

June 2017

Such a long list I have this time! Where to begin? I suppose the logical place would be with SEEDS. Yes, last week I planted many different seeds. Call me crazy, but when there are lots of tomatoes, these basil will be ready.

I am sorry, but I probably can't say the same thing for some of the other plants. Apparently I have a critter (mouse) that is sneaking past the eighth inch hardware cloth and eating seeds. So there will probably be no borage, milk thistle and limited red malabar spinach. Tiny seeds are not a target.

I have QUEEN RED LIME ZINNIAS coming on! I'm so excited! These are the dahlia type tall zinnias that I think are gorgeous and Andy thinks are weird. I hadn't been able to get the seeds the last two years, but this year Johnny's had them. I may even have enough to share. No promises.

Have you seen our DRIFT ROSES outside the fence? After two years of struggle and a few losses, they are really pretty. They don't get tall like Knockouts and, unlike Knockouts, they are fragrant. I mean enough that you can smell them several feet away.

CHICKENS DON'T EAT EARTHWORMS. They eat other kinds of bugs and worms but will step right on an earthworm and show no interest.

We have TOO MANY DEER! They are eating too many things they shouldn't, in the market, around the market and just about everywhere else on the property. If there is one plant to eat in the middle of inedible plants, they will find it. A further somewhat surprising fact: DEER DON'T EAT GRASS. It is a fiction. They eat hostas, comfrey, phlox, rose of Sharon, evening primrose, violets, many different trees. This year they are eating trumpet vine and goldenrod which is not a bad thing but they have begun tasting my beebalm. So don't picture them grazing peacefully in a field. It doesn't happen. I have gone on the offensive with my radio set on WRTI, the all night jazz station. You probably know, they are classical daytime, jazz at night. I am, sadly, not a big jazz fan but the combination of instrumental, vocal and talk may not appeal to my antlered friends. I have had some success putting coffee grounds around a hosta. It seems to have stunted the hosta though. Mothers beware of too much coffee for children. Haha.

By the way, is RED-VEINED SORREL edible? Deer give it a resounding “Yes!” They nibbled the tops off a whole flat. It will re-grow but still annoying.

CHALLENGE We are very much interested in TREES. There used to be an official ‘biggest tree list’ for New Jersey, but it doesn’t seem to exist any more. Alice Paul Institute on Hooton Road in Mt. Laurel has the largest copper beech I have ever seen and a very impressive American elm. Our very own American beech (Yes, there is a difference.), which we planted about 25 years ago, is going to have beechnuts for the first time this year. Very exciting! Sunnyside Farm, also on Hooton Road, has an enormous oak and some other beauties.

Now here is the challenge. We have a huge buttonwood (sycamore) in our pasture. I think it’s a winner but I am ready to be proven wrong.. At four feet from ground it has a circumference of twelve feet. Anybody have or know of a bigger one?

SAGE ADVICE as promised. Every year about this time I always remind you what to do with your blooming sage. When it is done blooming and you have at least several inches of new growth down inside the plant, cut off all the old growth with spent blooms down to the new growth. Yes, cut it off. You can do it. Otherwise in a few years you will have a big plant with long branches and tufts of leaves on the ends.

THANK YOU WALL STREET JOURNAL. I love my WSJ and here is one of the reasons. In April there was an article ‘Shrink Your Shrubs’ featuring four new small cultivars: ‘Pugster’ butterfly bush (2 feet), ‘Wee White’ pg hydrangea (30 inches), ‘Peach Sorbet’ blueberries (2 feet), and ‘BALMY’ BEEBALM (12 inches). We now have Balmy in two colors, rose and lilac. Come and get ‘em.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS. Thanks to the extensive library of our dear departed friend Lorna, we now have quite a number of gardening type books looking for new homes. I also purged some of my own. You may do the same. You also may take a book and bring it back if you like. There is some really good stuff!

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? (continued quest) I like to know who plants are named for.

“Mary Gregory’ stokesia could be named for a 20th century movie/TV star

or a 19th century artist in glass. I vote for the artist. Her pieces are quite beautiful and quite pricey. A customer asked me, "Is that the Mary Gregory?" I still can't answer that since I don't know which one is the Mary Gregory.

"Franz Schubert' phlox obviously named for the composer but I don't know why. Just a fan, I guess.

'Jacob Kline' bee balm is named for its originator. I can't seem to find out if he developed it himself or found it wild by the roadside in Georgia. It is beautiful, bright red and four feet tall. Two left in stock.

We have in stock the largest HENS AND CHICKS (sempervivum) I have ever seen! The main plant (the hen) is at least six inches across surrounded by small rosettes (the chicks). Growing hint: Don't over-water. I water mine about every third time I do everything else and only lightly even then.

NEW THYME Wait till you see 'Foxley' thyme. This one has it all! Larger than usual variegated green and white leaves. Much showier than 'Hi-ho Silver' And it is culinary!

I don't know if my son MARK in WV has fabulous soil or a terrific green thumb or both. Everything he plants in his yard gets half again as big as normal and multiplies like crazy. Also, he has two decent size dogs (Bruce and Clark) who play in the yard and somehow never manage to break off, dig up or otherwise damage his plantings. He has a balloon flower that looks like a small shrub, a strawberry foxglove with about six bloom stalks and his "Silver King' artemisia doesn't even look like the same plant I have popping up everywhere. Now Mark has discovered rooting hormone and is turning out new plants faster than he has room to plant. A stream where Mark walks the dogs has a large area of proper SPEARMINT. It is two feet tall and pretty much growing right in the water. He has pulled it out and planted it by his fence where, of course, it is flourishing.

My friends at WJEJ radio station in my home town may think ill of me if I don't remind you about streaming WJEJRadio.com. Check out the Phone Party at 11 AM Monday to Friday or just listen to the music and the great DJ's..

If any of you bought 'Starfire' phlox (George?) I must apologize because it is not Starfire. I had my doubts because the foliage had no red color. As soon as it bloomed I knew for sure. Definitely not cherry red. I'm not sure what to do.

Your money back if you like but that doesn't fix your color scheme.

Your LAVENDER should be blooming now, so here is some info on harvesting. Skip this section if you know what to do.

If you want your blooms to have color, cut as soon as the first flowers open and hang to dry. Some varieties may be already too far along for this. If you are making wands, stems must be flexible.

If you are only after the dried blooms you can wait till bloom is done , then harvest . Hanging not necessary as slightly dried stems will be stiff. Don't wait till stems turn brown and start to drop. Fragrance will be shot.

Obviously, you can choose to let your lavender bloom and not harvest it at all. You will need to trim blooms at some point to keep your plant looking good for next season.

I hear you asking, "Can I cook with lavender? Yes, you can. Flavor is a little like rosemary without the pineyness. Generally use dried flowers.

Lavender is strong; don't use too much or your dish will taste like Aunt Sally's sachet.

Add lavender flowers when making:

Bicuits or bread sticks

Fruit cup

Earl Grey tea or any tea

Marinade for chicken

Lavender is frequently a part of herbs d'Provence.

Brief BIRD REPORT.(Skip this if you don't like birds.) We have too many imitators. Every time I think we have a new bird, it is either the blue jays, the starlings or the Carolina wren who has amazing volume for his size.

We may be taking a few Sundays this Summer. You know the drill if we are not here.

Come see us,

**Sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste
Shakespeare**