

THE



AVANT
GARDENER

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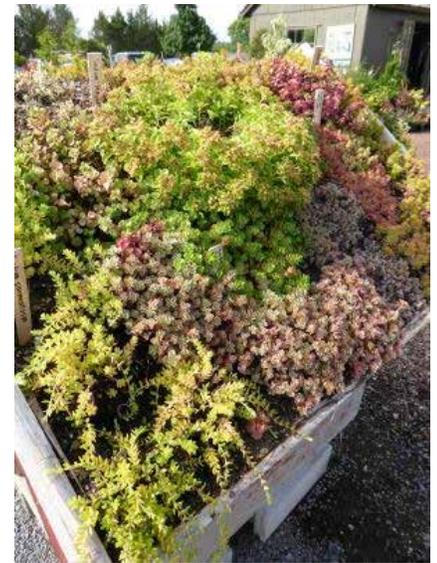
October 2015

SMALL GREEN ROOFS CAN BE FLAT OR PITCHED AND CHEST HIGH. A problem with most books about planting roofs is that the examples given are usually large, commercial installations that few home gardeners would ever consider. A new book titled *'Small Green Roofs – Low Tech Options for Green Living'* (Timber Press) is a refreshing change by four authors – one American and three British. They have collaborated to show how to design and construct a green roof, mostly as a do-it-yourself project involving no contractor. The American, Edmund C. Snodgrass, is president of Green Roof Plants, located in Street, Maryland. One of the American examples is a project by the owners of Aucaya Living Roofs, of Raleigh, North Carolina. Although most of the examples shown are in the UK, they are designs that could work well on any continent. Published by Timber Press, the smallest examples are bicycle shelters not more than 22 square feet, with the roof of the structure at chest height.

The chapter organization begins with the general concept of Making a Green Roof and explains that the inspiration for the increasing interest in them is the Norwegian turf roofs of farmhouses that help the structures blend in with the countryside and also provide an extra level of insulation during harsh, snowy winters. Extensively illustrated, the examples given include Hobbit houses that serve as playhouses, to small earth-sheltered buildings that serve for storage and as living space.

The chapter on Planting a Green Roof includes the use of drought tolerant plants and meadow grasses, and also vegetables and herbs. A chapter headed Biodiversity covers the attraction that green roofs can offer wildlife, notably butterflies and bees, but also birds, like plovers that will nest on a green roof. A chapter headed Garages, Outhouses and Small Structures shows examples with both flat and pitched roofs, while a chapter on Community projects shows structures involving teamwork. The book also includes a useful plant directory, a bibliography and a list of resources.

The authors stress that proper waterproofing is essential, and also



Display of hardy sedum suitable for growing on a pitched green roof.



Green roof of drought-tolerant plants on a rooftop at the Morris Arboretum, Pennsylvania

weight loading. "Quite simply it is the weight loading that ultimately dictates the quality, functioning and appearance of a green roof," quote the authors. "The more the roof can support the more the design and plant choices you will have," they say. In a book project involving four authors, with only one of them American-based, it would be useful to know who wrote what sections, even though the examples given are impressive.

A minimum of 6 inches of substrata is recommended for a green roof, the authors pointing out that the original Scandinavian substrata was natural loam soil that can become very heavy when wet, but many drought tolerant plants, like lavender, yucca and sedum will grow in lighter weight gravel soils that facilitate rapid drainage. A pitched roof – no matter how slight the pitch – will also provide good drainage and ease the weight load. Drains can direct the run-off into a rain barrel. For irrigation the use of a drip line on a timer is recommended since a spell of drought can turn plants to a crisp unless they are drought tolerant, and drip lines can remain hidden.

Two examples in the book stand out. They are a potting shed with a pitched roof and a dwelling called a roundhouse with a low mounded roof. One side of the potting shed roof is all glass to allow maximum light transmission for raising seedlings inside, while the roundhouse has such a low profile it is virtually invisible on a wooded lot in Wales.

WRITE IT RIGHT. Precision in writing should be the primary goal of every writer. Here's a list of common mistakes made in garden books and garden magazines about plants and gardens, sometimes involving word use and at other times perpetuating a myth. These myths often occur because one magazine article or book will contain an error that other authors unwittingly copy.

Entitled. Means privileged. **Titled** should be used when naming a book, such as 'The book is titled Vertical Gardening.' Even the *New York Times* newspaper and *New Yorker* magazines constantly make this error.

Unique does NOT need a qualifier. There are no degrees of uniqueness as unique means 'one of a kind.' For example it is wrong to say 'Veilchenblau' rose is a most unique color' or 'Cardinal Richelieu' heirloom rose is very unique.'

Nice is usually an inappropriate word as it is too vague. Always try to be more specific. Instead of saying a 'nice person' say a 'friendly person' or a 'generous person.'

Get is a also a vague word. Try to find a more definitive substitute. Instead of 'He went to get a wheelbarrow', say 'he went to find a wheelbarrow.'

