

Springville Herbary

515 Hartford Road

Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

856-235-5488 or cell 856-630-9185

www.springvilleherbary.com

email: mojo@springvilleherbary.com

End of April 2022

I am finding it difficult to write a somewhat amusing newsletter with UKRAINE always at the back (or front) of my mind. How can the world stand by while apartment buildings, train stations, hospitals and shelters for refugees are constantly being hit by the Russians? This is not a football game, people! All the flag waving, singing of Ukrainian songs, colored lights (yes, I have them in my window) does not stop the bombing. We need to get in there and do something. It is sad that our country is so afraid of threats from that nasty little man. Zelensky doesn't need our prayers, he needs whatever it takes to bring this to an end and save Ukraine.

I will once again be a vendor at the BURLINGTON COUNTY FARMERS MARKET on Centerton Road. In case you have forgotten, market is Saturdays from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM. First day is May 7th.

Obligatory WEATHER COMMENTS: I don't know when we will have basil. I believe it is going down into the 30's again tonight. The seed just rots in the ground when too chilly. March was a bit stranger than usual with the ups and downs. One nice thing, early warm weather brought early bloom of spring flowers and subsequent much cooler days kept them around longer. My daffs were amazing.

SURVIVORS AND OBITUARIES: I have managed to keep a basil alive all winter in the house. It doesn't look great, but there it is. The lemon verbenas that I usually kill in the basement almost all survived and are growing nicely. My beautiful coleus, however, didn't make its second basement winter. The big Gorizia rosemary that should have frozen is blooming, but the Mrs. Howard's rosemary by the market turned up her toes after making two winters.

Sadly, we had to get rid of our one GOOSE that hatched last year. Firstly, he turned into an attack goose; secondly, we think he was the ringleader in the crossing of Hartford Road. He was a fine big fellow and I am sure my poultry supplier will have no trouble selling him. No, he won't be dinner. A decent goose costs a minimum of \$40.00.

COMFREY is great stuff. This same goose pegged me in the knee, making a very impressive pinch mark. I immediately made a comfrey compress and strapped it to my knee with vetwrap. Left it on about an hour and did it again later in the day. The pinch mark was still there, but almost no bruising. You should have comfrey. Yes, we have it potted and ready to go. Yes, the deer love it. We keep our pots in the large patch of variegated vinca vine which deer do not like.

We have a number of ROSE OF SHARONS (Roses of Sharon?) back of the house which the deer love to chew. Last year I started stringing long pieces of vinca vine through them as a deterrent. It worked quite well as long as I replaced it every now and again.

We have lots and lots of vinca. "Life's a looming battle to be faced and fought" (Mr. Banks, Mary Poppins)

Our HERBS are looking good. I have slave labor (Andy) helping me pot up. People will fairly often ask me what is my favorite color flower. My immediate answer is 'whatever is blooming at the time'. But if I give it thought, I would have to say 'green'. When I go in the greenhouse and see all the babies with their different foliage, shades of green and assorted scents, I figure I am in the right business. Notice, I did not say 'lovely scents, I don't like sage smell but I love the look. A pot of mixed herbs pleases me more than a pot of flowers. Ok, you may take off your muck boots now...

My NATIVE PLANT inventory gets a little better each year. I brought some cut-leaf coneflowers (*rudbeckia laciniata*) back from WV. I planted my clump and surrounded it with chicken wire. I have some for you but watch out! It can easily go six feet.

Come see what else is new this year.

I have had to KILL MY BUTTERCUPS. I have always liked buttercups but they are poisonous for cows. Della's pasture kept having more and more of them, some growing in patches of grass where she might accidentally get a bite. With her at age 25, I'm not going to take that risk, so the buttercups had to go.

While I was walking around killing the aforementioned buttercups, I spotted a plant I had not seen before. Using my 'Picture this' which I love, I identified it as a DOVE'S FOOT CRANE'S BILL (*geranium molle*). I had already decided it was some sort of geranium. It is a European annual and has naturalized here almost exclusively in New England.

