North Country Gardening

I suspect that none of us wants to acknowledge that it’s already October because you-know-what will be here before we know it. Thank goodness our fall has been so beautiful...perfect weather for being outdoors cleaning up the garden or more importantly, taking the time to bask in the beauty of the North Country.

.....Jolene

Harvestmen

By Jolene Wallace

Some of the many very beneficial insects in the garden that are often called daddy-long-leg spiders are actually not spiders at all. They are Harvestmen, members of the Class Arachnida, Order Opiliones which includes spiders, mites, ticks, and scorpions. Like all arachnids, harvestmen have four sets of legs, a fang-like mouthpart called chelicerae and two antennae-like appendages near the mouth called pedipalps. Unlike a spider, the harvestmen have only two eyes instead of six or eight, and where spiders have two distinct body segments the harvestmen have an oval shaped body that appears to be one segment. In addition, harvestmen have no silk glands because they do not spin webs and no venom glands because they have no need to paralyze prey. Spiders have both.

Harvestmen have legs ranging from one to two inches in length. Their legs are very fine and jointed in seven places. The second pair of legs is the longest and it’s thought that they function as antennae or sensory organs. The tips of each leg are sensitive and used to search for food, detect danger, and explore the path ahead of it. The harvestmen walk with their bodies near the ground and the middle part of their legs above their bodies. Their legs are easily detached and this feature may allow the harvestmen to escape a predator who has grabbed them by the leg. They also protect themselves by emitting a foul-smelling substance from glands located near the base of their first pair of legs. As with skunks, foul-smelling emissions warn away predators; birds and predatory insects.

Harvestmen mate in late summer and early autumn. The male forms an “umbrella” over the female while she uses her ovipositor, which can be extended, to deposit eggs in soil, crevices, old wood, or on stones. When the eggs hatch in the spring, the young harvestmen look like small, white versions of the adults. Every ten

Continued on page 11...
Spare the (Golden) Rod

By Paul Hetzler, Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County

While most plants respond to late summer’s shorter days by winding down their business for the season, goldenrod is a “short-day” plant that is stimulated to bloom by waning day length. It’s a perennial in the aster family, and is widespread across North America; we have something on the order of 130 species of goldenrod in the genus Solidago.

As one of the most abundant blooms of autumn, this native wildflower is for many insects, including numerous bee species, a vital source of nectar as well as nutritious pollen. Unfortunately, this latter item has given goldenrod a black eye among many allergy sufferers.

Goldenrod’s showy yellow flowers are in full view along roadsides and in meadows and pastures just as fall hay fever season kicks in. So it’s understandable that goldenrod pollen has been blamed for the red itchy eyes, sinus congestion, sneezing, and general histamine-soaked misery that some folks experience this time of year. But it turns out that goldenrod pollen is innocent of all charges.

Goldenrod can’t be guilty because its pollen is quite light enough that bees manage to carry a great deal of it away. But in the pollen realm it’s heavy—and also very sticky—and it doesn’t blow far from the plant. It’s not that goldenrod pollen is incapable of eliciting an allergic response; it’s just that to do so, one would have to literally stick its flowers up one’s nose and inhale.

Not only is goldenrod guiltless of allergic assault, it has been used as an alternate source of rubber. Henry Ford was intrigued by goldenrod, and reportedly produced some tires made from the plant. Interest in goldenrod was revived during World War II. Goldenrod is also used in herbal medicine to help treat kidney stones, sore throats and toothaches.

So who’s to blame for the spike in late summer allergies? Surprisingly, the culprit is goldenrod’s cousin, ragweed, although it doesn’t behave at all like its golden relative (I suspect we all have a relative or two like this in our family tree). Ragweed, a native plant, is also in the aster family, but unlike goldenrod it churns out loads of very light pollen.

Just how light is ragweed pollen? It can remain airborne for several days, and significant quantities have been found up to 400 miles out to sea. And a single ragweed plant can produce a billion pollen grains to fly on the breeze and make you sneeze. Yep, this is the stuff that stuffs you up.

One reason we don’t suspect ragweed is that its blossoms are dull green and look nothing like a “typical” flower. It’s as if they’re trying not to attract attention. You can almost imagine them thinking, “sure, let goldenrod take the rap.” The reason ragweed is so inconspicuous is that it’s wind pollinated and has no need to “advertise” with bright colors and sweet nectar to attract pollinators.

Most ragweed species—there are about 50 of them—are annual, and will come back from seed produced this fall. They’ll keep powdering the air with allergens until the first hard frost, so let’s hope it’s not too much of an extended season. And let’s try to spread the word about goldenrod to spare it any further false accusations.