Thing is another vague word. Instead of "I find a hoe a useful thing.," say 'I find a hoe a useful tool.'

Which and **That** are seldom interchangeable. When they are, use 'that'



Contrary to popular belief, Spanish bluebells are not fragrant or deer repellent



Despite claims to the contrary tropical water lilies like this Australian blue bloom longer than hardy water lilies

as it sounds and reads better.

Will and **shall** are not the same. 'Will' implies determination, whereas 'shall' implies intention. President Johnson got it right when he said "I shall not seek, nor will I accept a second term as president."

Plant material is a term that should be avoided. 'Material' is redundant. Just say 'plants.'

Cultivar is not a term familiar to most gardeners. Better to say **variety**. Who cares whether a plant was produced from cultivation or some other means?

Tomato Pollination. Many magazine articles and books tell your readers to take a camel's hair brush and transfer pollen from one flower to another to improve fruit yields. Tomatoes are self-pollinating. Low yields are usually caused by too cool or too high a temperature or lack of phosphorus in the soil, not lack of bee activity.

Deer Proof Plants is not as good a definition as **Plants Deer Avoid** since almost all deer proof lists contain plants deer will eat when food is scarce.

Fragrance lists almost always contain bluebells, but they should be more specific since only English bluebells are fragrant. The more commonly planted Spanish bluebells are not. Nor are they deer repellent in spite of many bulb catalogs saying they are. At Cedaridge Farm we lose them every year to deer unless we spray early with a deer repellent. Although annual sweet peas can be exceedingly fragrant, depending on variety, the perennial sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*) has no fragrance. Recently on a home shopping channel a host selling perennial sweet peas displayed annual sweet peas and told the audience how fragrant they were! Sweet peas also have much larger flowers and a wider color range. The perennial sweet pea is available only in white, pink and red, while annual sweet peas are also available in all shades of blue and orange.

Water Lilies. It is not true that hardy water lilies bloom longer than tropicals. It sounds logical, but actually you will gain a month more bloom from tropicals than hardies even though tropicals must be taken indoors during winter.

'**Five Color**' **Swiss Chard** is NOT the same as '**Bright Lights**' (note the botanically correct single quotes for variety names) because 'Five Color' Swiss chard was used as the comparison to determine that 'Bright Lights' was worthy of an All-America Award. 'Bright Lights' has eleven distinct colors, while 'Five Color' is an unstable mixture, often with no more than three colors. 'Bright Lights' was developed by New Zealander, John Eaton who died of cancer shortly after receiving news of his All-America Award. The strain is kept pure by Johnny's Selected Seeds. Nor is 'Rainbow' chard the same as 'Bright Lights.' The name 'Rainbow' is simply another name for 'Five Color' chard.



There is a difference between 'Everbearer' and 'Day Neutral' strawberries. This is the fruit of day-neutral, strawberry, 'Albion' harvested in July

Capitals are not needed to denote people or places in botanical names, such as *Endymion hispanica* meaning Spanish bluebell. Botanical nomenclature has decreed the lower case in the second designation to be correct.

Strawberry articles often ignore the fact that there are THREE main types – ‘June-bearers’, ‘Everbearers’ and ‘Day Neutrals’ and lump Day-neutrals in with Everbearers. There is a big difference – an ‘Everbearer’ crops only twice a season, affected by the hours of daylight – in spring and fall; whereas a ‘Day-neutral’ crops repeatedly in spring, summer and fall, unaffected by day-length. British garden magazines most often make this error since it is American breeders who developed the ‘Day-neutral’ strawberry from plants found in Utah and Alaska.

Heirloom has become a word that is now used to deceive the public. It used to mean plants in commerce before World War II, and then more recently plants introduced more than 50 years ago; but now several catalog houses and at least one book claim the term can be applied to ANY open-pollinated variety no matter what the year of introduction. Also, at least one organization refuses to designate any commercially produced seed variety as an heirloom, saying that a true heirloom can only come from community involvement and not from a commercial breeding program.

Crepe Myrtle is the correct spelling for the small tree, *Lagerstroemia indica*, not **Crape Myrtle** because the common name comes from the fact that the leaves feel like crepe paper. Most British magazines say crepe myrtle, while most American publications are in the habit of saying crape myrtle.

‘Sugar Snap’ pea is a variety name to describe the first edible-podded pea that was bred by Idaho plant breeder, Calvin Lamborn, and which remains edible after the peas swell the pod. It does not describe the entire group of which ‘Sugar Ann’ and others are members. The correct group definition is ‘snap pea’ not ‘sugar snap pea.’

Trademark symbols are NOT needed in editorial articles. They are needed only when an offer of sale is made, such as an advertisement or on a company’s website. The same is true of patent symbols. Treat them like scabs in an editorial context.

