

You Ever Been To A Ramp Convention?

by Bill Sharpe

Waynesville, May 1.—The little girl grinned happily when asked why she and her two little boy companions weren't in school. "We were sent home," she giggled. "We went to the ramp convention."

Never heard of a ramp convention? You would have if you had ever lived in the Great Smokies. At a ramp convention you eat ramps and a ramp ("rampion", says Webster) is a sort of wild onion which grows in "buckeye flats" high up in the mountains. A buckeye flat is a rich mountain cove, and when it is occupied in dogwood time by tender ramps, it is a favorite rendezvous of mountain folks.

There are two descriptions of a ramp, which really is a leek. One is that it is "sort of like an onion, except better" and the other is that it is "sort of like an onion only worse." The wild vegetable has a root about the size of a walnut. It's two broad leaves are about eight inches long, and in some places they are used as a sort of green salad.

At this year's convention, several hundred people ate around 50 bushels of ramps high up on Black Camp Gap, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park near here, and that is enough ramps to fog the breath of a whole community for a long time.

Because the most conspicuous thing about a ramp is its breath-taking odor. Chopped up and scrambled with eggs, the vegetable is bad enough. But when you eat 'em raw, which a lot of ramp conventioners defiantly do, a ramp eater is something out of this world, where he should be, too. So strong is the breath of a ramp-eater that a small group of them can easily empty a movie in a few moments, and they can force the closing of an entire school. And not for just an hour or so, because it takes from two to three days for a ramp eater to recover from the effects of his buckeye flat orgy; and if one member of a family is a ramp eater and the others are not, the most serious of domestic disturbances can ensue.

In spite of these handicaps, it has been found practically impossible to reform a confirmed ramp eater. In addition to the fact that the ramp apparently has habit-forming properties, it is also believed to have tonic values. One veteran said he felt that if he

could just survive until ramp time, he was always pretty sure he'd live out the rest of the year.

STATE COLLEGE ANSWERS TIMELY FARM QUESTIONS

QUESTION — What processes are used to obtain maximum quality for North Carolina certified hybrid corn seed?

ANSWER — Dr. R. P. Moore, head of the Crop Improvement Association, says many of the small producers inspect each seed ear individually and remove by hand the diseased or damaged kernels prior to shelling. But the larger growers resort to special equipment known as a gravity separator to perform the task on a mechanical basis. The gravity separator makes separation on the basis of density of kernels. A flow of regulated forced air from beneath an adjusted vibrating tilted screen causes the kernels to float closely to the screen and to become arranged in order of their density. Since the diseased or damaged kernels are usually lighter in weight, they become grouped at one edge of the screen or "apron", where separation is made.

QUESTION — What fertilization should be used on vines of bunch grapes?

ANSWER — Apply 1/2 pint of 6-8-6 fertilizer or two level table-spoonful of nitrate of soda to newly set plants. Make the application in early spring before growth starts. Vines two and three years old may need twice the above amount of fertilizer. For an established vineyard three years of age and older, apply two to three pints of 6-8-6 fertilizer or 1-4 to 1-2 pint of nitrate of soda. A liberal application of stable manure mixed with superphosphate may be applied in the fall as a substitute for the above fertilizer.

QUESTION — What percentage of the nation's corn acreage is planted with hybrid seed?

ANSWER — The acreage of hybrid corn has increased from 0.1 per cent of the total in 1933 to 21.7 per cent of the total in 1947 — or from 143,000 to more than 61 million acres. Over 92 per cent of the corn in the North Central region is planted with hybrid seed. The use of hybrid seed, plus more liberal fertilization and improved cultural practices, has increased corn yields 22 per cent in the past 20 years.

Military Funeral For Brother Of Sylva Woman Held In Raleigh

A military funeral for 1st Lt. Charles M. Hunter, brother of Mrs. W. R. Enloe of Sylva, was held in Raleigh Wednesday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. Interment was in the national cemetery at Raleigh.

Lt. Hunter entered service in September, 1941 and was killed in action in southern France August 18, 1944. He was the son of Mrs. Pearl D. Hunter of Franklin and the late Nicholas J. Hunter.

Going down for the funeral were Mrs. Hunter and Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Dowdle of Franklin, Mr. and Mrs. Enloe and Mrs. Dan K. Moore of Sylva, and Mrs. Bill Moody of Bryson City.

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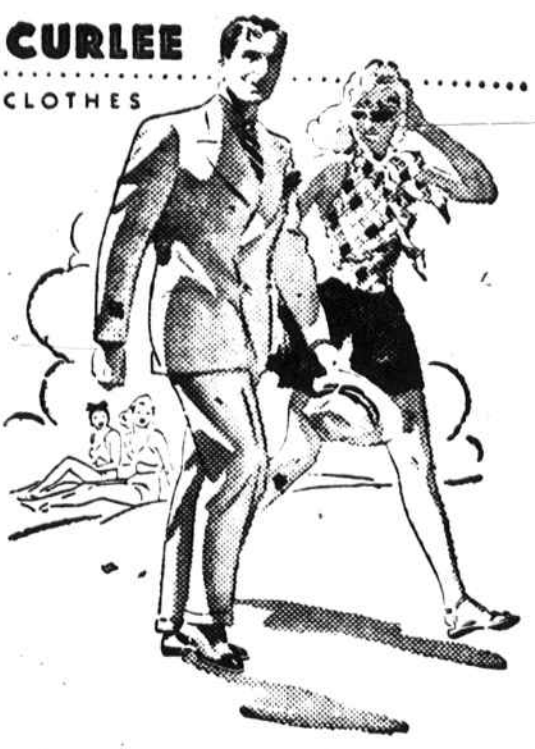
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