



July 2002

### GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

*"A swarm of bees in May is  
worth a load of hay.  
A swarm of bees in June is  
worth a silver spoon.  
A swarm of bees in July is  
not worth a fly."*

Old Proverb

The weather has caused many problems this summer. The drought has caused the loss of the corn crop for many farmers. The drought conditions exist in 49 of our states now. The dryness has contributed to the spread of wild fires that are presently raging in eight of our states. By comparison to these conditions, the circumstances in my Geddy Kitchen Garden seem of very minor importance, so I won't complain.

In the summer of 1774 Virginians were experiencing similar conditions. Philip Fithian wrote in his journal on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1774, "no rain has fell here since the 24<sup>th</sup> of May but a Scanty shower, and most of the time since windy." And again on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1774, he mentions, "The weather remarkably dry, since Sunday night, we have not had a drop of Rain, nor even a cloudy sky."

Of course, it did not rain this year on July 15<sup>th</sup>, St. Swithens Day, which according to legend indicates that 40 more days of drought will follow.

Maybe the drought has caused the bees to become more angry than usual. I have received five bee stings on separate occasions this summer. I was therefore interested in investigating remedies for bee stings. Some natural quick remedies can be found in the garden. If you rub basil or mint leaves on the sting it will offer some relief. If you have meat tenderizer and vinegar available, another treatment is to make a paste and apply it to the sting to relieve the pain.

The Junior Interpreters had their annual picnic and it was enjoyed by all. One of the events that took place at the picnic was the naming of the Geddy scarecrow. This year our scarecrow had the misfortune of being the victim of vandalism. During the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend the re-enactors removed her head from her body placed it on the *chevaux de fries* at the Magazine. Her head was eventually recovered by Geddy employee, Jill Darden, and re-attached. The Junior Interpreters suggested many names, but the name suggested by Peer Teacher Tyler Adams was the one chosen. It was, appropriately, "Marie Antoinette." Tyler received as her prize an original water color painted by a local artist.

In the month of July we enjoy an abundance of garden produce. One of the best things about the summer season now and in the past has been the availability of fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs. We like to enjoy our own homegrown goods, and we also like to shop at markets and roadside stands for them.

Recently, the Williamsburg Farmers' Market opened in Merchants Square. On Saturday mornings, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, there are over a dozen Virginia vendors at stands selling their produce. Our Colonial Williamsburg bakers offer their bread and other baked goods for sale. There are also flowers and plants from the Colonial Garden available. When I visited, it seemed to be very busy and going well. There were not only visitors there but many townspeople as well. I was struck by the similarity to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century market place.

Colonial markets were usually located near squares or around the courthouse in town. They provided the seasonal products of gardens and orchards and the vendors were both rural and urban producers who hawked their wares. Also sold at the 18<sup>th</sup>-century market place were livestock, fish and fowl, and butter and eggs. Some slaves were even selling things like brooms, nails, yarn, and woolen pieces of cloth. It was a place where all ranks of society and races could be found. As the housewives shopped and selected the best quality goods, they took advantage of the opportunity to visit, spread the news, and enjoy social contact with all.

I saw much of the same activity taking place at the new market. It seems to be a gathering place for locals who examine the goods offered, compare quality and prices at the various stands and, like the people of the past, spend a good deal of the time visiting and socializing at the market place.

You might want to pay a visit to the new market if you haven't already done so. It will be open until October 19<sup>th</sup>.

*Janet Guthrie*