as we compared notes, I could picture the bay in fall with the marsh colors of gold and brown against the background of deciduous trees with their fall foliage. Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet 1010 is titled Birding in the Garden State: How to get started. It suggests that you start with a pair of binoculars which every good sailor will already have aboard their vessel. The Fact sheet provides a list of things to keep in mind when picking out the right pair of binoculars that will match your personal goals in birding. Fact sheet 1010 also recommends several choices for bird identification guides, again something that many sailors carry on board.

As we wind along the curvy Cohansey River toward the Delaware Bay, we can count on seeing eagles perched in a dead tree ready to fish for their dinner. In fact it's actually rare if we don't see any eagles on our sailing days, and I can assure you that we never take that sighting for granted!

The bird identification along the marshes of course includes gulls with specific sightings of the Great Black-Bat Gull and Bonaparte's Gull. The gulls and many hawks fly overhead as the herons balance on their skinny legs along the riverbanks. It's surely a treat when they take flight.

As sailors, we go slowly enough to take note of the osprey nest atop the marker where the Cohansey meets the Delaware. That sight is memorable, especially because you can see Ship John Lighthouse off in the distance. I enjoy seeing many different ducks looking peaceful as they seemingly float along on the water's surface, but we know under the water's surface their feet are constantly paddling...I think there may a life lesson in there somewhere...Also of note along the river in the fall are sightings of Northern Gannets, Willets and a flock of Black Bellied Plovers.

Of course, this time of the year it's a common sight to see geese flying south for the winter in the vee formation and reminds us that the sailing season will soon be coming to an end – but there's always next year!

If you ever get the chance to go sailing and birding along the Cohansey or Delaware Rivers, I personally highly recommend it – there's nothing like the feeling of heeling over and the sight and sound of moving through the wind and water.



2014 Master Gardener of the Year

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County is pleased to name Doris Morgan as Master Gardener of 2014. Doris is a native of South Jersey, having grown up in Vineland before moving to Pittsgrove Township. Doris eventually settled in Deerfield Township where she and her family have been residents for 24 years.

Doris and her husband, Ned, have three children – Trinity, Nicole, and Ryan. Ryan is the only child still living at home. Doris is a stay at home Mother who is very involved in volunteer activities. She volunteers at Deerfield Township School weekly and at two food pantries.

Doris became a Master Gardener in 2013. Her interest in gardening began when the family moved to Deerfield and she filled her garden with various plants which attract butterflies and birds. She now nurtures plants which attract bees as she has been a beekeeper for two and a half years. She joins her husband who has been beekeeping for eight years. Both she and her husband have also been named Farmers of the Year 2014 for Deerfield Township!

Ned and Doris give talks to groups of children and adults on honeybees. They recently put on a very informative workshop "The Status of Honeybees" at the Extension Center. Participants got to taste Ned's Honeys – Spring, Summer, and Fall productions.

Doris is co-leader with her husband of the 4H Club "Wannabees", teaching beekeeping and their importance to our lives. Doris is Secretary and Treasurer of The South Jersey Beekeepers Association.

Doris's Master Gardener projects include Horticulture Therapy at four Senior Centers in Cumberland County. She also helps maintain the Butterfly Garden at the Extension Center. Doris is the Volunteer Coordinator for our program thus ensuring that all projects have workers and educators on hand. Her skills were essential to the success of the Master Gardeners participation at the 2014 Eco Fair at Wheaton Arts.

Finally, it was through Doris's efforts that the Home Arts Building was open at this year's County Fair. She organized workers to clean the building and man the exhibits. She was asked to take on this project just two weeks prior to the Fair's opening. Doris always gets things done with a smile.

Doris will be honored at the Rutgers Master Gardeners Association Meeting on October 11th.



Status of the Honeybee in New Jersey

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County recently hosted a two-hour program on the "Status of the Honeybee in New Jersey" at the Extension Education Center. It was well attended by Master Gardeners representing four separate counties.

Ned and Doris Morgan discussed the issues around beekeeping today, the importance of the honeybee to agriculture, and what homeowners can do to help the honeybee and other pollinators. After the presentation, the audience participated in a tasting of various varietal honeys. The Morgans are the owners of Ned's Honey LLC. Ned and Doris are also president and secretary/treasurer, respectively, of the South Jersey branch of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association. Doris is a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener of Cumberland County and both Ned and Doris are leaders of the Cumberland County 4-H WannaBees beekeeping club.

