



Geddy Garden News



Issue 49

April - 1998

April Weather Rain and Sunshine both together

The word April is taken from the Greek word for opening and the month is aptly named as in this month many flowers begin to blossom.

There are numerous happenings in April. April first is April Fools Day, a day that is known the world over. In Scotland, instead of saying April fool they say hunting the gowk. In France the expression is "poisson" Avril or April fish but what ever the term it is all the same idea. The first day of April is for playing practical jokes and good-natured tricks.

April is also the month in which National Arbor Day is celebrated in our country. The official Arbor Day is on the last Friday in April and on this day it is traditional to plant a tree or several trees. This American holiday serves to unite families as they look to the future and share the promise of new life and growth in our country. It is one of the few holidays that concentrate on the future rather than the past. I urge all to plant a tree this spring and as you do, you will be improving the quality of life on the planet.

April also means Lent and Lent means "spring." As we celebrate religion in the month of April this year in Colonial Williamsburg, we can find many connections to religion in our gardens.

The beautiful tree we see blooming right now with red flowers and heart shaped leaves is the red bud tree. Legend has it that Judas Iscariot chose the red bud tree on which to hang himself in shame and humiliation for having betrayed Jesus. The red flowers were supposedly originally white but turned red when they allegedly blushed in shame.

In our flowerpots by the back gate of the Geddy garden and in our perennial garden we have some Johnny-jump ups. These wild herbs look like miniature pansies and are violas that are colorful and delicate and

almost look like they have happy little faces. Because of their shape of three separate petals they were symbolic in Christianity of the Holy Trinity.

The colonists celebrated the end of the Lenten season at Easter by eating a certain dish called tansy pudding. It was a mixture of eggs and young leaves of tansy. In olden times tansy was believed to purify the body of bad humours and in the 14th century it was taken for cramps and to expel worms in children, but today we warn against using it internally.

I am enjoying my enlarged Geddy garden. I've planted vegetable and morning glories on the fence and look forward to their growth.

My asparagus were unfortunate casualties in the formation of the new garden. I felt very bad about that as it takes several years to establish the growth of asparagus, but my disappointment was short lived when I saw my determined asparagus poking through the new garden design and volunteering.

John Randolph in his treatise on gardening gave us rather complete instructions for the planting of asparagus. In the diary of Nicholas Cresswell in 1777 he mentions seeing asparagus growing wild on Long Island, N. Y. He wrote, "*asparagus grows in the fields with very little cultivation. I suppose it has been planted some time or other, but does not appear to have had any manure about it for years. It is now in a flourishing state, and what is more remarkable the land is gravelly and does not appear to be rich.*"

So apparently, if properly planted, asparagus is reluctant to leave a property and my few hardy stragglers are more than welcome in my new garden. The freshness of spring brings us hope and joy.

*"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing
has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in
our land."*

Song of Solomon
2-11-12

Janet Guthrie