
GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

**“Gardening gives me fun and health and knowledge
It gives me laughter and colour.
It gives me pictures of almost incredible beauty.”
John F. Kenyou**

Autumn is the twilight of the year. The harvest is almost over. We have enjoyed our figs, a luxury we are fortunate to have in our Geddy orchard. In ancient Rome the fig was considered a gift of the god Bacchus. The Bible tells us of the significance of the fig in the lives of the Hebrews. It is in fact the first tree mentioned in the Bible. On the wall of a 12th dynasty Egyptian grave there can be found a fig-harvesting scene. Fig like plants were growing in Italy and France long before the Stone Age. Fossil remains revealed this to us. In America the figs were introduced by the Spaniards. They were in St. Augustine, Florida in the 16th century. In Jamestown in 1629 Captain John Smith wrote, “Mistress Pearce harvested neere a hundred bushels of excellent figges.”

Many Northern visitors are surprised to find our fig trees uncovered during the winter but our fig trees can withstand temperatures as low as 10 degrees Fahrenheit without suffering serious damage. When the temperature dips to 5 degrees Fahrenheit below they will suffer but will usually recover with new shoots sprouting from the roots. We have experienced that several times on our site. The well-known cookie, the Fig Newton did not come about until the late 19th century and is named for the town of Newton in Massachusetts.

This is the season for soil preparation fertilization and the building of garden beds. These tasks, along with weeding and watering take up most of my time in October. I found some interesting quotations from an 18th century letter of Rosalie Stier Calvert of Virginia. She wrote, “Experience continues to demonstrate how plaster (of Paris) fertilizes the soil. We still use ten tons of it annually and a great quantity of manure, too. My husband buys almost all (the manure) available in Bladensburg, as well as their old ashes for almost nothing...”

I have had mixed feelings this past week about the National League championship battle. I am an Atlanta Braves fan but I recently gained new respect for the New York Mets. My interest in the Mets came about from learning of the hobby of the ball club. They grow a vegetable garden at Shea Stadium. Two of the ball players, Dennis Cook and John Franco and Chris Murphy a grounds crewmember at Shea are responsible for the garden. Shea was built on a landfill so a lot of fertilizer was needed and the NYC mounted policemen provided horse manure. Before the establishment of the garden a rat problem existed in the bullpen but since the ball players have started gardening the rat problem has diminished.

The garden which is isolated behind the right field wall in the bull pen produces broccoli, sun flowers, both jalapeno and habanero peppers, pumpkins, and tomatoes which are covered with netting to protect them from getting hit by homerun balls. The team members weed and water the garden during batting practice. Although I was happy with the outcome of the recent post season playoff I still felt a little sad for the gardening Mets. Wait until next year...

Janet Guthrie