Now don't get me wrong. I love our natives and the people who promote them, but let us not be too native. The only website that said 'Look out! Possible invasive!' was a native plant site. All the others love the bright pink color, the nice size and the soft furry leaves. I am leaving it to self sow.

I will, however, have to take out the purple mustard which is really cute with very tiny purple flowers, but I can see the potential for a problem.

Since I am on the subject of killing things, we have decided to have most of our many AILANTHUS TREES removed at a rather large expense. The lantern flies have become too much for us and there are more trees than we can handle. Too bad, I actually like them, with their palm tree look and showy blooms.

We once again have HELLEBORES for you. We have an expensive dark purple called 'New York Nights' and the more reasonably priced white, some of which have color. I guess they must cross in the field. Mine have been wonderful, most blooming since January.

MORE CHICKENS If you don't care about chickens, skip this article.

This is your substitute for the botanical names lesson. It is about chicken breeds. We bought two lovely slate gray (Called blues by breeders) hens to lay blue-green eggs. You may hear them called Easter eggers. What breed are they? Araucanas or Ameracanas?

I just learned myself that Ameracanas have beards and ear tufts while Araucanas only have ear tufts. We were just noticing our girls' lovely beards so they are, you guessed it, Ameracanas! There will be a pop quiz next week.

We have only one of the Philadelphia chickens left (Long story) who lays enormous eggs. We did send the rooster away. The girls were getting rough looking. Ask me why and I will give you the chicken sex ed talk.

Then there is the partridge cochon, Shirley, and her friend the buff Brahma, Laverne. I believe they were pets. They are almost always together. I also believe they are not young and we may never get an egg. Oh well, they are very cute and friendly and lovely.

Tractor Supply in WV had CHICKS when we were there but I resisted temptation, remembering that chicks get brought up in the house.

We spent a FEW APRIL DAYS IN WV which I could ill afford but we did it anyway. I guess we have not been there at quite that time. We have never seen so many blooming redbud trees. The highways are lined with them, both planted and self-sown. Beautiful!

Once again I ask you; Are you chewing your way through your shrubs and plants? Could you do it faster with your teeth? Don't waste effort and ruin your expensive pruners, not to mention mutilating your victims. For a small fee Andy will sharpen any of your cutters. He can usually have them in a day or two. Mt. Laurel Garden Club members get free sharpening. No scissors, please.

There was a rather interesting article in National Wildlife magazine about what plants are considered to be KEY PLANTS in our country for the health of all concerned. I was surprised at the three which are oak trees, goldenrod and asters. Apparently they all benefit animals, plants, insects and right on up and down the environmental line. So we are in pretty good shape here. Many oak trees (Want one, I will dig you one.), plenty of goldenrod except I think it has been diminished by the rampant milkweed, and we will be happy to sell you fine New England asters.

I have numerous times encouraged you to stream my hometown radio station at WJEJradio.com. The longtime owner, Mr. John Staub, the man with the golden voice, passed on to a higher calling in February. We will all miss him. Carry on, Joanna!

NOTES ON ANDY'S RETIREMENT: He has always thought he may like to knit. And he does! The only problem is that he has quickly reached kind of a stopping point. He would like to move on from headbands and needs more instruction. Videos and books don't do the job. The ladies in the group at the library get together twice a week mostly to socialize and to more or less each do their own thing, not instruct. Anyone?

We are also looking for a decent sized new or used ROTOTILLER. Recommendations?

<p>REMEMBER, OUR LAST SAFE FROST DATE FOR TENDER</p>

ANNUALS IS MAY 15.

I became weary of searching for the BEE BALMS I want so I have established a propagation area for various varieties. It won't do you or me much good this year but I am looking to the future. Guess I am up-sizing not down-sizing.

Our 48 years neighbors are moving. Best of luck Tina, Ava and Anna! The new owners have two kids, a Lab, and chickens. Sounds like we will get along fine. Welcome Chelsea and Steve!

Come see us. Ring the newly painted bell.

*Andy made my comfrey poultice.

Springville Herbarry
515 Hartford Rd.
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

WEEDS are the strong and persistent creatures who live in weak circumstances.

WEEDS are simply a matter of perspective.

All my friends are sunshine, all my weeds are wildflowers.