

September 2021

FALL IS FOR PLANTING! Plant a perennial flower or herb in the fall and it has all winter to put down roots and come back big in the spring. No scorching sun, no hot drought, no bugs.

What about those **AFTER-BLOOM PERENNIALS?** If you are not saving seeds or leaving the seed heads for the little birds, coneflower, for example, then your plants will be better if you cut them back to the new growth at the base. They will put their effort into roots instead of making seeds. This does not apply to flowering shrubs which, in general, should be pruned after blooming.

CHICKEN REPORT Skip this article if you don't care about chickens. We did it again; got more chickens! Andy's friend George discovered a Chinese market in Philadelphia, but not in Chinatown that sells live poultry reasonably that they will dispatch for you on the spot. They decided to do a chicken rescue. We now have four new hens (I hope they are hens, two are still quite young) which Andy picked out and which cost a lot more than the original plan. We don't know the breed, but they look like they will be pretty. George is looking forward to visiting their chicken children.

THE PURGE If you got this newsletter in the mail, you have survived the dreaded purge. If you are only reading it on-line, you are off the list. If you want to be back on, call, text, email. If you are no longer interested, please call, text, email. Postage went up to 58 cents. **WAS NOT ABLE TO MAIL.**

We are up to our eyeballs in **LAVENDER**. All perennial varieties that we like and a good size. Want to plant a whole row? Discounts available for four or more.

I hate **LANTERN FLIES** more than ground ivy! I think I still hate the yellow aphids on milkweed more than either one.

Odd effect of lantern flies: We have had, in years past, lots of **GARLIC CHIVES** on the hill where we had our original herb garden. Not so many there in recent years. However, the nasty sticky stuff from lantern flies that turns everything black killed off the competition. We now once again have a wonderful stand of garlic chives that apparently don't mind the black ground. Strange.

When in bloom they make a lovely moon garden, like a floating white cloud.

What is up with the MONARCHS this year? We have a ridiculous amount of milkweed and see quite a few butterflies but almost no caterpillars. Also, we were watching a few smallish caterpillars and they just disappeared. Birds? At least we seem to have gotten the praying mantises under control. We caged two caterpillars and have one chrysalis. Very exciting!

JAPANESE STILT GRASS Just what we needed, a new foreign invasive! I should have identified this sooner, now I have huge swaths of it in pasture and other places. Look it up. Watch for it. Pull it out before bloom, it is an annual. Nothing can eat it, not the cow, not the deer. Do you think it came with the lantern flies?

I was thinking about our NATIONAL MOTTO; e pluribus unum 'From many, one' and realized we plant growers are going for the opposite effect 'From one, many' That's how we increase our gardens and that's how I can make money!

SALE: We still have some lovely CORAL BELLS. You can have them for \$5.00 off regular price. We also have many NEW ENGLAND ASTERS which are just starting to bloom. Regularly \$8, you can have them for \$6. They are a good butterfly plant. If happy they get very tall. Best to cut them back in June.

We made it to both STATE FAIRS! The New Jersey Fair was somewhat limited as far as vendors and animals due to the fact that the final decision to have it was made in May. We nevertheless managed to eat lots of fair food and see our friends who have all the great Nepalese merchandise which is our weakness. Looking forward to next year!

The WV Fair was good as usual except it poured rain our last night when we went to see all the beautiful lights. For some odd reason, we got all into the judging of pigs. It uses a whole different language which we tried to retain the rest of the day.

It seems the longer I do this growing thing, the more I see the line blurred between annual and perennial. We have a HOT PEPPER plant in the living room window which came from our parrot seed. This is its third year. It looks terrible because the cats chew it, but there it is, still with us.

There is an ORNAMENTAL KALE in the market that has come back from the root for the third year. It has a long stem, but is pretty anyway.

Then there are all those perennial MUMS we buy every year that maybe would be perennial if we planted them immediately, otherwise you can forget it.

I once kept a BASIL into its third year by cutting it back and hauling it in the house in the fall. I guess it got a bit brittle because I finally snapped it off at ground level and that was the end. By the way, we have several enormous basil plants who would be good candidates for your house.

