
GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

“Now every field is clothed with grass, and every tree with leaves; now the woods put forth their blossoms, and the year assumes its gay attire.”

Virgil (70-19 B.C.)

Summer is here and we have experienced record breaking high temperatures already. After a long drought we also had a strong rain storm that caused the loss of several large limbs from one of our fig trees, but the rain was needed and appreciated.

The annual Jr. Interpreters picnic took place last week and we all enjoyed ourselves. I awarded Danielle Banks the prize for naming our new scarecrow. The winning name was Lazy Daisy.

I'm not sure how well Lazy Daisy is doing her job. I've seen quite a few crows in the garden this year. I recently learned that crows can be taught to repeat phrases. The regular crow sound we hear from them is their way of marking their territory but if that sound turns low and guttural the crow is warning other crows of the nearby danger of hawks or owls. Crows have a bad name and always have from very early times. Discord and strife was symbolized in hieroglyphic drawings of crows and in folklore the presence of a crow forewarns death.

Crows are also associated with war and thought to incite armies. The crow is a thief and a scavenger. He eats everything from corn to frogs and toads. He robs eggs from bird nests and eats small snakes. The good news is that he also eats beetles and cutworms and some of the other garden pests. The crow is definitely not wanted in our garden and therefore we will continue to do our best to eliminate him.

The sweet potatoes in the garden are growing well. They are considered number one on the list of vegetables containing the beneficial nutrients of vitamin A, vitamin C, foliate, iron, copper, calcium and fiber. However if one overeats sweet potatoes he can run the risk of becoming jaundiced from the pigment carotene. Sweet potatoes should be eaten quickly because they spoil and they should not be refrigerated but stored for a short time in a cool place.

I have melons growing in the garden. The pocket melon is doing well. It was one of the three melons that Miller wrote was worth cultivating. It is grown for its fragrance. I'm also growing some cantaloupe, which is another of the three melons mentioned by Miller. I'm careful not to grow them in the same bed nor near gourds or cucumbers because in his treatise on gardening John Randolph warned that “the farina of one will impregnate the other, spoil the relish of the fruit, and make them degenerate.”

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Probably the most frequently questioned vegetable in my garden this year was the infrequently seen kohlrabi. It was introduced to China from Europe via the Silk Road in the Middle Ages. It was eaten in the colonies. It is believed to have developed from a single mustard ancestor, a wild cabbage. The bulb is the edible part of the plant. It can be sliced and eaten raw or added to a salad but it is usually steamed. I had never tried it so I decided to sample it. I found it agreeable. It was similar in taste to a turnip or rutabaga, but without the bitter taste. It has some nutritional value but is not as beneficial as broccoli, kale or brussel sprouts. It is high in vitamin C, potassium and bioflavonoids. It is also high in antioxidants that may reduce the risk of cancer.

The garden has required a lot of weeding this year but that is what gardening is all about. Women in the 18th century were called "women weeders." There is no doubt that gardening is laborious. Rudyard Kipling wrote, "and such gardens are not made by singing; "Oh how beautiful! And sitting in the Shade."

Janet Guthrie



KOHLRABI