

# The Manure Spreader

July  
Volume 9



2002  
Number 7

Newsletter of the Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America

## THIS MONTH'S MEETING

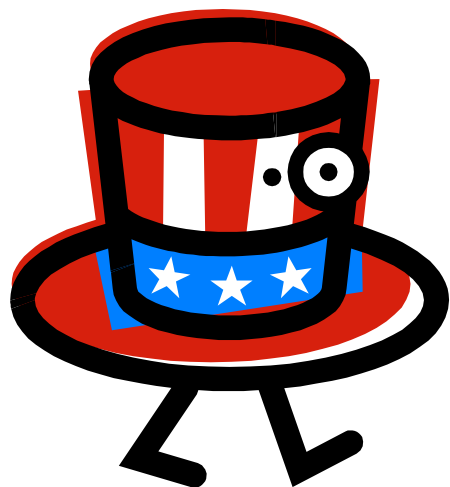
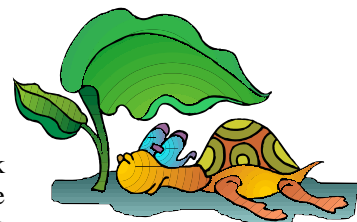
### SHADE GARDENING

Speaker: Rob Mortko  
Monday, July 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Loose Park Garden Center

By day, Rob is a chemical engineer with Black & Veatch in Overland Park and is currently Vice President and Technology Manager for Natural Gas Processing. His passion for shade gardening and hostas has grown over the past 17 years since he and his wife Sheri moved into their shaded woodland home in Olathe.

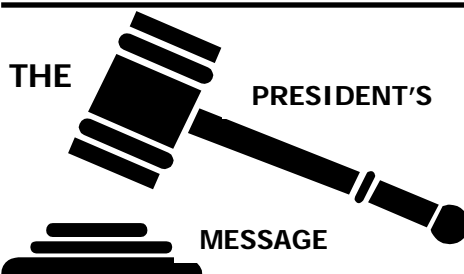
His shade gardens have been featured on various public tours, on Lily Shank's "In the Garden" on channel 5, and in "Kansas City Homes and Gardens Magazine". His "spare time" is now devoted to Made in the Shade Gardens – a home-based retail business specializing in hosta. In 2000 he registered and introduced a new hosta cultivar named 'Heart and Soul'.

Rob is a Johnson County Extension Master Gardener and a board member of the Heartland Hosta and Shade Plant Society. He is also a member of the American Hosta Society, the Western Nursery and Landscape Association, and the American Hosta Growers Association.



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Talk about picnic weather! We sure have been lucky this month. There were about 75 people at our annual picnic. Several were new members, and we do want to invite them to our regular meetings the first Monday of each month. We had plenty of delicious picnic food, and a cool breeze. There is always lots of garden talk about the good and the not so good, about certain flowers and garden plants, and one member claimed he has lost ten pounds. Now we have been

working hard, but ten pounds??? I think I gained a pound or two just listening to this story. Grace and Kay did a great job planning this event. We want to thank them and their helpers for a job well done.

On June 8th, we attended a Mo-Kan Regional Convention in Olathe. We heard about other Club's achievements and awards, also that the Mo-Kan Region now has 544 members. This is an increase over the last report we had.

We have our own Board Meetings on the third Monday of each month. We discuss our past meetings and plan the future meetings. Also, our budget is read and approved each month. If you would like to attend, you are always welcome, and you will be given an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. We will always listen.

Enough shovels of earth -- a mountain.  
Enough pails of water -- a river.  
Chinese Proverb

## The Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America

### Chapter 1096

#### Meeting

The first Monday of each month  
Loose Park Garden Center  
5200 Pennsylvania  
Kansas City, MO  
7:00 p.m.

#### Mission:

To promote gardening education and related environment issues to the membership and the gardening public, through charitable, educational and scientific means.

