



## *Geddy Garden News*



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***"There never can be too much rain before midsummer."***

Old Proverb

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After almost a month of very little rainfall we are finally enjoying some very welcome spring showers.

We celebrated Mayday with the ancient Maypole tradition. The pole was erected and festooned with colorful ribbons and surrounded by baskets of flowers. The celebration took place in the Robert Carter backyard and the upper level of the yard formed an amphitheater for interested spectators. John Needre provided music for the occasion and visitors and employees joined in the Maypole dance. Families with youngsters, school groups and senior citizens united, resulting in a joyous welcome to springtime. The Maypole has proven to be a very popular event for our visitors.

The Geddy garden is thriving and is being carefully guarded by our unnamed scarecrow. She will receive her name at our picnic for our youth interpreters on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

This time of year, I enjoy one of nature's finest gifts, the strawberry. I don't look for the largest strawberries in the market, for they are often filled with tasteless water and lack the flavor of smaller strawberries.

The desire to enjoy the sweet taste of strawberries goes back in time. Thomas Tusser wrote in this book, Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry in 1557,

**"Wife, into thy garden and set me a plot,  
Such growing abroad, among thorns in the wood,  
Well chosen and picked, prove excellent good."**

Thomas Hariot wrote in 1587, after his voyage to Virginia, "Strawberries there are as good and great as these which we have in our English gardens."

The Indians not only ate strawberries but also drank them in tea for a wide variety of medicinal treatments. Cherokee tribes drank strawberry tea as a remedy for diarrhea, scurvy, nervous disorders, dysentery and even to remove tartar from

their teeth. Iroquois Indians made a tea of the root for chancre sores and to purify the blood, and for colicky and teething babies. Some Indian tribes considered it a "life" medicine and they even powdered the leaves and used it as an antiseptic. They unknowingly were also receiving ellagic acid, a cancer preventative found in strawberry leaves.

Gerard suggested boiling the leaves to make a poultice to reduce the heat in wounds. The berries were to be eaten to quench thirst and he also suggested distilling the water to make the face fair and smooth.

Parkinson and Gerard both recommended the distilled strawberry water to revive the spirits and make the heart merry.

Parkinson mentions that the berries "are often brought to the table as a reare service whereunto claret wine, creame or milke is added with sugar . . . a good cooling and pleasant dish in the hot summer season."

In 1770, Landon Carter bemoaned the fact that a severely cold winter had killed every one of his strawberry vines as well as his lettuce, parsley, broccoli and artichokes.

I have found the best way to freeze your strawberries is to slice them and mix them with brown sugar. Use about one pound of brown sugar to 4 pounds of strawberries after giving the strawberries a 10 minute rest, pack them in containers and put them in your freezer. The brown sugar preserves the natural flavor and color and even the aroma more than white sugar.

I have just developed a great appetite for strawberries with a little whipped cream, low calorie, of course.

Bon appetit!

*Janet Guthrie*

