

Agriculture

Some interesting information on bats

Bats in your belfry? Not as bad as it sounds, if you garden.

First of all, a little background on bats, who are mammals, like you and me. Meticulously clean and highly intelligent, these gentle animals seldom transmit diseases. While susceptible to rabies, they carry it far less than our best friends, dogs, and not-so-best friends, racoons.

We are most familiar with evening bats like the Big Brown, our most common bat, the Pippistrelle, a migrator from the south, and the biggest North American bat around, the great Hoary.

Bats live in communities in caves, hollow trees, old houses—and belfries, sleeping upside down in convival clusters. All hibernate in the winter, after having mated. The sperm is stored by the female over winter, and fertilization takes place in the spring. The usual number of babies is one, born feet first, a birth position uncommon in mammals.

Frequently "maternity" groups may be spotted. Hoary bats will gather in a big sycamore tree, leaving their young hanging under the huge leaves while they are out feeding.

Unlike birds who flap their wings up and down to fly, bats "swim" through the air, curving their bony fingers around piece of air and pulling their bodies past it.

Bats function through sonar, utter-



ing tremendous bursts of supersonic sound ranging as high as 30,000 frequencies per second and as little as one two-hundredth of a second, maintained continuously while the bird is in flight. Sounds are broadcast through the nostrils, and sound waves are reflected back and picked up in the ears. So forget those stories about bats getting tangled in your hair. If he can zap a mosquito at 30,000 frequencies, he can surely avoid your big head.

At dark, bats leave their roosts and go to a lake or pond where they dip their lower jaws in the water to drink. They catch insects in their mouths, or will scoop them up in their wings while flying, turning somersaults to extract the food from the wing. One gray endangered bat can eat 3,000 insects in one night, reports Steve Kovarie of the Green Gazette.

In some parts of the world, bats are the only pollinators of various fruits and nut trees, such as figs, avocados,

bananas, and mangoes.

Kovarie states that English gardeners are far more cognizant of the importance of bats than we. England alone has more than 10,000 bat houses

So if you are having trouble with beetles, ants, flies, moths, and leafhoppers, order a bat house. I have two sources. One is the Bat Conservation International, Box 16203, Austin, TX. 78716. Cost is \$32.70 postpaid. Proceeds are used by the nonprofit organization to support bat conservation projects worldwide.

Parris Trail, naturalist from Edenton, says he got his from Gus Logan, at Nixon's Beach outside of Edenton. Mr. Trail also has building plans. In fact, he has just finished a house, and is waiting for his first tenants.

He knows a lot about bats. He's the one that told me about hoary babies under sycamore leaves. He also told me about sitting all alone at night in a deserted farmhouse, armed with a flashlight with a red light. He frequently turned on the light just to see who was, ah, hanging around, so he could make notes on their eating and sleeping arrangements. But Parris does things like that, and that's why he knows so much about nature.

As for the rest of us, let's call Gus Logan, or write the Bat Conservation people, and we'll have a go at those English gardeners.



Left to right Dena White, Alison Gregory, and Crissy Davenport after a horse show last year. Bet those ribbons on the trailer are responsible for their smiles.

4-H club to host horse show on Sat.

The Indian Riders 4-H Horse Club will be hosting the 1987 Northeast District 4-H Horse Show. This year's show will be held on May 30, 1987 at the Hertford Saddle Club Ring at 10:00 a.m. The show class schedule will begin with Cloverbud Showmanship for 6-8 year old youth. Among the 34 classes for the show,

several will include Western Pleasure, Stock Seat Equitation, and Bridle Path Hack. This show, which is an annual 4-H event, provides 4-H'ers the opportunity to demonstrate horse showmanship skills they have learned over several years of working with horses.

Parents from the Indian Riders 4-H

Club will be operating the concession stand where visitors and show participants may purchase lunch and other refreshments. A special thanks to Hertford Saddle Club members who will be assisting with the show and for providing their show facility.

Tips and recipes for strawberries

By JUANITA T. BAILEY
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STRAWBERRY TIME

Sometime between 1598 and 1683 Izaak Walton said of the strawberry, "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did". Even now with all of the other luscious berries in the world, many people agree with Mr. Walton. Strawberries served with cream or short cake are hard to beat. There are, however, many delightful ways to serve this luscious fruit.

Eat strawberries as a fruit course or on cereal for breakfast. Serve them as an appetizer, or in salads and desserts for lunch or dinner. The flavor and bright color of the fresh berry has been captured in the freezing process to make them a year-round favorite.

Fresh or frozen, strawberries are a

delicious way to get your quota of Vitamin C. One scant cup of whole fresh or ¾ cup sliced, frozen strawberries will give you the amount of vitamin C needed daily. Most people think that oranges and other citrus fruits are the only source of this vitamin. Strawberries, cabbage, tomatoes, cantaloupe and many other North Carolina produced foods are good sources of this health protecting vitamin.

Vitamin C cannot be stored in the body. A fresh supply is needed daily to: aid in healing wounds, to keep gums healthy, and to strengthen walls of blood vessels.

Temperatures of the berries from the time they leave the vine until you swallow them helps determine their quality. At refrigerator temperatures (around 40 degrees F.) quality changes in a short time and as much

as 20 percent of Vitamin C may be lost each day held.

To save food value wash and cap berries just before using and thaw frozen strawberries in the package. If fresh strawberries must be prepared a few hours ahead, keep them in a tightly covered container in refrigerator.

More Berry Handling Tips
Keep cool enroute from the vine to the freezer

Wash gently in cold or ice water (This prevents injury to the tender skin which holds the juice and flavor.)

Don't soak the berries in the water, they will become water logged.

Remove all sand and grit from berries

STRAWBERRY TARTS
1 package unflavored gelatin
see strawberries page three

The Perquimans High School FFA and FFA Alumni would like to thank these supporters of the FFA who made donations for the recent FFA Chicken Dinner.

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A special thanks to the people who gave their time and energy in helping cook the chicken and prepare the plates.

Mr. Pete Riddick
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Also thanks to the people who made the cupcakes.

Americans have changing lifestyles

After many years of decline, the small town is making a comeback. This revival began in the 1970's with an abrupt reversal of population patterns that had prevailed for generations. Small towns had been losing residents to metropolitan areas for some time but according to census figures, millions of Americans are opting for a more rural lifestyle these days.

U.S. metropolitan areas grew by 9.8 percent during the 1970's but rural and small town regions developed much faster. With a growth rate of 15.8 percent, they gained more than 8.5 million people.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture says samplings done in the U.S. since 1980 show that rural and small

town areas are still drawing people through the growth may not be as dramatic as it was in the 1970's.

The USDA also says the surprising thing about this exodus to rural areas is that it's occurring in all major geographic sections of the nation with the south and west seeing the greatest influx of new citizens.

The experts say this rush for rural America is caused more by social factors than economic fluctuations. Which basically means urban folks are just now discovering what rural folks have known all along about the many advantages of rural and small town living.

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