

## Geddy Garden News

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In this new year we are welcoming new ways here in our neighborhoods and many changes are taking place. These changes will be extended to my garden as well as other spaces in the colonial area. I will be changing a few of the plants in the kitchen garden. The Geddy family in preparation for possible war on the eve of the Revolution will be growing more storable vegetables. The growing and preserving foodstuffs was one of the few ways a woman could do her part to protect and nurture her family in those uncertain and fearful times. Root plants and apples will be stored in barrels and as an alternative to imported tea, a variety of herbs will be grown in my garden. I'm looking forward to telling the Headline Event stories in the kitchen garden and involving the Geddy family with these political happenings.

There is an old proverb that says, "*He that plants trees loves others besides himself.*"

There are many trees that were named by the Indians. The native hickory tree was named by Algonquin Indians. They gathered the nuts, crushed them and made a soup, which they call Powcohicura. A botanist named Raffinesque latinized that word and named the genus.

Another tree that was named by the Indians is the sassafras tree. Florida Indians were the ones that gave the name to tree and they also informed the colonists of it's curative properties making sassafras roots the very first export cargo to England from the colonies. The bark was taken internally in the form of tea called, Ague tea. It caused victims of Malaria to perspire freely.

The catalpa trees, which grace Palace Green, were among those trees named by Indians and native to North America. Others include the persimmon and the wahoo or winged elm tree.

The Indians had many practical uses from their trees. From the winter buds of the balsam poplars they squeezed out the wax and used it as glue to seal up seams in their birch bark canoes. They called this glue propolis. They took the material from the inner bark of the willow tree and used it for fishing lines and fishnets.

Probably the canoe birch or paper birch can be called the most valuable tree to the Indian. It was put to so much practical use. It provided food from the sweet syrupy sap, and meal, which they dried up and ground from the inner bark.

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The tough bark was used for roofing materials on their wigwams and this bark was also light and waterproof, which made it ideal material for the making of the canoe. This wonderful tree served to provide food, lodging, drink and transportation. It was indispensable to the Indians.

Food was obtained from other trees as well. The inner bark of the cherry birch was dried and then boiled with fish. Pine nuts were pounded into meal or parched into mush or sometimes eaten raw in autumn by Indian tribes. The paw paw tree supplies not only the fruit for food but the inner bark was woven into fiber cloth. The hard resin of the sweet gum was chewed by the Indians for the good of their teeth and also served to perfume their soap. From the red mulberry bark fiber was woven into coarse cloth and the birch canoe was sewn together with the tough roots of the American larch tree or tamarack tree. Many roots from trees provided fast dyes that could not be washed away. These dyes were carried in bladders. Red willow bark was used to tattoo the skin of the Indian. They believed that evil spirits were unable to see the color red so red ocher or red vegetable paints were used to ward off those evil spirits. The sumac tree was the tree used for dying and tanning leather.

There were many medicinal uses too. The Indians were a pragmatic society and used the plants of the earth in so many practical ways.

One day we will review the Indians use of food. Much of the world's cuisine would be quite different today if it were not for the American Indian gardens and gardeners!

*Janet Guthrie*



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