The Morgans will be presenting this program again as part of the 2015 Master Gardener Classes. Doris offered to share this recipe:

Honey Doodle Recipe by Doris Morgan

1/3 cup butter, softened
2/3 cup honey
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 egg
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)

Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a large cookie sheet; set aside. In a large bowl beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add honey, baking soda, cream of tartar, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping side of bowl occasionally. Beat in egg until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any remaining flour.

Drop dough by rounded teaspoons 2" apart onto the prepared cookie sheet. If desired, in a small bowl combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over cookies.

Bake in preheated oven to 8-10 minutes or just until edges are firm. Transfer cookies to a wire rack; cool.

To store: Place in layers separated by waxed paper in an airtight container; cover. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

Gram's sunflowers

How happy was I to find that my mom was able to grow sunflowers from seeds that came from my gram's garden. I can recall many a happy time spent at my gram's watching the goldfinches visit the sunflowers at her back door. While this is a cherished childhood memory for me, many commercial growers of sunflowers consider the finches as pests.



Sunflower or *Helianthus annuus* originated in North America. Its name comes from the Greek helios, meaning "sun" and anthos, meaning "flower, and annus meaning annual. Its common name of sunflower comes from the fact that the sunflower head are heliotropic and move in response to the direction of the sun. East at sunrise and follow the sun through the sky until they face west at sunset. Then they turn back east to start a new day. I remember finding this as fascinating as the goldfinches.

Sunflowers require full sun and good drainage but are not particularly sensitive to the soil pH. Typically sunflowers grow 5 to 10 feet tall, but they can be found in both extremes as dwarf and mammoth. Hybridization has also given us the choice of a range of flower colors including many shades of yellow as well as browns and white.

There are a number of uses for sunflowers, including a mutualistic relationship with honeybees. Sunflowers offer nectar to the honeybees, which in turn help pollinate the sunflower. Birds and butterflies are also attracted to the sunflower with its large surface area that can provide a perch while enjoying lunch.

Humans have started growing sunflowers for commercial cut flower purposes, but by far the most valuable part of a sunflower for commercial purposes is the oil which is used as salad dressing or in cooking.

Artists have been inspired by sunflowers and Vincent Van Gogh depicted the changes in a sunflower as it cycles through life in his painting of "Vase with Twelve Sunflowers". Sunflowers are sure to make us smile. A quote from Helen Keller says "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow. It is what sunflowers do".

Resources:

Purdue: <https://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/sunflower.html>

University of Washington: <http://courses.washington.edu/esrm412/protocols/HEAN3.pdf>

University of Wisconsin: http://bioweb.uwlax.edu/bio203/s2008/mitchell_sara/



**Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland
County & the Cohanzick Zoo
invite Your School Art Class or County Youth
Group to Compete In The**

“September Fun Scarecrow Contest”

**September 20, 2014 at the Cohanzick Zoo!
Cash Prizes!**



Theme: New Jersey Born Entertainers

Entry Form: School/Organization Name

Teacher/Leader Name

Contact Phone _____ Email _____

Scarecrow Class Competition: Mini _____ Full Size _____

Scarecrow Kits can be picked up at the Zoo.

*Finished scarecrows must be delivered to the Zoo by 9-19-2014 before 4PM.

*Judging is on Saturday 9-20-2014

Call or email Barbara McOscar at 856-455-5632 bamoscar@verizon.net for more information.

**Please Fax Entry Form to Barbara, Rutgers Master Gardener of Cumberland County at 856-451-4206
ASAP & no later than 9-12-2014.**

2014 Award of Excellence
Children's Learning Table
By Barbara McOscar

I started the children's learning table 4 years ago so MG could bring both an educational component to the Eco Fair and a program designed specifically for children's venues such as Boys Club/Girls Club, County Fair, Community Fun Day at the Cohanzick Zoo, etc.

The learning topics and experiences thus far:

1st year – Importance of Soil, Composting

2nd year- My Plate - Healthy Eating, Salad Greens Tastings & Plantings

3rd year –Birds – Their Importance to our Environment

This year – Animals of the Farm and Forest – Identifying them by their tracks and scat

Colleagues who assisted me from the very beginning and have continued to help every year whenever I ask them are Tammy Commander, Nina Nerad, Peggy Peters, Patrick Conlon, Jane Hankins, Carol Diament, Mary Rosen, Helen Angelo, and Carol Henry. As other members became involved with MG, they too have helped - Sarah Johnson, Patti Sheppard, Dee Shiell, Cheryl Loatman, Jean Munson, and Kathy Salter.