### 2002 Officers

Robert Dye - President  
913-722-0417

Nancy Richart - 1st Vice President  
816-363-3480

Grace Brasher - 2nd Vice President  
816-942-6152

Karen Nielsen - Secretary  
913-649-3864

Kay Elliott - Treasurer  
816-941-9459

John Walsh  
Immediate Past President  
816-942-1074

### 2002 Board Members

Tim Driscoll - 1 Year  
913-451-9683

Mildred Dolman - 1 Year  
816-333-9605

James McGuire - 1 Year  
816-943-1133

Marilyn Ricci - 2 Year  
913-677-4939

Kate Butler - 2 Year  
913-648-2668

Jeff Havlin - 2 Year  
816-822-7142

## Nancy

On Sat June 15 we had our annual picnic with 76 members and guests present. The weather was great- warm and pleasant until toward the end when a wind blew up and the temperature dropped rapidly. At least there were some of us complaining about being cold!

The food was great as usual thanks to our chefs, **Vince Vogel, Johnny Tutorino, David Burk, Dale Dorner,** and **Jeff Havlin** who worked very hard over hot grills to produce the great burgers, chicken and hot dogs. All members brought a big variety of great food to round out a perfect dinner. I don't know about anyone else, but I ate too much!

It was great to meet and talk to the new members and do hope they continue to participate in our meetings. We had our previous shelter house back and so we were all together and most important (to some of us) the bathroom was very close.

The evening ended with drawing of plants, etc., that members had brought to share. My number was the first one called and I choose six darling small candles in the shapes of frogs, flowers and bumblebees. I'm recently into candle making so these intrigued me.

I think we all had a great time with friends, wonderful food and just lots of fun. If you had to miss it this year plan to attend next year. It's a great way to visit with each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Many thanks to **Grace Brasher** and **Kay Elliott** for all their behind the scenes work of buying the essentials and making sure we had everything we needed. ☺

## GARDEN



CORNER

Richart

## BUTTERFLY PLANT OF THE MONTH

*By Sherry Rindels, Dept. of Hort., Iowa State University*

The plant of the month for your butterfly garden is *Liatris*.

*Liatris* or Blazing Star is a native prairie plant as well as a popular perennial plant in many gardens. It's long lasting blooms make excellent cut flowers, either dried or fresh. In the garden the flowers attract butterflies. The flower spike opens from the top downward. This is unusual because most flower spikes open at the bottom first and work upward.

*Liatris* perform best in full sun and are quite drought tolerant. They will not tolerate soggy soils, especially in winter. New plants can be produced through seed or by division of the tuberous roots in the spring. Division will be necessary every 4 years or so. Tuberous roots can be cut with a sharp knife. Allow at least one eye to remain on each division.

*Liatris* species available to gardeners include:

- *Liatris scariosa*. This species grows up to 5 feet tall with flowers available in white, lavender, or rose. It often requires staking in the garden to prevent lodging.
- *Liatris spicata* grows 2 to 3 feet tall with rosy purple flowers.
- 'Kobold', a cultivar of *L. spicata*, grows only 18 to 24 inches tall with purple flowers. This plant works well planted at the front of the perennial border.

When drying *liatris*, harvest flower spikes when one-half to two-thirds of the flowers are open. Remove foliage from the stems and hang them upside down in a dark, dry place. Air circulation is important to prevent molding and speed the drying process which usually takes about three weeks. *Liatris* can also be dried with desiccants such as silica-gel or sand. Flowers dried with desiccants often have truer blossom color.

*Liatris* make excellent pest free plants for the summer blooming garden. You may want to try some in your perennial garden. ☺

# VOLUNTEER REPORT



## JUNE BOARD MEETING

By Karen Nielsen

No report was received. The actions of the board are unknown. ♻️

## NEW MEMBERS

By Grace Brasher

The following is a list of new members that have joined the Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America since the first of the year. Welcome to our gardening family!

**THOMES ALLEGRI**  
2020 W. 56th St  
Shawnee Mission KS 66208-1103  
(913) 362-8679

**BEVERLY NIX**  
2207 Red Bridge  
Kansas City MO 64131-3635  
(816) 942-0968

**B. A. BURWELL**  
12700 Holmes Road  
Kansas City MO 64145-1322  
(816) 943-0028

New member **Beverly Godwin** (816-942-8121) has organized a group of four people to help maintain two flower beds at the intersection of Holmes and Red Bridge in south Kansas City. She is being assisted by Lyn Schuchman, Jan Pascal and Sara Robben.