ARE BLUE TOMATOES WORTH THE GARDEN SPACE? At Avant Gardener’s Cedaridge Farm test facility this past season we included ‘blue’ tomatoes among the trials, curious to see whether the fruits actually lived up to their descriptions of blue highlights and good flavor. Developed by Wild Boar Farms, California, we chose the company’s ‘Blue Berries’ (a cherry size tomato) and ‘Blue Beauties’ (a large-fruited variety) as these were the most widely available. ‘Blue Berries’ ripened about 70 days from transplanting 6-week old transplants and continued producing over an extended period from their indeterminate vines. The fruit clusters were attractive, a dozen or more studded along arching stems, starting off black and then ripening to become a combination of blue-



Crepe myrtle tree is named after the crepe paper texture of its leaves



Snap pea is the name for a group of edible podded peas like the variety, ‘Sugar Snap’



Tomato ‘Blue Beauty’ has excellent flavor in taste tests at Cedaridge Farm

black and reddish-orange. They looked delicious but compared to cherry varieties like 'Sun Gold' and 'Sweet 100' the flavor was disappointing since they were not nearly as sweet, and even imparted a bitter taste.

'Blue Beauties' proved to be reasonably productive for a large-fruited variety, the large red 'Beefsteak'-sized fruits exceedingly attractive with blue-black shoulders. The flavor was excellent, as good as 'Big Boy' and 'Supersteak' which we considered the standard for large-fruited flavor; but the shape was not as smooth as our comparisons. Indeed, most of the fruits were cushion-shaped, flattened with deep indentations. However, the irregular shapes added to their visual appeal since it gave them the appearance of heirlooms. The indeterminate vines began ripening fruit within 80 days from setting out 6-week old transplants. Bottom line: thumb's up to 'Blue Beauties' but thumbs down to 'Blue Berries.'

NEW ORNAMENTAL MELON IS SWEETLY FLAVORED. Two varieties of ornamental melon that caught our attention this season were 'Tigger', which Baker Seeds discovered in Armenia and introduced as an edible version of 'Queen Anne's Pocket' melon, and 'Rich Sweetness' from the Soviet Union. All three melons produce fruits about the size of a tennis ball and look alike, with longitudinal, zig-zag red stripes on a yellow background. All three also produce white flesh. 'Queen Anne's Pocket' melon has a pleasant perfume and was used in Victorian times by women as a nose-gay, carried in their purses or pockets. The flavor is bland, rather like a cucumber. 'Tigger' also has a pleasant perfume, but is has a pleasant flavor similar to an Asian pear. 'Rich Sweetness' has a similar pleasant perfume, a large seed cavity, and a sparse amount of edible flesh. To our taste the flavor was not as pleasant as 'Tigger' since it had a sickly-sweet flavor. Slightly under-ripe fruit were better flavored but it was difficult judging for perfect sweetness. We found all three ideal for growing vertically up trellis and garden netting. For ornamental value 'Rich Sweetness' was best, but for eating quality we voted 'Tigger' above the rest.

Also in the Cedaridge Farm melon trials this year was 'Ha'ogen' which we would describe as a green fleshed 'Charantais' type melon. Although named for an Israeli kibbutz, this melon is believed to have originated in Hungary. It is a single-serving melon about the size of a large grapefruit. The green-grey skin turns yellow with green ribs when ripe, and the flavor is delicious – similar to the famous French 'Charantais' melon which has orange flesh rather than green.

CAN YOU REALLY GROW ALL YOU CAN EAT IN THREE SQUARE FEET? The problem with a new book from Dorling-Kindersley, titled '*Grow All you Can Eat in 3 Square Feet*' is the title itself since the book does not show you how to grow all you can eat in such a small space. More like 300 square feet since this is basically a raised-bed book showing how you can grow in multiples of 3 square feet. Some of the ideas feature growing plants in containers such as window box planters, and growing vertically – such as pole beans rooted in wooden boxes. It's a thorough coverage of small-space gardening, including old ideas like growing potatoes in grow-bags and training edible gourds to grow up



Tomato, 'Blue Berries' were not considered tasty enough to grow a second season at Cedaridge Farm



Sweet corn in container showing that not much can be grown in three square feet, certainly not all you can eat



Sweet corn in container showing that not much can be grown in three square feet, certainly not all you can eat

bicycle wheels stacked against a wall. A new idea featured is the pallet planter where a wooden pallet is stood on end and the interior space filled with potting soil so plants can grow in spaces between the boards. To grow vertically, wall pockets are shown, as are hanging baskets, and also the idea of stacking pots on step ladders.

Many of the raised beds look like Mel Bartholomew's 'Square Foot Gardening' although the soil depth recommended in the Dorling-Kindersley book is deeper – 36 inches in most cases – ensuring a better result. As we have noted in previous issues, growing plants in small raised squares, such as 3 or 4 square feet is a waste of space. If your garden space will allow it, a much better harvest will be possible by keeping the three-foot width but extending the length as far as space will allow.

