

Geddy Garden News

“A PECK OF MARCH DUST IS WORTH A KING’S RANSOM.”

March received its name from the Roman god Mars. It is known as the stormy month. A dry march means that the newly sown seed will not be washed away, and the farmer can expect a good crop.

This however is the year of El Nino! This global weather force has changed the course of nature and already has done great damage to some crops in certain parts of the country. The March crop of artichokes in California for example has been washed out as well as some California lettuce. Florida suffered damage to tomatoes and the peaches, strawberries and watermelons in Georgia and the Carolinas were adversely affected by the El Nino cold snaps and rains. Farmers are working hard to salvage crops. Locally El Nino has caused a delay in the planting of spring gardens. Experts feel the effects of El Nino have reached a plateau and are decreasing, and over the next few months the conditions on earth will start to become more normal.

This week we are enjoying hot, sunny days which has enabled me to begin planting my enlarged kitchen garden. I find it most appropriate that in this year of changes in Colonial Williamsburg, my garden has also taken on a new form. The garden will include some new features that will be exciting to develop. One of those features will be a perennial garden along the fence. Albert Cowles has always been responsible for the perennials in the Geddy yard, so this will be a new experience for me and one I am anxious to begin.

I am refreshed from a vacation week in Florida where, like every where else, the weather was erratic, but it was mostly fair.

One of the many delicious meals I enjoyed there was flavored with béarnaise sauce. The herb, French tarragon was responsible for the wonderful taste. The sauce consisted of white wine, butter, egg yolks, shallots and fresh tarragon that gave the sauce a unique licorice taste.

Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing tarragon to our country from his visit to France. It was used in the eighteenth century as a cure for snakebite and a remedy for fatigue. Today we recognize it as a beneficial plant due to its richness in potassium. It also has rutin which is thought to have cancer-fighting properties. I think I shall include some tarragon in my

garden this year.

I planted potatoes and chives today. The chives serve to reduce the potato bugs, but I am resigned to accept the fact that there will be a bug problem. With potatoes come pests and although the chives are helpful they are not a cure for the problem.

Chris Trowbridge, my coworker, has a birdseye view of Palace Green from the window next to her desk in the Geddy House. During the winter months she did some informal research. Chris became involved with a family of squirrels that lived in the nearby tree. She kept us informed of the activities and antics of her favorite squirrel family. We received daily reports on Charlie and Henrietta and their children. Now that spring has arrived we hear less about them and I miss the reports.

She will probably turn her attention to the newborn rabbits found in our yard. We have a mother and four nursing baby bunnies. Everyone thinks they are so adorable. Everyone but me. I view them as the enemy. I know it is just a matter of time before they invade my garden and attack my lettuce and cabbage. I can remember when I used to like rabbits.

Janet Guthrie