New members **Joyce** and **R.J. Maas** (816-942-6890) are heading up a team to plant and weed a bed of annuals at the intersection of Ward Parkway and 86th St. This bed is comprised of canna, vinca

**JEANNE CAREY**  
1013-D E. Stone St.  
Independence MO 64050-4666  
(816) 252-8994

**KAY & ED CROSSON**  
20 East 69th St.  
Kansas City MO 64113-2512  
(816) 361-7177

**GIGI DORNER**  
8724 N. Charlotte  
Kansas City MO 64155-2641  
(816) 468-7384

**JOYCE FOWLER**  
6001 Oak St.  
Kansas City MO 64113-2216  
(816) 363-1697

(Continued on page 6)

and Dusty Miller. The city provided the plants and the design.

Initial planting was performed with the assistance of **Chuck** and **Grace Brasher**, along with Brad Lucht trailing up the rear. This bed is located directly at the entrance to the new Target store.

Both of these beds are located at prime locations with thousands of vehicles passing by each day. In return for the labor provided by our club, the city Park Department will post a sign at each location crediting the Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America for maintaining each bed. This is excellent publicity for our group, and the kind of community service I had hoped to participate in when I first joined.

If you would like to help maintain either of these beds, please call Beverly Godwin or Joyce Maas. It may require one hour of your time every two weeks, but the good feeling you receive will last much longer than that.

Leftover business from the picnic. Grace Brasher reports that someone forgot their plastic serving spoon, and someone else left behind a silver serving spoon with a rose design on the handle. If you are missing these utensils, call Grace! ♻️

The Manure Spreader is a monthly publication of the Greater Kansas City Gardeners of America.

Publisher, Editor, Writer  
Brad Lucht  
816-941-2445



The deadline for articles submitted for publication is the 3rd Monday of each month.

Mail to: Brad Lucht  
9944 Locust Street  
Kansas City MO 64131-4220  
E-mail - blucht@isualum.com



## TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 6-17-2002

Total Income (YTD).....\$?  
Budget Income.....\$?  
Total Expenses (YTD).....\$?  
Budget Expenses .....\$?  
Bank Balance.....\$?

The budget is secret. All spending decisions made by the board are secret.



"I don't know whether to try to weed the lawn or tell everyone it's a vegetable garden."

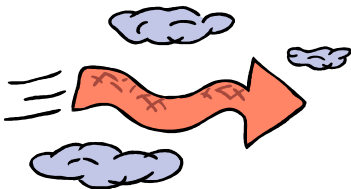


## JULY GARDEN CHECKLIST

- \* Cucumbers have a very short "vine storage time;" under warm, humid conditions, fruits on the vine may remain in prime condition for less than 12 hours. For the best tasting cukes, pick early and often. The fruits can be stored for up to two weeks at 45 to 50 degrees F and 95 percent relative humidity. Lower temperatures cause chilling damage, and higher temperatures encourage yellowing. Yellowing is also accelerated if cucumbers are stored with tomatoes or apples.
- \* Remove cucumbers by turning fruits parallel to the vine and giving a quick snap. This prevents vine damage and results in a clean break. If you have trouble mastering this, take a sharp knife to the garden for harvesting. Cut or pull cucumbers, leaving a short stem on each fruit.
- \* Cucumbers develops a bitter taste if the soil is not kept consistently moist. Harvest for pickling whole when 2 to 4 inches; for table use, when longer than 5 inches. Remove any overripe cucumbers to encourage continuous production.
- \* Continue to use *Bacillus thuringiensis* for caterpillar pests, such as imported cabbageworm. Follow directions for application on the label.
- \* Make successive plantings of beets, beans, and carrots to be able to harvest into fall. Direct seed cool-season crops, such as broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts, into the garden.