LET'S EXPLODE A FEW MORE MYTHS. Thumbing through 'How Plants Work' (Timber Press) by Linda Chalker-Scott, we found the author outspoken on a number of products of questionable gardening value. For example, she claims that 'Harpin' – sold as 'Messenger' – and claimed to provide disease resistance, is derived from a protein isolated from fire-blight. It acts like a vaccination that works well indoors in a laboratory environment but has little effect on plants outdoors because it has difficulty penetrating the cell wall to be effective.

She also points out that landscape fabric (Geotextile) is an ineffective weed barrier because it allows light to penetrate through to the soil. Widely available as a mulch fabric, it is porous and supposed to keep weeds out but allow water and oxygen to reach the root zone. She says that the holes soon become clogged with dust and dirt, reducing the porosity, and weed seeds already in the soil will sprout, lifting the fabric clear of the soil and suffocating whatever crop is planted.

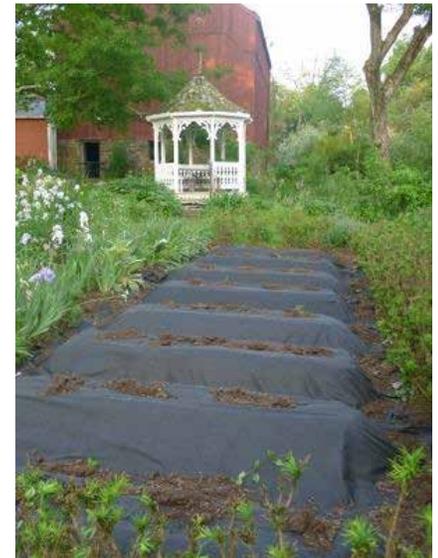
At Cedaridge Farm we have experienced better results with black plastic for warm season crops. Although the plastic is not porous it does suffocate weeds and water will reach the root zone of desirable plants through osmosis if pathways are left uncovered.

Lay off the sugar if you have been using it as a weed killer on the theory that it promotes desirable bacterial growth which ties up nitrogen so weed seeds fail to germinate. Although touted as a 'home remedy,' it is non-selective and if a weed seed cannot tolerate your soil, neither can your desirable crops. Epsom salts are also touted as a home remedy because they contain magnesium sulphate which feeds plants. But most soils contain sufficient amounts. Touted to improve seed germination, adding more can create an undesirable imbalance. When soils fail to produce desirable results, don't guess – have a professional soil test and take the specific advice recommended by the laboratory.

The author recommends against using anti-transpirants except for reducing water loss in Christmas trees and cut flowers. She says that they should not be used on living plants. While anti-transpirants reduce water loss from leaves, they interfere with a plant's normal physiology. With reference to compost teas, the author prefers to apply compost directly



A raised bed with chard and tomatoes showing limited production in three square feet



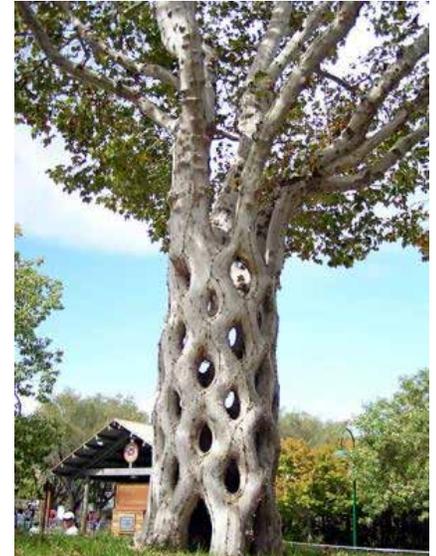
Black plastic is a better weed barrier than fabric mulch, seen here at Cedaridge Farm

to the soil around plant roots as rainfall and regular watering will allow nutrients to feed plants slowly. At Cedaridge farm we have found that both top-dressing with compost for long term feeding and fortnightly watering with compost teas does promote highest yields.

Is spring better than fall to plant trees? According to the author, fall is the preferred tree planting season because of the high risk of dehydration from summer drought. Autumn is better because the above-ground parts go dormant and do not need so much water. Roots, by contrast never go dormant. Their growth slows but, an organic protective mulch such as shredded leaves will help keep the soil from freezing and ensure greater survival rates for trees than from spring planting.

MORE FAMOUS TREES AND WHERE TO FIND THEM. In the September issue of *Avant Gardener* we featured the new paperback book by Thomas Pakenham titled, *'Meetings with Remarkable Trees'* which featured champion trees with historic associations found mostly in the UK. Casting a wider net, *Avant Gardener* key-stroked 'The World's Most Famous Trees' and we were amazed at the number of websites devoted to the subject, sometimes titled 'The World's Most Magnificent Trees.' It is actually fascinating how many of these can be found in North America, or will grow in some part of the Continental USA if given the chance, such as the giant baobabs of Africa, specimens of which can be found in Southern Florida. The images are spellbinding even if the captions in some cases contain errors (for example, the Angel Oak- an immense live oak tree - is not to be found in California, but near Charleston, South Carolina.)