North Country Gardening
Amy’s Tips for October

By Amy Ivy

Cover your soil

I love to make plants grow but I must admit that I also enjoy pulling them out or cutting them down in the fall. Not everything goes, but now that every surface in our kitchen is covered with green tomatoes, I’m not too sorry to pull out the bedraggled, spotted tomato plants that worked so hard this summer. I let the dead tops of my perennial flowers stand as long as they still look nice, but the annual crops all go.

As I pull out dead plants and weeds and cut back perennials I can finally get a good look at the soil. Now is a good time to add some organic matter, just an inch or so will do. This can be chopped leaves, dry grass clippings, or compost if I have it. I try to keep the soil covered year round with either plants or natural mulches that will break down over time to add organic matter to the soil.

It’s too late for most cover crops now. Simply put, those are crops that you plant to cover the soil. They are traditionally planted in the early fall as the garden is cleared but different types can be planted in other seasons. Buckwheat can’t take the cold, for example, and is only grown June through August. In early October you might get away with a quick planting of oats, the only problem is they die with the first killing frost so they aren’t likely to produce much leafy growth this month. Annual ryegrass is another option. It is more frost tolerant than oats and if it doesn’t die over the winter it’s relatively easy to turn under next spring.

Winter rye is the hardiest cover crop and can be planted until the middle of October. It comes up quickly and is very cold tolerant. The biggest challenge for home gardeners is stopping it next spring when it comes up lush and thick. You need a good rototiller and/or a strong back!

Because of these challenges with cover crops so late in the season, if you haven’t planted one yet it might be simpler to use the natural mulches I mentioned earlier to cover your soil this fall.

Continued on page 5...
Fizzing Inflation!

By Chelsea Baxter, 4-H & Nutrition Program Educator

Many of us have observed the eruption (chemical reaction) that occurs when we mix baking soda and vinegar together. This is the basis of any exciting homemade volcano, but many of us do not fully understand the science behind these amazing concoctions.

**What you need:**
- One small empty plastic bottle
- ¼ cup of vinegar
- Small balloon (deflated)
- Baking soda
- Funnel or a piece of paper in a funnel shape

**The Experiment**

1. Carefully pour the vinegar into the empty bottle.
2. Stretch the balloon a few times to loosen it up
3. Using the funnel, pour the baking soda into the balloon (a little more than half way)
4. **Carefully** put the neck of the balloon all the way over the neck of the bottle without letting any of the baking soda get inside the bottle

**READY!**?
5. Lift the balloon up so the baking soda falls from the balloon into the bottle and let it mix with the baking soda

**Observe the reaction!**

**How does this work?**
When baking soda and vinegar mix they create an **acid-base** reaction. This means that the two chemicals work with one another to create a gas (carbon dioxide). Gasses need plenty of room to expand so once the carbon dioxide starts to fill the bottle it will then move into the balloon and inflate it.

*Carbon dioxide is what we _exhale_ during normal respiration. When we _inhale_ we are taking in oxygen and a little bit of carbon dioxide. When _exhale_ we are releasing more carbon dioxide than oxygen.*

**Questions you can ask for further exploration**

- Do you think that the temperature of water would affect how fast the balloon fills up?
- Does the size of the bottle affect how much the balloon will fill?
- Can we control how much the balloon inflates by the amount of vinegar and baking soda we use?

To see this experiment and more go to:
www.sciencebob.com/experiments/
Soil pH

One simple step every home gardener should take this fall is to have their soil pH tested. Extension offices can do this test for a small fee ($2 in Plattsburgh, $1 in Westport) or you can buy a kit and do it yourself. Soil pH is a measure of the acidity of your soil; it tells you whether you need to add lime to raise it or sulfur to lower it. The ideal range for most plants and crops is 6.0-7.0. When your pH is in the right range, the soil microorganisms that do most of the work to keep your soil healthy and make nutrients available are at their best. It takes months to change the pH, so by testing in the fall you can make corrections and give them almost six months to work before you’ll be planting again.

Most of the home garden soil we test has a pH that is too high. Lime and wood ashes raise the pH.

Heavy, clay-based soils tend to be naturally close to 7.0 while the sandy, stony soils of the higher elevations tend to be naturally acidic. Fertilizers, manures, peat moss, and other amendments can change the pH. You just don’t know until you test!