### OUR JULY WEATHER

Average Low: 68°F  
 Average High: 88°F  
 Average Precip: 4.4 in  
 Average Snow: 0.0 in  
 Average Wind: 9.5 mph



- \* Continue to monitor your squash vines for squash vine borers. The moths lay their eggs on the stems, then the emerging larvae bore into the vines, causing the squash vine to wilt and die. Contact your local Extension agent for control recommendations.
- \* Okra, one of the most showy blooms in the vegetable garden, bears flowers that last only one day. If the flower has been pollinated, a miniature okra pod can be seen beneath the wilted flower.
- \* Although tomatoes are self-pollinating, they need movement to transfer pollen. If it is hot and calm for several days, gently shake plants for assured pollen transfer and fruit set. Hot temperatures can also interfere with blossom set.
- \* Drought and hot, dry winds can cause pepper and tomato blossoms to drop off. Try misting plants twice a day to cool them and help the blossoms set fruit.
- \* For the best flavor, pick ripe tomatoes as needed; flavor peaks within three minutes of picking. If you must wait to use garden-fresh tomatoes, don't refrigerate them. Fruit texture and some aroma compounds deteriorate quickly in the cold.
- \* A garden needs 1 inch of rain or water each week. Early morning is the best time to water. Evening watering is less desirable because leaves that remain wet through the night are more susceptible to fungal diseases. Mulch plants to reduce water loss and improve yields.
- \* Keep peas, beans, and berries cool while you pick them by spreading a damp cloth over your harvest basket.
- \* For a fall harvest of cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, set transplants in late July. For a fall harvest of lettuce, radish, carrots, beets, turnips, kale, and spinach, sow seeds in late July to early August.
- \* Stop vine crops from taking over your garden or lawn by pinching off the fuzzy growing tips. This also directs the plant's energy into ripening fruit rather than producing more vine.
- \* Side dress crops like corn and cabbage with 2 pounds of 5-10-5 fertilizer per 50 feet of row about a month after growth starts. Scatter the fertilizer between the rows and scratch it into the soil with a rake. If your garden is on an infertile sandy soil, side dress all of your vegetables to promote vigorous growth.
- \* When muskmelons are 1/3 to 1/2 their mature size, decrease watering. Over-watering reduces sweetness and may cause the fruits to crack open. From half-size to maturity, 1 inch of water per week from rainfall or overhead irrigation is plenty. Likewise, trickle irrigation should be reduced. ♻️

## SENIORS GET FREE VEGETABLES

*By the Associated Press*

Arlis Schnieders and her husband, Herman, aren't able to garden anymore -- and they don't have extra money to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables.

That won't stop the retired couple from getting their fill this summer of farm-fresh sweet corn, tomatoes, beets, potatoes and radishes -- definitely radishes.

"We ate more radishes last year than we have in a long time. We would have never bought them otherwise because we're on a limited income," said Mrs. Schnieders, 71, sitting in the commons room of the Sunshine Center for seniors.

In its second year, the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is going strong, promoting nutritional diets for low-income seniors and benefiting farmers by increasing the consumption of locally grown produce.

Low-income seniors are given coupons they can redeem for free vegetables and fruits only at farmers markets, roadside stands or through community support agriculture programs.

The program developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is offered in 26 states -- from California to Maine -- with \$10 million in federal grants. President Bush has cut the funding in half for next year.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## PROGRAMS FOR 2002

Date	Program	Speaker
7/1	Shade Gardening	Rob Mortko
8/5	Seed Collection and Fall Gardens	Megan Barnett
9/9	Fall Wreath and Basket Making	Cindy Morehead
10/12	Banquet: Garden Masonry and Ornaments	David Bird
11/4	Unusual Holiday Plants	Greg Schroer
12/2	Christmas Wreaths	The Brashers
1/9/03	Plant Life in Africa and China	Jeff Havlin

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## 2002 FLEUROSELECT GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

*From Fleuroselect.com*

### Dianthus barbatus 'Noverna Purple'

Also known as Sweet William, this is an annual to be used as a bedding plant. Start seeds four to six weeks before the last frost. Set plants out the middle of May where they will receive full sun. Produces bunches of bright pink-purple flowers 1/2" in diameter. Seeds are available from R. H. Shumway ([www.hpsseeds.com](http://www.hpsseeds.com)).

### Petunia F1 hybrida 'Lavender Wave'

A new color in the "Wave" series, this annual makes a great bedding plant, or is good for hanging baskets. It tolerates heat well, and has good spreading and cascading characteristics. Seeds are available from R. H. Shumway ([www.hpsseeds.com](http://www.hpsseeds.com)), or Vesey's ([www.veseys.com](http://www.veseys.com)).

