

Farming news

Farmer's market festival set

RALEIGH—The State Farmers' Market in Raleigh will be the site of a three-day gala celebration July 6, 7 and 8. The first annual Farmers' Market Festival will be held over the three days, highlighting the availability of local fruits and vegetables.

Festival hours on Monday and Tuesday will be 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hours for the Wednesday evening celebration will be 4 p.m. The Monday fete will highlight canning and freezing fresh produce, with home economists on hand to answer questions on canning and freezing. Door prizes of local produce including sweet corn, tomatoes, blueberries and peaches along with canning and freezing supplies will be given away based on traffic counts.

Tuesday's festivities will spotlight Goodness Growers in North Carolina

a marketing program sponsored by the NCDA. Door prizes of fresh produce and foodstuffs donated by Goodness Growers participants will be given out based on traffic counts during the hours of the festival.

The Wednesday evening celebration, called Family Night at the Market, will feature entertainment for the entire family. Farmers and retailers will be on hand with ample supplies of fruit and vegetables and the Farmers' Market will have free watermelon slices, helium balloons, free fethered rides on two hot air balloons and more. Door prizes of produce, country hams and the grand prize of a champagne hot-air balloon flight donated by Captain Jim Kirk of the Airship Enterprise will be given away that evening.

"The purpose of having three days

of festivities is to show the many hours of operation of the market, and the availability of produce at any hour convenient to the shopper," said N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Graham. "Whether you're a housewife or working consumer outside the home, we have produce waiting for your shopping needs all summer at the State Farmers' Market," he said.

The market will be operating on the 24-hour open summer schedule according to market manager Charles Edwards. "During this festival, we'll be highlighting the best-looking retail and farmer displays, offering assistance with canning and freezing and providing fun and education for the whole family," said Edwards.

Questions answered about imports

A question often asked by consumers as well as farmers is, "Why do we import agricultural products when we have surpluses?"

The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers this explanation:

Of the \$19 billionworth of agricultural products imported in 1985, 30 percent did not compete directly with domestic farm products. These foods include coffee, bananas, cocoa, tea, spices and some tropical fruits.

The USDA report shows that the remaining 70 percent that add to or

compete with U.S. products are imported because domestic demand for the food exceeds the domestic supply or because the imports are produced more efficiently elsewhere.

It should be also pointed out that the administration encourages competing ag imports from developing nations to help their economies and these are added to the ag import total.

Most other countries have maintained or increased their exports as ours have fallen. Unfortunately,

through 1985-86 the total value of U.S. farm exports dropped by 39 percent since the record year of 1980-81, and last year our total trade deficit grew to around \$170 billion.

There is some good news on the horizon, however. Compared with 1986, U.S. agricultural export volume in 1987 is expected to climb 16 percent with a 5 percent increase in value. The value of agricultural imports by the U.S. is also expected to decline from \$20.9 billion to \$20 billion.

Information on purple cone flowers

Describing plants by common names is confusing, say experts at the N.C. Botanical Garden at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Two distinct plants blooming now, called cone flowers, illustrate the confusion. The common name is appropriate because both plants have a distinctive cone in the center of the flower head surrounded by ray flowers.

Many books list only the yellow-petaled plants, commonly called black-eyed Susans, as cone flowers. These flowers are members of the aster family.

The other cone flower, echinacea

purpurea, also is in the aster family, but is in a different genus. The purple cone flower is from the Greek word for hedgehog, referring to the sharp bristles, or bracts, at the base of the cone. The 2-to 4-inch flower head consists of lavender-pink petals surrounding the cone.

The cone consists of many small disk flowers that usually are a purple color or sometimes have a coppery tone.

Each tiny disk flower is a tiny seed receptacle. Once the petals fade and fall off, they need four weeks for the seed, or nutlet, to mature. During this time the corns expand.

In collecting seeds for propagation,

bend the corn and shake it. If the seeds fall out, they are ready. If not, give them another week or two. The mature seeds are only an eighth of an inch long, so shaking them into a paper bag is the safest way to catch them.

Purple cone flowers add to a perennial bed. The color is good, the plants stay upright and they tolerate partial shade. The flowers need good drainage. They rot in soggy areas. These cone flowers usually grow 2 to 3 feet tall and are showy when planted in groups of two or three. Some gardeners like to plant them in a dry sunny spot along a roadbank because they are tolerant of hot sun and wind.

