

## September 2017

First, as usual, my obligatory comments on the WEATHER. Our thoughts go out to those areas who have had some nasty and scary times this year. Our own summer, however, wasn't so bad. Not too much heat and enough rain to keep stuff growing. The weeds especially have had a good time. I let a large evening primrose grow outside my fence with the lilacs. I believe it has finally topped out at about eight feet.

Looking back at my earlier newsletters, I have a few recaps. I have been told by other CHICKEN people that my chickens are weird and that most chickens love earthworms.

Most of the SEEDS that I feared were eaten grew after all. The borage suffered for lack of up-potting; I only got four milk thistles; but the red malabar spinach looks great and is just starting to vine. With our long growing season and average frost date of Oct. 31, it is worth planting.

Some of the BOOKS have gone but there is still a pretty good selection. Don't make me carry them in the house!

Andy's divided and re-potted OX-TONGUES (gasterias) were soooo unhappy out in the market. We brought them in the house to settle down and will try again with them next year. We have one prize-winner that he didn't divide. Show and tell next time?

You weren't around when my QUEEN RED LIME ZINNIAS were ready to go so I gave a few away and planted the rest. If you ask me, I will cut you a few.

Thank you, ladies, for the information to access the New Jersey BIG TREE LIST. Web address is

[www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/community/bigtree\\_registry](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/community/bigtree_registry).

. By the way, as I feared, my big buttonwood at 12 feet is nowhere near the biggest..

I do feel there is a bit of fiction included. White fringe tree (*chionanthus virginicus*) is a native small tree or large shrub. No possibility of being 12 feet in circumference. It's not far away. We are going to track it down.

Why do my lovely customers apologize for ringing the bell and bringing me from wherever I am? No bell, no sales, no more Gloria and Andy's Springville Herbarium!

Coming soon, sorry for the short notice: the EGYPTIAN FESTIVAL at St. Anthony's Coptic Christian Church on Hartford Road near Lenape High School. The dates are Friday evening Sept 8, all day Saturday Sept. 9, and Sunday afternoon Sept 10. We have been going every year since they started having it. The food is fabulous, there is neat stuff to buy, if you are interested they have a brief presentation on the Coptic Christian church, and you can dress like an ancient Egyptian and have your picture taken. Bring the kids; they have amusements for them, too.

Let's talk about INVASIVE VINES in our part of New Jersey. You may want to keep this page for future reference.

I discussed mile-a-minute vine before but here is brief re-cap. It is a fast-growing annual vine with L-shaped leaves and wicked little back-facing thorns. If it hasn't got berries (watch out, they are pretty) just pull it out. As I said, it is an annual

. Oriental bittersweet is probably the worst invasive going right now in our area. I see large areas of it in the wooded parts of Medford and it will eventually kill the trees. If smothering doesn't work it will wrap around the trunk and girdle the tree. It looks like an innocuous vine and doesn't berry until quite large. Leaves are simple; slightly shiny light green. When you pull it up, you will find the roots are orange. Hard to kill. Keep fighting.

Do I really need to discuss Virginia creeper? You know it by the five leaves. It will smother your trees and shrubs and pull the siding and gutters off your house. Too bad there are several big beautiful moths that eat the leaves.

You cannot totally defeat Japanese honeysuckle. Battle it where necessary, enjoy the smell where you can tolerate it. It will also smother trees and shrubs but more slowly. You can often pull creeper out of trees easily, but honeysuckle wraps around too much.

If you haven't yet heard of porcelain vine, you will. The leaves resemble a grape, but a bit thinner and more finely serrated. If it gets away from you, it will get a cluster of pretty little white or pale blue berries that look like porcelain. I still let it grow in one spot. Dumb. Trees seem to deal with it better than some of the others. We had one amazing vine that somehow grew straight up about 15 feet from the ground like the Indian rope trick before it found a tree. I couldn't believe the length when I pulled it down. We roughly measured it at 40 feet!

Trumpet vine is a problem you probably won't have unless you have planted it yourself. It is my worst invasive here. At least the deer had a go at it this year. Probably invigorated it. Trees do co-exist better with this one. We have one vine which is almost as thick as the tree. Both doing well, thank you.

Notice that I haven't mentioned herbicides. Sometimes they will do the required job on these guys, but they are so often tangled with your good plants, they are not a practical solution. Also remember, herbicides must be applied when the plant is growing and has enough leaf surface. Now is probably not the best time.

Remember FALL IS FOR PLANTING!

I always feel a little like Cassandra of Greek mythology must have felt. In case you don't know, she was a prophetess who was always right, but her curse was that no one would ever believe her. She probably got the curse from that randy bad boy Apollo, whose appetites we also have to thank for bay.

I keep telling you that a healthy perennial planted it the fall will grow a sturdy root system with no heat stress and come back bigger and better in spring. Ok, I tried again.

We have some new pictures on our web site. I especially like hummingbird clearwing moths and got a couple of good pictures. Check them out.

BUTTERFLY REPORT. Since we have lots of parsley, we also have lots of black swallowtails. We had five at once on the balmy bee balm in stock. I seem to be seeing more buckeyes this year. Or maybe just seeing the same ones often? Not so many tiger swallowtails. I have a nice picture of

**an eight-spotted forester, but Mark said my filthy fingernails ruined the picture. (I looked. He was right.)**

**We love the little skippers that light and then spread their wings like a miniature fighter jet. Silver-spotted skippers favor the butterfly bushes.**

**We don't see many monarch butterflies but they obviously have been around because we have a fine crop of caterpillars in the milkweeds wherever they are growing.**

**On our way back and forth from WV, we couldn't help but notice that the wide median strips are about 1/3 milkweed. (And half teasle)**

**Butterflies do love zinnias. I rate them the top butterfly annual.**

**I always let at least one large EVENING PRIMROSE grow amongst the market plants because the Japanese beetles seem to prefer it above all else. To my surprise and to the surprise of my nice customer, a female hummingbird spent a lot of time with the primrose. I guess they are the right shape bloom. Nevertheless, I won't sell them.**

**My friends at my hometown station are getting spoiled so I won't be able to mention WJEJradio .com this time.**