### Viola F1 hybrida 'Ultima Morpho'

Named after the 'Morpho' butterfly that shares the same colors, this charismatic pansy displays 2-inch blooms in combinations of vibrant blue and bright yellow, each flower accented with intriguing black whiskers. The 5- to 9-inch plants tolerate heat and continue their exuberant display of flowers until frost. Sun to part shade. This plant was also declared a 2001 All-America Selection. Seeds are available from R. H. Shumway ([www.hpsseeds.com](http://www.hpsseeds.com)), Jung Seeds ([www.jungseeds.com](http://www.jungseeds.com)), Park Seed ([www.parkseed.com](http://www.parkseed.com)), or Stokes Seeds ([www.stokeseeds.com](http://www.stokeseeds.com)). ☼

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*(Continued from page 4)*

Last year, more than 400,000 seniors received free produce from 3,700 farmers at 929 farmers' markets, 542 roadside stands and about 90 community support agriculture programs nationwide.

"This program has been immensely popular both with the seniors who are getting fresh produce and with farmers who are increasing their markets," said Zy Weinberg, co-director of the National Association of Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.

The green-and-white coupons come in \$3 denominations and look like checks. Mrs. Schnieders simply signs it and chooses her vegetables. She gets no cash back if she doesn't use the total amount of each coupon.

This year, coupons for fresh produce will be accepted by about 3,500 farmers at nearly 2,000 markets, roadside stands or CSA programs.

In Missouri, to get additional information or to apply for the SFMNP, contact the Division of Nutritional Health and Services at 1-800-392-8209 or 573-751-6204. Or visit their web site at [http://www.health.state.mo.us/fmnp/sfmnp\\_announce.htm](http://www.health.state.mo.us/fmnp/sfmnp_announce.htm).

Persons age sixty or above, with an annual income of \$16,391 for a single individual or \$22,089 for a married couple will be eligible for the SFMNP.

Each eligible senior will receive 12 checks for a total of \$36.00 for the season. Each check will enable the senior to purchase \$3.00 worth of fresh fruits, vegetables, and edible herbs from a farmer. The checks can be redeemed from the day they are received until October 31 when the farmers' market season ends.

For the second year in a row, elected officials in Kansas opted not to participate in this program. ☼

## WATERMELON LYCOPENE

*By Rosalie Marion Bliss  
USDA Agricultural Research Service*

Watermelon growers aren't exactly singing the new tune: "Our lycopene is better than your lycopene." But there is a new twist on the amount of healthful lycopene found in raw watermelon versus raw tomato that's heating up discussions.

Besides sharing a pinkish-red color, watermelon and tomato are known sources of the phytochemical lycopene—one of a host of beneficial compounds found in plant foods. Phytochemicals have not yet been classified as traditional nutrients, such as the vitamins and minerals considered essential for life. Still, they've been found to reduce the risks of age-related diseases and many people call them phytonutrients.

Agricultural Research Service scientists working to determine lycopene levels in varieties of watermelon have found many have as much as—or more than—that found in raw tomato. But lycopene content in food is different from bioavailability in humans. Bioavailability is how well the body digests, uses and stores a given chemical.

ARS nutritionists Beverly A. Cleveland and Alison J. Edwards of the Phytonutrients Laboratory in Beltsville, Md., conducted a 19-week study with 23 volunteers to assess the bioavailability of lycopene from watermelon. Tomato traditionally has been used in lycopene research because of its established lycopene levels.

Now here's the rub: Past testing showed lycopene bioavailability to be low from ingesting raw tomato, yet higher from ingesting heat-processed products, such as tomato juices and sauces. Heating and homogenizing are known to increase tomato's lycopene bioavailability.

Researchers wondered whether raw watermelon would echo raw tomato's low bioavailability. Would watermelon also need to be heat-treated to increase its available lycopene? It didn't. That's good news for people who don't like tomatoes but do like watermelon. They can eat their watermelon and absorb their lycopene, too. ☼

## DIAGNOSIS: MELAMPODIUM

By Gayle Harris

Doctor, what is it? It's spreading all over the place, it's yellow, and no matter what I do it keeps coming back! Not to worry; it may sound like a contagious skin disease, but it's actually a versatile plant called melampodium. This underused annual with a dreary moniker is well worth a trial run in your garden.