I am also very excited about the great contributions given by this year's interns – Pat Stella who has done much legwork; the track mold team of Sam Pace, Tom Lesosky, Jean Wright, Yolanda Smith, and Pat Stella; the teaching presence of Sue Merighi, Jan LoBiondo, Pat Stella, Sam Pace, and Yolanda Smith.

And I am most encouraged by Pam Burton who has already come up with next year's theme while continuing to assist with this year's activities!

My thanks to all for making the Children's Learning Table a success!



Garden Tips for September



- Purchase spring-flowering bulbs while the selection is good.
- Fertilize most houseplants for the last time until next spring.
- Sow a new lawn. FS108 & 684
- Core aerate your lawn when the soil is moist but not wet.
- Fall is a good time to test the soil in your lawn, vegetable garden, perennial bed or around trees and shrubs. Call your local Extension office for a soil test packet (\$20.00 fee)
- Clean off the vegetable garden and annual beds as plants die.
- Remove spent flowers from perennials.
- Start a compost pile with fallen leaves and garden debris. FS74
- Plant some lilies.
- Plant chrysanthemums, pansies and ornamental cabbages and kales early in the month.
- Lift and divide iris rhizomes and overgrown peonies.
- Bring fibrous begonias, coleus and impatiens indoors for potted houseplants.
- Store surplus seeds in a cool, dry location.
- Fall is a great time to plant most trees and shrubs. FS786
- Don't fertilize established woody plants until they are dormant.
- Allow winter squashes, pumpkins and gourds to mature completely on the vine. Harvest them before the first frost.
- Wait at least two weeks after the tops die to harvest white potatoes. FS679
- Dig sweet potatoes before the first frost. FS560
- Move perennial plants within the next month or wait until next spring.
- Make a map of your perennial gardens to record the location of your plants.
- Continue to weed the garden. The best place for these plants is the compost pile.
- Enjoy the Fall crisp weather!

Gardening Tips for October



- Consider dwarf fall asters to brighten the flower garden.
- Fall is a good time to apply lime to the lawn and garden if a soil test recommends it.
- Harvest gourds and squashes when they mature and before they are exposed to frost.
- Weed and edge your gardens. FS20 & FS119
- Plant tulip, daffodil and hyacinth bulbs and crocus corms.
- Plant garlic, rhubarb and shallots.
- Plant hardy spring-blooming perennials and biennials in the garden early in the month.
- Store leftover flower and vegetable seeds in a cool, dry place.
- Provide food and water for the birds. FS1022
- Repair garden fences, trellises and accessories.
- Call a certified arborist for any serious tree problems. FS19
- Continue to mow the lawn at a height of 2 1/2 to 3" until the grass stops growing.
- Start a wish list of plants and tools for next year's gardening season.
- Spread humus (composted organic matter) 2" deep and work it into your garden soil. FS117
- Note where fall color is needed in the landscape and plan to add an appropriate plant next year.
- Clean and store lawn furniture.
- Rake fallen leaves to prevent them from smothering the lawn.
- Form a compost pile of leaves and other garden debris.
- Wait until the ground freezes to apply mulch around perennials.
- Plant and transplant deciduous trees and shrubs after leaf fall.
- Fertilize woody plants after they go dormant (after several hard freezes).
- Prune trees and shrubs after they go dormant.
- Keep mulch away from the trunks of trees and shrubs.
- Store garden stakes, hoses and tools before winter sets in.
- Remove dead chrysanthemum tops from the garden.
- Dig root crops before the ground freezes. Carrots, beets, leeks, turnips and parsnips can be harvested from the garden all winter long.
- Be sure to harvest your tomatoes, peppers, sweet potatoes and other tender crops before the first frost.
- Plant a cover crop of winter rye or hairy vetch on your vegetable garden.
- Harvest pears before they are fully ripe. Harvest apples when the stem separates from the branch with a slight pull.
- Make a jack-O-lantern and roast the seeds for a snack.
- Have a Great Halloween!