Knowing your pH level is the first step. If it needs adjusting, you need to figure out how much, and of what, to add. We have a chart that factors in your soil type (clayey, loamy, sandy) and gives a rate. Clay soil is more chemically active than sandy soil so it takes much more lime or sulfur to make a change than sandy soil. Don’t just wing it and toss down lime or sulfur! We can do a quick test and give you a rate that’s geared to your soil. Chances are good you won’t need to do anything, but until you test, you just don’t know.
From Recipe to Market: A seminar for future food entrepreneurs

Saturday, October 18
Madison Barracks Shared-Use Kitchen
85 Worth Road, Sackets Harbor, NY
Jefferson County
8:00am to 4:00pm

Sunday, October 19
Whallonsburgh Grange Kitchen,
1610 NYS Route 22, Whallonsburgh, NY
Essex County
8:30am to 4:30pm

Is your recipe ready to go to market? If your goal is to launch a specialty food business, then this program is for you. Bob Weybright, an Extension Agricultural Development Specialist with the Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture program, will present this one-day seminar providing future food entrepreneurs with instruction in food business basics and knowledge of the critical issues to consider before starting a food processing business. Topics include:

- Food Business Basics
- Marketing: Developing a Strategy, Objectives, Research, and Communication Plan
- The NYS Food Venture Center
- Market Trends and Product Development
- Regulatory Agencies and Requirements
- Food Safety, Processing, Packaging and Labeling

Bob Weybright has a strong agricultural economic development and marketing background. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Michigan State University and his graduate degree from California State University in New Business / Small Business Management, Bob has been actively involved in a number of development projects. He has experience in all phases of agriculture, including production, processing, marketing and sales. He is engaging in methods that help producers develop innovative new products and increase their marketing opportunities, especially in the local foods area.

Cost is $75 and includes lunch and all educational materials. Deadline for registration is October 15.

- To register for the Sackets Harbor location contact Steve Ledoux at 315-788-8450 or swl73@cornell.edu. Or register and pay online at reg.cce.cornell.edu/20CKitchen_222
- To register for the Whallonsburgh location contact Laurie Davis at 518-962-4810 x404 or lsd22@cornell.edu. Or register and pay online at reg.cce.cornell.edu/recipe2market_215

Presented in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Jefferson and Essex Counties, The Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program, the New York State Food Venture Center, the Whallonsburgh Grange and Madison Barracks Kitchen

North Country Gardening
The Board of Directors of Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Clinton County cordially invites you to attend our

2014 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 21, 2014
Elk’s Lodge, 56 Cumberland Avenue, Plattsburgh
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

Please join us in recognizing this year’s Friends of Extension

Jenn Lottie, Stewart’s Shops
Seth Forrence, Forrence Orchard

A lite fare provided by Irises Café will be offered.
The cost is $15.00 per person

RSVP by Wednesday, October 15, 2014
CCE Clinton County, 6064 State Route 22, Suite 5
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
561-7450
Kohlrabi Sauté

Try this great veggie side dish in 30 Minutes or Less

Serves: 4
Cups of Fruits & Vegetables per Serving: 1/2

Ingredients

4 medium Kohlrabies (about 1 1/2 pounds without leaves, 2 pounds with leaves)
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon minced, fresh ginger
2 tablespoons chopped shallot
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper

Directions

• Remove kohlrabi leaves if present and save for another use.
• Peel kohlrabi globes and shred or julienne.
• Heat olive oil in a large skillet over MEDIUM heat.
• Toss kohlrabi with ginger and shallots and heat until tender-crisp, 3-5 minutes.
• Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Each serving provides: an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of potassium and fiber.

Nutritional Information: Calories: 55, Total Fat: 2.4g, Saturated Fat: 0.3g, Cholesterol: 0mg, Sodium: 96mg, Carbohydrates: 8g, Dietary Fiber: 4g

Recipe courtesy of Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH). This recipe meets PBH and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) nutrition standards that maintain fruits and vegetables as healthy foods.

North Country Gardening

This newsletter is also available on our website:
http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceclintoncounty/ under Gardening: News
Try Something New!

By Jordy Kivett, Nutrition Educator

When I am encouraging little ones to try a new food, I often point out that if you do not try something new, you might miss out on your new favorite. Since they are often very young, I can point out that at one point they had never tried spaghetti, or apples, or pizza. But that goes for all of us, at one point we all had to try different foods, and even if you are a limited eater today chances are good you have changed your food repertoire over time.

I just tried kohlrabi for the first time and was disappointed, disappointed that I had not tried it sooner. I substituted raw, grated, and drained kohlrabi for cabbage in coleslaw and I have to say, we liked that version better than the original. I am excited to peel, chop and roast it tonight to see if I am equally delighted by its cooked form.

Don’t forget to give things a second (or third) chance. Sometimes our taste changes over time. Brussels sprouts anyone? Rarely do little kids like the bitter little cabbages, but I know I have grown to love them as an adult. Also if you try a different method of preparation it can make a big difference. Even a different variety of a food can have a different taste.

Those big, ugly tomatoes are bursting with flavor compared to mealy, bland hot house tomatoes.

Get to a local farm stand before the snow flies, or go to one of the farmers’ markets that are now available in our county and pick up something new. It may be a winter squash you’ve never seen before, a leafy green that’s size has seemed a little intimidating compared to the bagged supermarket greens, or even a complete oddball that you cannot name; grab it and try it out!