The most interesting of the websites proved to be the London Daily Telegraph which featured the following sixteen trees in its article: **The Hiroshima Memorial Tree** is a bonsai'd pine estimated to be 390 years old and which survived the atomic blast that destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima during World War II. Donated to the city of Washington in 1976, it is now displayed at the National Arboretum. **Rikuzentakata Lone Pine** is the name of a pine tree that in 2012 was cut down by authorities after surviving the tsunami that destroyed the district of Rikuzentakata and replanted to save it. The tree is the lone survivor of a coastal forest swept away by the strength of the waves that inundated the coastline. The tree was cut into sections and given anti-decay treatments, then re-assembled with a carbon spine on the same spot a year later. **General Sherman Giant Sequoia** is the tallest known tree in the world, located in Sequoia National Park, in Tulare County, California. Rising perpendicular to a height of 83.8 meters, it has a diameter of 7.7 meters, and is estimated to be between 2,300 and 2,700 years old, named after the Civil War general, William Tecumseh Sherman. Although these giant trees will survive raging forest fires, they are now threatened with destruction from the California drought. **Jay Sri Maha Bodhi** is a sacred fig tree in Anuraahapura, Ceylon, believed to be the tree under which Buddha received enlightenment. It was planted in 288 BC, making it the world's oldest tree planted by humans, and revered as one of the most sacred relics of Buddhism. The **Methuselah Bristlecone Pine** grows high on the gravel slopes of the White Mountains of California and



Basket-tree is part of a display at garden in Gilroy, California



Famous baobab avenue on the island of Madagascar

at 4,847 years old was thought to be the world's oldest tree. Although an older specimen has been located, estimated to be 5,064 years of age, Methuselah is more photogenic with its broad base, buttressed roots and evergreen branches still clinging to life. **The Major Oak** is an ancient English oak in the heart of Sherwood Forest, England. With a circumference of 10 meters, it is believed to be 1,000 years old and to have sheltered the outlaw, Robin Hood and his gang of thieves. Although there are older oaks in England, the Major Oak has a beautiful symmetrical shape and billowing foliage canopy. **The Queen Elizabeth Oak** is another famous English oak, located in the grounds of Hatfield House, England. It was under this tree that Queen Elizabeth I is said to have received news of her sister, Mary's death, making her the new monarch. **The Oklahoma Bomb Survivor** is a 100-year old American elm that survived the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, an act of terrorism. The force of the blast damaged the tree, but it recovered to become an integral part of the Oklahoma City National Monument. **El Arbor del Tule** (The Tree of Tule) is a Montezuma cypress that has a massive trunk of 42 meters circumference, thought to be the bulkiest tree in the world, found in Santa Maria del Tule, a city in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. **The Cedars of God** is a grove of cedars of Lebanon growing at a high elevation in Lebanon. The 400 trees are all that remains of a once extensive forest that supplied timber to King Herod of the Old Testament, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Now protected as a World Heritage Site, the cedars of Lebanon are mentioned in the Bible 70 times. **Stokes Gabriel Yew** is an English yew thought to be 1,000 years old and believed to be the oldest yew in England, located in the graveyard of the Church of Saint Mary and Saint Gabriel, Devon. **Strangler Figs of Angkor Wat** have sprouted all over the temple ruins of Cambodia's popular historical tourist site. These have extensive root systems that can envelop doorways and walls like the tentacles of an octopus. The temple was used in the movie, The Tomb Raider. **The Lone Monterey Cypress** is located at Pebble Beach, near Carmel, California, and claims to be the most photographed tree in the world. Located along the 17-mile coastal drive on the Monterey Peninsula, the tree grows out of bare rocks, withstanding gales and salt-laden air. Believed to be 250 years old, it was a favorite subject of photographer Ansel Adams. **Thimamma Marrimanu** is a banyan tree located in India with branches and brace roots that extend over 11 acres. It is listed in the Guinness book of World Records as the world's biggest tree by area. **The Chandelier Tree** in Legget, California is a California coastal redwood with a 6 ft. wide hole cut through its trunk to allow cars to drive through. **Old Tjikko** is a clonal Norway spruce believed to be 9,550 years old, discovered in the Dalarna province of Sweden by a professor at Umea University. Although the tree stands only five meters high, it sprouted from a fallen host tree believed to be much older.

An internet search found other lists of famous, remarkable or unusual trees, including the following oddities:

Lonely Mesquite Tree in the desert on the island of Bahrain is a 400-year old specimen that appears to be growing out of nothing but pure sand with not a scrap of vegetation visible all the way to the horizon.