Although *Melampodium paludosum* has been around for a long time, I wasn't aware of it until my mother claimed that she'd discovered a true yellow that bloomed gloriously in partial shade. Here in Texas we love our shade trees, but it can be a challenge getting a variety of colors beneath them. Like everyone else I've used the pink hues of impatiens and the ubiquitous caladiums, but I was yearning for something a little brighter. I figured I had nothing to lose by giving melampodium a try.

My first seedlings came straight from mom's garden, and I was surprised that they transplanted with hardly a fatality. I wasn't especially tender with them, hurriedly patting them into their new homes before a May thunderstorm. And the soil, I'm afraid, wasn't perfect since I had to dig among the roots of a live oak. So I was surprised at how well they adapted and grew. And grew! Each plant transformed into a foot-wide mound of spectacular, sunny color that lasted until the first frost.

At maturity, melampodium has cheerful, bright green foliage and is profusely covered with 1-inch yellow, daisy-like flowers sporting darker centers. Another bonus is that it seems to be ignored by disease or insects, which can be a frightful force here in Texas. I've seen several seed varieties available; among them are Million Gold, with an approximate growth height of 8-10 inches, Showstar (14-24 inches), and Medallion (24-36 inches), and they're quite easy to grow from seed. I prefer a more compact growth habit, but the variety you choose will depend on planting location, companion plants, and the effect you wish to achieve.

As mentioned, mine did well in dappled shade, which was a nice surprise since many sources indicate that it needs a good full sun to bloom well. As an experiment, I also planted some in an area of my yard that gets strong summer light for a good 7 hours per day, but it proved to be a cruel move. My poor mellies in that location looked a little depressed when August rolled around. Although they didn't die, the foliage drooped by late afternoon and didn't perk up again until the cool of evening and after a solid watering. So if the summer sun in your part of the country isn't as brutal as ours in Texas, melampodium might be very happy without any shade at all. Otherwise, a little break from the relentless rays is fine and shouldn't affect the blooms. I feel safe in saying that it wouldn't do well in full shade, however.

Although melampodium is officially classified as an annual, I've had mine reseed and pop up year after year due to our mild Texas winters. And prolific little reseeders they are, too, yielding plenty to gather and share with friends. They're generally regarded as drought and heat resistant (after all, they're natives of South Africa), though they do appreciate a cool drink during the dog days of summer, even in dappled shade. Amid a background of blue salvia and a pairing with white begonias, the resulting contrast is beautiful.

If you go nursery shopping for melampodium, don't confuse the yellow varieties with melampodium leucanthum, a white daisy-like flower sometimes known as the Blackfoot Daisy. The latter has many things to recommend it, but is different entirely. And above all, if you're ever diagnosed with melampodium, don't panic and run for the skin cream. Relax, put your hoe away, and enjoy prolonged blooming from the carefree plant with the peculiar



## AMAZON TOP 10 GARDENING AND HORTICULTURAL BOOKS

As of 17 June

(Ratings from May 7 in brackets)

1. American Horticultural Society A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants
2. Jerry Baker's Old Time Gardening Wisdom
3. Two Gardeners: A Friendship in Letters
4. Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs : An Illustrated Encyclopedia
5. Indoor Marijuana Horticulture - The Indoor Bible
6. The Ortho Problem Solver
7. Weeds of the North East
8. The American Horticultural Society Encyclopedia of Gardening
9. Easy Gardens for South Florida
10. Native Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: A Guide to Using, Growing, and Propagating North American Woody Plants

(Continued from page 3)

JAN GEORGE  
15001 Peppermill Dr.  
Olathe KS 66062-4651  
(913) 829-4737

BEVERLY GODWIN  
11946 Pennsylvania Ave  
Kansas City MO 64145-1004  
(816) 942-8121

JEAN HARRIS  
3028 S.W. 9th Terr.  
Lee's Summit MO 64081-3711  
(816) 763-1823

JOYCE & R.J. MAAS  
547 E. 101st Terr.  
Kansas City MO 64131-4215  
(816) 942-6890

GOLDIE MCCLELLAN  
6201 Fairlane Dr  
Kansas City MO 64134-1157  
(816) 966-0972

RUSTY MUNYAN  
9510 Cedar  
Shawnee Mission KS 66207-3323

(Continued on page 9)

# MOM WAS RIGHT, BROCCOLI GOOD FOR YOU

*By the Associated Press*

Broccoli and broccoli sprouts contain a chemical that kills the bacteria responsible for most stomach cancer, say researchers, confirming the dietary advice that moms have been handing out for years.