Gardening Tips for November



- Sow seeds of hardy flowers, such as calendula, larkspur and sweet pea.
- Plant bare-root plants when they're dormant and the air temperature is cool.
- Rake fallen leaves from the lawn.
- All trees and shrubs should be deeply watered before winter.
- Stake newly planted trees to protect them from winter winds.
- Wrap arborvitae and other upright evergreens that could be split by heavy snow.
- Resist the temptation to pile mulch up around the trunks of your trees and shrubs. Keep the base of the plant free from mulch while keeping the area under the canopy covered with 2-4" of mulch.
- Turn your houseplants regularly for even growth.
- Winterize roses and mulch perennials and strawberries after the ground freezes.
- Continue to remove weeds from the garden.
- Place all weeds, leaves and dead, annual and perennial foliage in the compost pile.
- Turn and water the compost pile to keep it working.
- Dig up and store tender bulbs, corms or tubers.
- Have you planted your spring-flowering bulbs? If not, do this before the ground freezes.
- Continue mowing the lawn at 2 1/2-3" until the grass stops growing.
- The late fall fertilization of the lawn should be done after the grass stops growing. Extension has details on the type and amount of fertilizer to apply.
- Turn over or rough till your vegetable garden if soil erosion is not a problem. A cover crop of winter rye still can be planted if it's done as early in the month as possible.
- Place hardware cloth or plastic guards around fruit trees.
- Pot paperwhite narcissus for forcing indoors.
- Don't over water your houseplants.
- Have your lawn mower and other power equipment serviced.
- Clean and repair garden tools.
- Drain and bring in all of your garden hoses.
- Feed the birds.
- Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

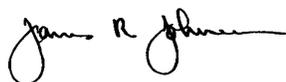


Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets

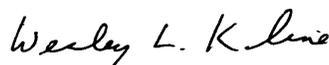
FS #	Fact Sheet Name
Fact Sheet 19	How to Hire a Tree Care Professional
Fact Sheet 20	Weed Control Around the Home Grounds
Fact Sheet 74	Backyard Leaf Composting
Fact Sheet 102	Your Lawn and Its Care
Fact Sheet 108	Renovating your Lawn
Fact Sheet 117	Using Leaf Compost
Fact Sheet 119	Weed Control in Home Lawns
Fact Sheet 122	Tree Problems Caused by People in the Suburban Landscape
Fact Sheet 128	Forcing hardy Bulbs Indoors
Fact Sheet 235	Two Spotted Spider Mites
Fact Sheet E272	Weed Management in Ornamental Plantings (\$1.50)
Fact Sheet 374	Jersey Fresh Tomatoes! The Mystery of Their Great Taste
Fact Sheet 389	Minimizing Waste Disposal: Grass Clippings
Fact Sheet 555	Best Management Practices for Watering Lawns
Fact Sheet 560	Growing Sweet potatoes in the Home Garden
Fact Sheet 595	Low Water Use Landscaping
Fact Sheet 596	Water Only When and Where Needed
Fact Sheet 597	Improve your Soil
Fact Sheet 599	Apply Mulches
Fact Sheet 633	Fertilizing the Home Lawn
Fact Sheet 679	Growing Potatoes in the Home Garden
Fact Sheet 684	Turfgrass Seed Selection for Home Lawns
Fact Sheet 786	Six Ways to Keep your Newly Planted Tree Alive and Healthy
Fact Sheet 806	Yard Trimmings Management Strategies in New Jersey
Fact Sheet 811	Home Composting
Fact Sheet 829	How to Protect Water Quality & Have a Beautiful Lawn: 10 Steps to Proper Fertilization
Fact Sheet 839	How to Calculate the Amount of Fertilizer Needed for your Lawn
Fact Sheet 849	Cover Crops and Green Manure Crops: Benefits, Selection and Use
Fact Sheet 905	Agricultural Liming Materials
Fact Sheet 944	Roses and Their Care
Fact Sheet 988	Picking Vegetables in the Home Garden
Fact Sheet 1022	Backyard Birdfeeders
Fact Sheet 1175	Rain Gardens and Mosquitoes
Fact Sheet 1178	Help! My Refrigerator or Freezer Stopped Working. Is my Food Safe?

Call 856/451-2800 x4 ask for Pam Burton. When calling to request a fact sheet refer to the Fact Sheet by FS# or by name. All fact sheets are free unless otherwise noted.

What's Growing On is prepared by Pam Burton, Horticultural Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County.



Sincerely,



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For important announcements concerning the Cumberland County Extension Center visit:
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu>

Visit the newly activated website to see what activities are happening in the
Home Horticulture and Agriculture Departments.

If you have any questions concerning the website, please call our office at
856-451-2800 x1 for agriculture and
856-451-2800 x4 for Home Horticulture and Master Gardeners

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