This grove of drought tolerant dragonblood trees is located on the island of Socotra



Famous lone-cypress clings to live on a rocky promontory at Pebble Beach, California



Stranger figs threaten to swallow up the ruins of Angkor Wat, Indonesia

Named 'The Tree of Life,' its survival is a complete mystery. **The Baobab Prison Tree** in the Northern Territories of Australia is estimated to be 1,500 years old and so named because its bulbous hollow trunk once served as a temporary prison by local police transporting Aborigine prisoners to work camps. Baobabs are such efficient drought tolerant plants a single specimen can store 31,700 gallons of water. Also world famous is the Baobab Avenue formed by a grove of tall baobabs near Morondava, Madagascar. **A Grove of Dragonblood Trees** in the desert on the island of Socotra, off the coast of Yemen presents a sight that seems to be from another planet. Botanically known as *Dracaena cinnabari*, the trees have a unique growth habit, creating a mushroom shape with a smooth, bare trunk and dome of branches. Spiky yucca-like leaves are produced only on new growth at the tips of the branches. The plants derive their common name from a red sap that is used as a dye. **The Basket Tree** was planted by California bean farmer, Axel Erlandson who shaped trees as a hobby. To create the basket tree he planted six sycamore trees in a circle and as they grew he grafted their side branches together to form a diamond pattern, or 'basket weave.' His collection of 'circus trees' were considered such an interesting oddity that they were purchased by millionaire Michael Bonfante who transplanted them to his amusement park, Bonfante Gardens, in Gilroy, California. **The Chapel Oak** of Allouville-Bellefosse is the most famous tree in France. An English oak, its massive form was converted into a chapel after the tree was made hollow by a lightning strike.

'DEER REPELLENT PLANTS' THAT DEER LIKE TO EAT. Many garden books print lists of so-called 'deer repellent' or 'deer-proof' plants. One of the most widely read is titled '*Grandmother's Critter Ridder*' by Dr. Myles H. Bader and published by Creative Products Concepts. The author, who says he is known as the 'Buggy Professor' has been a guest on thousands of television and radio shows advising how to rid your home and garden of bugs by using home remedies. He also claims to be a leader in preventative medicine using home remedies. Unfortunately, his list of 'deer repellent' plants does not stand up to scrutiny, and we have discovered that other authors and broadcast communicators, including television shopping channel hosts, have used the list as gospel, notably in claiming that daylilies are 'deer repellent' when they are not.

At Cedaridge Farm we have deer in the garden every night looking for food and if we did not use a repellent liquid spray on daylilies we would have no blooms because as soon as the new shoots emerge from dormancy in spring, the deer eat them. The mature leaves they avoid, but back they come again when the succulent buds occur on top of long stems. They also relish the flowers when they fully open.

Another error on the doctor's list of deer repellent plants is tulips when in reality they are a favorite food of deer. They not only dig up the bulbs to eat after planting, they eat the new shoots as soon as they poke through the soil in spring, and they eat the buds and flowers.

English ivy and holly are both on the doctor's list, and while deer tend to leave both these broad-leaf evergreens alone during spring and summer



Despite claims to the contrary, daylilies are a favorite food of deer



Deer have rubbery lips that allow them to eat thorny plants with impunity including roses

they will eat them down to the ground in late fall and winter. That is true of many evergreens, including needle evergreens like spruce and arborvitae. The deer will leave them alone during frost-free months because they know they must rely on them as winter forage.

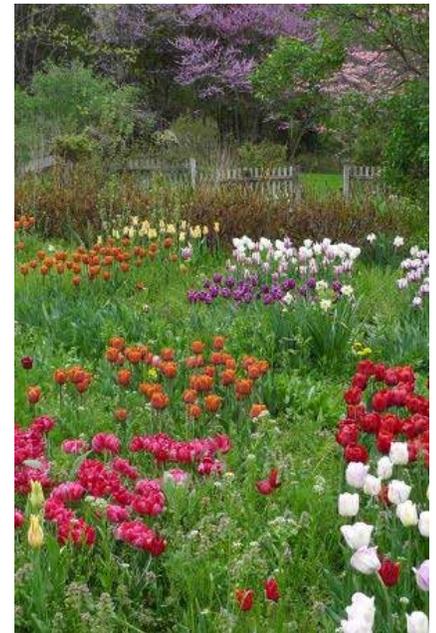
One of the better books about controlling deer is titled '*Solving Deer Problems*' by Peter Loewer, and subtitled '*How to Deer Proof your Yard and Garden*.' He notes that tulips and daylilies are favorite food for deer, and also lists roses, hostas and phlox – all of which suffer severe damage at Cedaridge Farm if not sprayed with a deer repellent. He notes that tiger lilies are unpopular with deer, which has been our experience at Cedaridge Farm, but other kinds of lilies – such as Asiatics and Orientals – are a favorite deer food. Among other plants he names as 'unpopular with deer' are dill, horseradish, cardoon, basil and lavender. He also identifies most ornamental grasses and ferns as unpopular, although he specifically names Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) which deer frequently eat at Cedaridge during winter. Among flowering bulbs repellent to deer are alliums, colchicums, aconites, snowdrops and fritillaria as well as daffodils. Loewer also notes that bluebells suffer occasional damage in spite of the fact they regularly appear on deer resistant lists. At Cedaridge Farm both English and Spanish bluebells are eaten to the ground every spring unless protected with a deer repellent spray.