In laboratory tests the chemical, sulforaphane, killed helicobacter pylori, a bacteria that causes stomach ulcers and often fatal stomach cancers.

And the good news is there appears to be enough of it in broccoli sprouts and some varieties of broccoli to benefit people who eat the vegetables.

The researchers could not say how much broccoli one would have to eat for there to be an impact, something they said could not be determined without long-term tests involving humans.

"The levels at which we tested it ... are such that those could be achieved by eating broccoli or broccoli sprouts. It's a reasonable level that we think would be reached in the stomach," said Jed W. Fahey of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

The findings are reported in Tuesday's issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. Broccoli sprouts are tiny three-day-old plants that resemble alfalfa sprouts and have a peppery flavor.

"I feel quite comfortable suggesting people eat more fruits and vegetables, specifically cruciferous vegetables, specifically broccoli," Fahey said. "We know it's safe and healthy ... we know sulforaphane is effective in protecting against cancers."

Dr. Paul Talalay, a co-researcher at Johns Hopkins, had previously reported sulforaphane is an effective anticancer agent and the new studies extended that work to the bacteria that causes stomach cancer and ulcers.

In the lab, the scientists found that sulforaphane even killed helicobacter that was resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

They also showed it can kill the bacterium whether it's inside or outside cells. In people the bacteria can hide in cells lining the stomach, making it more difficult to get rid of the infection, said Fahey.

The studies concentrated on mice and the researchers will now seek to determine if the same effect occurs in humans.

"If future clinical studies show that a food can relieve or prevent diseases associated with this bacterium in people, it could have significant public health implications in the United States and around the world," Fahey said.

"In some parts of Central and South America, Africa and Asia, as much as 80 percent to 90 percent of the population is infected with helicobacter, likely linked to poverty and conditions of poor sanitation," said Fahey, a plant physiologist.

*(Continued on page 8)*

# MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

*Commentary by Brad Lucht*

News from our fellow gardeners in Texas. The Men's Garden Club of Austin has decided to change its name, seeing as so many women participate in gardening. The motion to change the name passed with a 2/3 majority.

Also from Austin, their chapter awarded FOUR \$1000 scholarships. Each winner receives \$500 in the fall, then another \$500 spring semester.

Which makes me wonder why our chapter no longer awards a scholarship. When I first joined just a few years ago, the scholarship was SUPPOSED to be the primary reason we raised funds. It made me feel good to think we were helping someone begin a career in an area I enjoy so much. I think it is a shame we no longer support a young person in their pursuit of a horticulture degree.

Tangentially related to no scholarship funds, I want to point out once again that it costs us \$10 per person to print and send this newsletter each year. Yet each year you only pay \$5 in local dues. That is \$5 per YEAR. In addition, the club also pays for the coffee and baked goods at each meeting, and heavily subsidizes the annual summer picnic.

I'm just wondering why we can't raise our dues to pay for these "benefits" that we award ourselves, and use the funds raised at our plant sale to give back to our community.

What do you think? As a public, nonprofit organization, what should we be doing with the funds we raise?

I picked my first 'Tumbler' tomatoes June 5. The vines have yielded 15 little beauties so far. Chuck Brasher says they are mighty tasty.

I also harvested my first crop of bucket broccoli June 12. Haven't tasted it yet, but you can bet I am sure looking forward to it.

My daylilies have finally started to bloom, a week or so behind most I've seen around my neighborhood. It always amazes me how short-lived the blooms are, lasting just a few hours before they fade and fall to the ground.

*(Continued on page 8)*

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## PICNIC MACARONI SALAD

Recipe By : unknown  
Serving Size : 4 Preparation Time : 0:20  
Categories : American Pasta Salads

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
8	ounces	elbow macaroni	
1/3	cup	sliced green onions	
1/3	cup	sliced celery	
1/3	cup	sweet pickle relish	
2/3	cup	mayonnaise	
2	tablespoons	prepared mustard	

Cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain and cool. Combine macaroni with chopped green onions, celery and pickle relish. Gently stir in mayonnaise and mustard. Mix well. Cover and chill.