Trying new things doesn’t need to be limited to vegetables either. Try other new things that are good for your health. Though you may strike out with some things, like an unused yoga gift card or the time you thought you’d swear off of sugary drinks forever, but if even a few healthier habits stick, they will help to make and keep you healthier over time. Who knows, you may find a new activity or food that becomes a new favorite.

Have a garden or agriculture related business? This space is available for your business card! Contact us at 561-7450

North Country Gardening

Are you curious about all that’s going in our 4-H program? Check out the Clover Express at the link below! Call our office if you’d like to find out more about how you can get involved.

http://www.ccecc4hce.blogspot.com/
Energy Saving Tips for the New Year

by Peter Hagar, CCE Clinton County

Sooner or later, Winter will arrive. There is no better time than now to take actions that will reduce your heat loss and fuel consumption. Because roughly 50% of the homes in the North Country were built prior to 1969, there is a lot of opportunity for air sealing and insulation.

Since air infiltration is one of the biggest sources of heat loss, sealing up the building envelope should be a high priority. A close second would be additional insulation. Since hot air rises, most heat loss is escaping your home through the attic. If you have noticed ice dams forming on your roof edges, it means that warm air is reaching the roof deck and melting the snow. Once melted, it runs down to the colder edge, refreezes and forms icicles. Sealing up cracks, attic access doors and around vent pipes will prevent warm air from infiltrating the attic. Once the air leaks have been plugged, adding additional insulation to the attic floor will slow the heat lost by conduction. The less heat you lose the more money you will save.

For more information about saving energy in your home, go to http://stars.nyserdagreennys.org/ or attend one of our upcoming “Save Energy, Save Dollars” energy workshops.

Cornell Cooperative Extension invites you to attend a FREE workshop: “Save Energy, Save Dollars” being held on 3 different days in October. As we get closer and closer to the cold and blustery days of Winter, NOW is the time to prepare. Instructor, Peter Hagar from Cornell Cooperative Extension will explore the many ways to reduce your energy bills through no-cost/low-cost energy actions.

FREE Energy saving items will be provided.
Fun, Free and Open to the Public. Bring a Friend!
Please be sure to register so we can notify you of any changes due to weather, etc.
Call Cornell Cooperative Extension at 561-7450 or email phh7@cornell.edu. See you then!

• Tuesday, October 14th at 6:00 pm
• Wednesday October 22nd at 6:00 pm
• Friday October 31st at 1:00 pm
• at the Clinton County Cooperative Extension Office, 6064 Rt 22, Plattsburgh

North Country Gardening
Harvestmen continued...

days or so, until they reach mature size, they molt by splitting their exoskeleton open and dragging their long legs out of the old skin.

Harvestmen eat flies, mites, decaying matter, aphids, caterpillars, leafhoppers, fungus, small slugs, and an assortment of other things. You can see why this makes them valuable in the garden. They also clean each leg after a meal by pulling it through their jaws! They hunt mostly at night but can be found during the day in shaded areas or under logs, stones, or in garages. They are scavengers and beneficial predators. Hurrah for harvestmen!

Did You Know?

- The story that Harvestmen "have enough venom to kill a person, but their mouths aren't big enough to bite us" is a myth. Harvestmen do not have venom. There is a species of spider in Australia that people also call "Daddy Longlegs" that is venomous, but they do not live here.

- In the old days, it was believed that you could use daddy-long-legs to find your lost cattle. When you wanted to know which direction the herd had wandered to, you could pick up a daddy-long-legs by all of the legs but one, and the free leg would point in the direction of the cattle (or so it was believed).

- Another myth from the old days: if you kill a daddy-long-legs, it will rain the next day.

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture; Cooperative Extension

Myth: "Arachnid" is just a fancy name for spider.

Fact: There are eleven orders of arachnids. These include the scorpions; mites and ticks; harvestmen; pseudoscorpions; whipscorpions; solpugids; and spiders. It's like the relation of beetles with insects: beetles constitute one order of insects, the Coleoptera, but not all insects are beetles. Similarly, not all arachnids are spiders.

Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture, University of Washington

Office Hours

Our office, located at 6064 State Route 22, Suite 5, is open from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. We will be closed on Monday, October 13 in observance of Columbus Day.

Events

Silvopasture Field Day

October 17th, 2014
9:30am-4pm at Mace Chasm Farm
810 Mace Chasm Rd., Keeseville NY
preregistration Required. $15.
https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events.cfm?dept=215 or call 518-962-8225

CCE ANNUAL MEETING—TUESDAY, OCT 21
6:30-8:30 PM AT THE ELK’S LODGE IN PLATTSBURGH. SEE PAGE 7 FOR DETAILS.

FREE “Save Energy, Save Dollars” Workshops
See previous page for days and times.

North Country Gardening
North Country Gardening

October 2014

Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County

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