A chapter in the book discusses various deer controls, with a fairly lengthy endorsement of carnivore urine such as coyote. "They work by sending a signal to all those animals out in your garden that a vicious meat-eating animal is out there roaming the vegetable plots or that great display of bountiful flowers." We suspect that the author has not tested these urine sprays because at Cedaridge Farm they have proven useless, quickly washed away by rain. Some home remedy books recommend human urine, but that has proven as useless as predator urines. Also, the collection of coyote urine is cruel, involving the animals locked in cages elevated off the ground and forced to drink gallons of water so their urines can be collected beneath the cages.

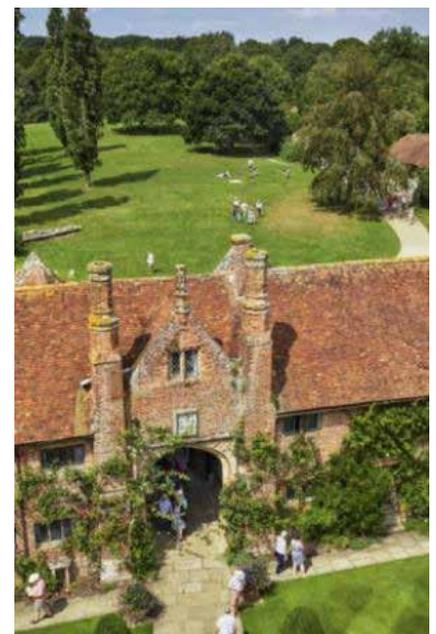
An important point that Loewer mentions is the fact that deer have rubbery lips that act as a cushion, allowing their teeth to ingest prickly leaves. Therefore a gardener should not assume that because a plant has thorns (like roses and holly) it will not be eaten. An exception is prickly pear cactus.

NEW BOOK ABOUT SISSINGHURST PROVIDES INTIMATE LOOK.

There have been many books about the British garden of Sissinghurst in the Kentish countryside, but Sarah Raven, author of '*Sissinghurst – Vita Sackville-West and the Creation of a Garden*' (St. Martin's Press), has produced one that not only provides a look at the significance of the plantings, but also a satisfying intimate look at its founders, Vita and her husband Harold Nicolson, a diplomat. Her unusually insightful book is possible by the fact that she is an accomplished garden writer who married Adam Nicolson, grandson of Vita and Harold. When her step-father became ill she and her husband moved into private quarters at Sissinghurst to care for him, and after he died in 2004 they stayed on. Although



This tulip planting at Cedaridge Farm is protected from deer damage by Liquid fence deer repellent



Aerial view of main building at Sissinghurst Garden

the property is managed by the National Trust, descendants of Vita and Harold have rights of residency.

No longer a practicing doctor, and now with two children, Sarah Raven had become a gardener. "As someone passionately interested in the beauty of what is around me, I'm lucky to have spent ten years entwined with Vita and Sissinghurst," she says. The book is divided into three parts: (1) The People and the Place; (2) Vita's Garden Themes including her famous White Garden and Cottage Garden; and (3) Smaller Canvas, including container plantings and vignettes used throughout the gardens. The pages are liberally illustrated with archive photographs showing Vita and Harold enjoying the property, and there are three color inserts of the property today, including interior views; also a full page image of Vita in middle age painted by William Strang, titled 'Lady with a Red Hat.' Born in 1892 at Knowle, a stately mansion in Kent, Vita became a distinguished critic, biographer, poet, gardener and author of twelve novels. Her relationship with novelist Virginia Wolfe is celebrated in Wolfe's novel, 'Orlando', and the story of her chaotic personal life told in a biography titled 'Portrait of a Marriage' by their older son, Nigel Nicolson who died in 1962 and which inspired two BBC movies.

The author notes that gardens do not normally survive their creators, but Sissinghurst remains one of the most heart-renderingly beautiful spectacles in England, a garden in a romantic place, formerly a ruined Elizabethan hunting palace flanked on two sides by a moat in a wooded part of the Kentish Weald.

TRIBE MASSACRED TO PROTECT SPICE MONOPOLY. Indonesia's spice islands once produced more nutmeg, mace, pepper and cloves than anywhere in the world, and on the island of Ternate, dominated by the Gamalama Volcano it harbored a special secret – the location of a clove tree believed to be 350 to 400 years old. For hundreds of years Ternate and its neighboring island, Tidore were the only source of the spice known as cloves, derived from its fragrant, woody inflorescences. The origin of these cloves was a closely guarded secret among local tribes until the arrival of the Spanish and Portugese in the 16th century and later the Dutch East India Company which ordered the destruction of all trees outside its control. Anyone caught growing trees without company permission faced the death penalty.