Weeding hoe is tool of the month

Keep the weeding hoe sharp and the garden hose handy. They are likely to be the most needed tools in keeping flowers and vegetable gardens clean and healthy in July.

While it is a month to begin fully enjoying the fruits of your gardening labors, July brings heavy weed pressure and often a need for irrigation.

Here are some additional July gardening suggestions from North Carolina State University agricultural extension specialist:

Early morning is the ideal time to harvest vegetables. The quality of what you pick will be better, and the work won't be as uncomfortable if done in the relative cool of the morning.

Harvest Irish potatoes when vines start to die, and store the potatoes in a cool dark place.

Water the garden regularly if there is insufficient rain. Also, sidedress vegetables with a little fertilizer to keep them producing and continue disease and insect control measures.

You can continue to plant warm season vegetables, and seed leafy greens for fall transplants. Prepare for your second garden, most of which is planted in August.

Fall tomatoes should be transplanted by the middle of July. You

can start tomato plants from seeds or from suckers on mature plants already in the garden. To start new plants, pinch off the suckers when they are three to four inches long and stick them in moist sand in a shady spot. Rooting will begin fairly quickly, and they should be ready to transplant in a couple of weeks or so.

If you want to supplement what you grow for canning or freezing check supplies of vegetables at local farmers' markets. Supplies should be plentiful and prices reasonable.

Additional July chores include trimming wisteria to encourage blooming next year and to keep the fast growing vine from getting out of hand.

Powdery mildew can be especially bad on crepe myrtle, phlox, rose and zinnia. The fungus can be controlled by spraying with an approved fungicide, such as Benlate.

Many crepe myrtles still show signs of the heavy cold damage of two winters ago. Prune out any remaining dead wood.

If you have night-blooming cereus, watch carefully for budding. The blooms of this ungainly cactus last only a night and are too special to miss.

Cut flowers for arrangements early in the morning. This is when the moisture content is highest and the flowers are more turgid.

Generally, annuals such as zinnias, snapdragons, petunias, salvia and marigolds produce more flowers when seed pods and old flowers are removed at least once a week.

While the house plants are outside enjoying the warm weather is a good time to divide or repot any that need it.

Finally, if you have a surplus of vegetables, fruits or flowers, share them with friends, neighbors or even strangers. Many elderly people were once avid gardeners. They would enjoy the surplus from your garden and probably enjoy even more a conversation about how you grew what you share with them.

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Girls attend girls' state

YuVonka Reid, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Reid, and Terri Baker, daughter of Mrs. Naomi Baker of Hertford attended Girls State from June 6-12th at the University of Greensboro, North Carolina. The two seniors at the Perquimans

High School were recommended by the Guidance Counselor, Mr. James Midgett. They were sponsored by the American Legion Unit 362 of Hertford.

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photo courtesy of Daily Advance

Pictured above members of the Hertford Fire Department are seen doing a program on fire safety as part of the SOAR into Summer Fun program which is being offered by the Perquimans County Extension Office, the Perquimans County Library, and the Perquimans County Recreation Department this summer.

Tips on decorating with sheets

By PAIGE UNDERWOOD

Home Economics Ext. Agent

Ready to decorate with sheets? You might consider using sheets for your new window treatment or decorating idea. You've been living with sheets all your life but may have never thought of them for anything other than making the bed. No more! There are many uses for sheets, especially with so many colors, patterns, and coordinates to choose. Many sheets have a main design on the flat sheet, and an adaptation of that design on the fitted sheet which makes mixing and matching possible and fun.

There are also solid colors to

match each pattern—often several, and some patterns even have their own trimmings which can be detached from one edge and added elsewhere.

Think of all the fabric you get from one sheet. The following yardage equivalents give you helpful information: a twin flat sheet (finished size with self hem) measures 66 by 96 inches and is equivalent to 4½ yards of 36 inch wide fabric. A full flat sheet, 81 by 96 inches, equals 6 yards of 36 inch wide fabric. Queen, 90 by 102 inches, seven yards, king, 108 by 102 inches, 8 yards. A standard pillow case measures 20 by 30 inches and yields ¾ yard of fabrics, a king pil-

lowcase, 20 by 40 inches, one yard.

Before you go out and buy sheets, measure carefully and buy all your sheets at one time because dyelots may vary. It's better to be caught with too much fabric (that you may be able to find creative uses for) than too little.

Using sheets can give you a head start on your decorating and save you time and money when making a change or starting from scratch.

For ideas or more information call your Home Economics Extension Agent. Make decorating easier. Plan ahead!

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