Mark (You remember my son Mark in WV) was very unhappy with his CUT-LEAF CONEFLOWER (*rudbeckia laciniata*). It topped out at about seven feet in a totally inappropriate spot. I loved it. When I had it for sale, I always gave a warning. Unfortunately, deer love it too.

MOSQUITOES have been terrible. I know they don't fly very far, but I can't seem to find where they are breeding. It has been a wet year which hasn't helped.

Della (You remember Della, our 24-year-old cow) has been plagued with enormous horse flies that defy all kinds of repellent. There are brown ones and black ones. Andy smacked a black one on her side and had a blood covered hand. It left a 10-inch blood streak down her side. They also breed at the edge of water. The larva bite! Life seems to be a battle against nature this year.

GARDEN STATE GARDENS consortium is an informational site for a number of public gardens in New Jersey. Their website and brochure will give you addresses and facilities available, but you must go to the individual garden websites to find out what is actually there. Website is gardenstategardens.org.

Of course, Rutgers Gardens, Grounds for Sculpture and the NJ State Botanical Garden/Skylands are included, but we tried a new one for us

The Sister Mary Grace Burns Arboretum is at Georgian Court University in Lakewood. Antique statuary, huge planted urns, Japanese garden, Mansion and Sunken Garden (Sadly in need of repair but has the best lions!) are some of the features. College was not in session when we visited so we were able to explore pretty freely.

Dr. Michael Gross from Georgian Court gave an excellent zoom presentation to our Garden Club on the various gardens. I took careful notes on which ones we may like to visit, then put them in a safe place. You all know how that works.

Do you have PICTURE THIS app on your phone? I was a bit reluctant, seemed to be a lazy way of avoiding research. I have become a believer. Not only do you identify your plant in question, there is lots of other info about it. Yes, of course it's not free but well worth \$2.99 a month or \$19.99 a year. This app does not access all your photos unless you ask for that. Some do, so watch it.

Are ROSEMARYS winter hardy? That is a more complicated question than you would think. The short answer is ‘sometimes’. The long answer is ‘it depends’ on variety, location, weather and apparently some unknown mysterious factors. Several varieties: Arp, Salem, Hill Hardy, have a better chance buuuut there is a Gorizia, not supposed to be hardy, in a large pot at the Mt. Laurel 9/11 Memorial that has survived the elements for at least three years. It is huge and gorgeous.

We have a mixed planter in the most exposed spot possible with a Mrs. Howard’s Creeping Rosemary that not only survives but blooms twice a year. They seem in general to do well at the shore. Are rosemarys winter hardy? It depends.

My computer says plural should be ‘rosemaries’ but to me that is a group of women named Rosemarie. I will do it my way.

Solving RETIREMENT PROBLEMS. As I told you last newsletter, Andy retired in June. We are still trying to get some sort of meal schedule sorted out. I think I have a solution for one of our difficulties. Okay, my difficulty. Andy likes to spend a fair amount of time on the computer, playing games, watching videos. Since he worked at night for twenty years and either wasn’t here or was sleeping, I streamed my favorite hometown radio station quite a lot. In case you have forgotten, it is WJEJradio.com out of Hagerstown, MD. Problem. Solution? I am going to get a laptop and speakers and keep them in the kitchen. Maybe even a supplemental keyboard. Done!

Have you all been to the BURLINGTON COUNTY FARMERS MARKET on Centerton Road? I will be there at least through September. The market is open through October, with two special holiday markets on November 20 and December 4. Bring lots of money. The Christmas in July market was wildly popular with many interesting vendors. Saturdays 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM.

I just bought a new KEYBOARD online with bigger letters for my non-typing brain. Why don’t they sell them at Staples? It’s super if your eyes aren’t great or your light not too bright. 20 bucks.

We had a customer who texted me from the bell stand and said she couldn’t find the bell.

Come see us. Ring the bell.

Merry Autumn Days

**'Tis pleasant on a fine spring morn
days,**

**To see the buds expand,
turning red,**

**'Tis pleasant in the summertime
beautiful**

To see the fruitful land;

**'Tis pleasant on a winter's night
harvest time**

To sit around the blaze,

We hail the merry autumn

When leaves are

Because they're far more

Than anyone has said.

We hail the merry

The gayest of the year;