On the Bandu Islands to the south – the world's only source of nutmeg – the East India Company used Japanese mercenaries to slaughter almost the entire male population, and to keep clove prices high the company restricted the production of cloves to 1,000 tonnes per year, the rest of the harvest to be burned. However, in 1770 a Frenchman acquired some seedlings and smuggled them to France, from where they were taken to the Seychelles Islands and Zanzibar, which is today the world's largest supplier of cloves.

A relic of the time when Ternate Island was the only source of cloves, the ancient clove tree still survives at 6,000 ft. above sea level, badly damaged but 40 meters high and four meters around the base of the



New book about Sissinghurst Garden takes readers behind the scenes



Example of variegated holly reverting to plain green form. These branches are growing on the same plant

trunk, now protected by a security wall.

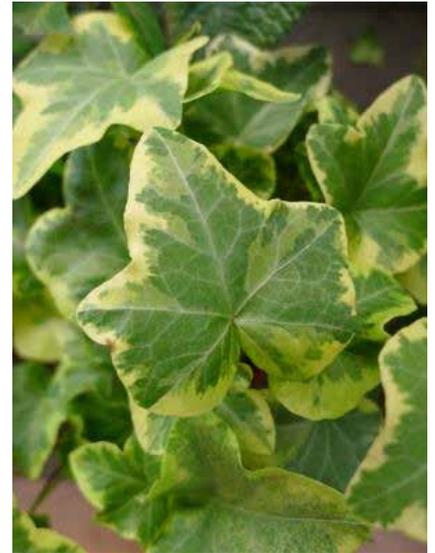
NEWS BRIEFS

VARIATION IS OFTEN RECESSIVE AND NOT ALWAYS BEAUTIFUL. An article in the current magazine of the *Ivy Journal*, the official publication of the American Ivy Society, explains that although ivies can be variegated in a variety of ways, that in time the weaker growth caused by variegation is often overtaken by healthier green growth, so that to maintain variegation, judicious pruning is needed, usually once a year. The same is true of many other variegated woody plants, particularly variegated hollies. It is interesting to note that variegation is not always a desirable trait because in many variegated mutations the plant looks sickly. In others, like variegated grasses, the variegation can be permanent and produce a totally different effect, for example the variegation in the *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Mist' produces a unique and appealing misty effect, while the variegation of *Miscanthus zebrinus* will produce an effect like a shower of sparks that is by no means sickly looking. At the other extreme, the variegation of Hosta 'Spilt Milk' could even be described as ugly, as if a bird has disfigured it with milky white droppings.

PLANT GARLIC IN THE FALL. Although garlic can be planted in spring, a fall planting will ensure earliest yields in early summer. Choose a sunny site with good drainage and if the soil is clay or sand improve with compost. Garlic is often sold as 'bulbs' made up of cloves that are shaped like the segments of a tangerine orange. It is important to realize that it is not necessary to plant the entire bulb but that each clove can be separated to produce a new plant, spaced 4 to 5 inches apart. Few people realize that there are dozens of varieties available with different degrees of pungency, including bulbs that produce a pleasant mild flavor delicious as pickles. In cold winter regions choose hard-neck varieties such as 'Purple Glazer,' and in mild winter areas choose soft-neck varieties such as 'Early Italian.'

ACADEMICS ARE BEING INFLUENCED TO DEFEND GMO PLANT BREEDING. If a professor of genetics at one university says a GMO bred plant is safe and another at a different university says it is not, who can you believe? A recent report in the *New York Times* newspaper says it is common practice among GMO plant breeders to pay professors at universities – over extended periods - to defend their points of view and also to appear in court and other hearings as expert witnesses. The newspaper also claims that it is common for the organic food industry to pay retainers to influence professors to refute claims of safety. The inference drawn by the article is that the testimony by these academics can only be biased in favor of the organization rewarding the professors even though those academics interviewed said they would not lie in court.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE. Why every garden should include a gazebo; and styles to consider. How to make your garden look attractive in the depths of winter with decorative bark. Edibles that can survive killing frosts, with



Variegated varieties of English ivy will commonly revert to all-green



Garlic bulbs can be divided into small segments called cloves for fall planting

and without a cold frame. Watermelon chips are delicious and easy to make. Recipe for a hearty winter soup: a leek-and-potato combination. A visit to Middleton Place Gardens, near Charleston, South Carolina. Essential differences between English and American hollies. We identify famous heirloom flowers and vegetables in Impressionist paintings by Pissarro and Monet, and explain the hidden symbolism in Van Gogh's painting titled 'The Sower.' AND MUCH MORE.