
 GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

A dripping June keeps all things in tune.

Old Folks Saying



CHERRY

We have survived a long, dry spell but thankfully the spell has been broken and our garden is quenching its thirst. The ground had become very hard and dry and some streams and wells in the area had dried up but although our well had become low, it had not become dry. We rejoice in the rain.

June 15th is St. Vitus Day, which is known not only for a spastic dance of the sick but according to weather lore the day plays a role in weather forecasting. The saying goes, "If St. Vitus Day be rainy weather, it will rain for thirty days together." I'm in the process of testing that theory right now.

Another bit of weather lore says, "Red sky at night, shepherd's delight" and I find that proverb was taken from the Bible. "He answered and said unto them, when it is evening ye say, it will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning? It will be foul weather today; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrite's, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye discern the signs of the times?" Mathew XVI ,2-3

The plants in my garden that showed the quickest response to the rain are the Black-Eye-Susan's (Rudbeckia Fulgida.) They have reseeded themselves in a slightly new location from where I planted them last year. They have almost doubled in height from the two-foot flowers of last year. They obviously are draught tolerant and they seem to be challenging our new scarecrow to see who is the tallest in the garden. Since Black-Eyed-Susan's are long blooming we will be enjoying them for quite some time.

Another plant that is starting to benefit from the change in the weather is the sweet potato. They have really been put to the test this year. First they had to survive the hungry rabbits that live in our boxwood border and then the scorching heat. Having endured all that, they now seem to be doing well. I'm relieved because the sweet potato is one of the most important vegetables in my garden. The colonists appreciated and enjoyed it. We should all eat more sweet potatoes if only for their nutritional value. By switching from the baked white potato to the sweet potato you can eliminate the temptation of adding all those harmful, fat toppings to your diet. The sweet potato is high in vitamins A and C, iron and calcium and high in beta-carotene. Do not confuse it with the yam, which has a white colored flesh, not orange and is much lower in nutritional value.

Our fruit trees are coming along nicely in the orchard! The apples and figs appear to be unharmed by the lack of rain and the cherries have already ripened. Of course the birds ate them all.

Cherry trees bring to my mind George Washington. The association of Washington and cherry trees began centuries ago by an Episcopalian minister named Mason Locke Weems. Weems was born in 1759 and was a very interesting, eccentric and controversial preacher. He seems to have been ahead of his time. He was often harsh in describing sins, which probably would not have the same shock value today as it did then. He often preached at the Pohick Church where Washington had been a vestryman. He was inspired by Washington's character and wrote a popular biography about the first president upon his death. He included in this book the legend of George Washington chopping down the cherry tree. This little story was the creative imagination of the minister at work in an effort to exemplify Washington's honesty and it has endured throughout time.

The legend of Washington claiming "I cannot tell a lie" about chopping down his father's cherry tree caught the imagination of Americans and Mason Weems rose to fame. His book was published in 52 editions in many languages.

So although George Washington may never have really spoken those words he will forever be associated with honesty and truth. We can thank Mason Weems for having placed that little hatchet in George's hands.

Janet Guthrie