# GROWING GIANT TOMATOES

By Deborah Wechsler

Meet the growers of super tomatoes: Their tomatoes are as big as cauliflowers, and their plants are stupendously tall and luxuriantly healthy. Year after year, they win contests, give away hundreds of pounds of fruit, and put the growers of ordinary tomatoes to shame. Who are these super-growers, and what miraculous methods, special seeds, and fantastic fertilizers do they use?

Although this country boasts many great tomato growers, we've found four whose huge plants and giant tomatoes are worthy of special note. They have some growing techniques in common, but also have discovered special techniques that gives them a certain edge in growing "the big one."

## Grower Know-How

In 1987, **Gordon Graham of Edmond, Oklahoma**, grew the world's largest tomato ever--a whopping 7-pound, 12-ounce 'Delicious', listed in The Guinness Book of Records. In 1986, he grew a cherry-tomato plant that was 28 feet tall and 53 1/2 feet wide. Each year, he grows 25 to 50 plants of many varieties, selecting the best potential winners for extra attention as they grow.

He starts with his soil. "When I moved here," he says, "the front yard was pure sand, and the back was solid clay, and gradually I've mixed them." He actually rotates soil instead of crops, annually trading the topsoil layer (about 6 inches) of his tomato beds with soil from other beds one wheelbarrow's worth at a time. If that's not enough, he gathers leaves from the many large oak trees on his property, chops them with a chipper-shredder, mixes them with horse or other manure, lets them compost for a year, then spreads the compost on his raised beds, tilling it occasionally all winter long to bring insect pests up to the surface just before a hard freeze.

Another key to success is starting early. Although gardeners in his area near Oklahoma City (zone 7) generally set out tomatoes around April 20th, he sets out his first transplants as early as February and is practically ready to harvest by April. Between early February and April 20, he insulates his plants in an ingenious way. Gordon rigs up a protective structure by placing a water-filled frost protector jacket inside a tomato cage, staking it to the ground with 1/2-inch dowels. Then he strings soft wire through five holes punched through the plastic walls to create a radial cradle, and on that he sets a second water jackets inside the cage. He further protects plants by wrapping them in row-cover fabric. With such dedication and ingenuity, it's no surprise that he's a regular winner for first ripe tomato in his region.

Once these beauties are growing, he directs his efforts to producing contest-sized fruits. He pinches off all blossoms until the stem of the plant is 1/4-inch in diameter at the base, and then prunes the flower clusters to produce only one or two fruits per cluster. Gordon grows his tomatoes in 5-foot cages of concrete-reinforcing wire, but he piles the cages three high, supports them with recycled stakes, and anchors the whole tower to a permanent trellis. Harvesting requires a 24-foot ladder!

**Minnie Zaccaria, of Long Branch, New Jersey** (zone 6), is one of the few women at the top of the male-dominated big-tomato-contest world. "When a woman wins," she laughs, "people really notice!" The competitive bug bit her about 14 years ago when she entered New Jersey's Tomato Weigh-In contest and came in sixth. The next year she was second, and for the last three years, she has grown grand-champion winners weighing close to 4 1/2 pounds each. Her winners come from a variety she developed herself, a hybrid of two 'Beefsteak'-type heirlooms. Its name? "Big Zac," of course.

Although she once grew as many as 100 tomato plants, she has cut back to 30 so she can lavish more care on each one, starting with planting in clear plastic cups to monitor root growth. She waters plants individually with a watering can and brushes off aphids with a paintbrush. "A lot of people just don't work as hard at it as I do."

Like Gordon Graham, she believes big tomatoes start with great soil. "People call me The Bag Lady," she says, "because I drive around until I find places where people have put out piles of chopped leaves and grass clippings, and I take them away

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The bacteria can usually be treated with antibiotics, but these are too costly and scarce in many parts of the world, he noted.

Perhaps "people in some of these very poor areas, where it's almost impossible to even conceive of antibiotic therapy ... might, by a relatively minor change in diet, be able to heal themselves," he said.

Dr. Carlos F. Quiros of the University of California, Davis, said he was not surprised by the findings, commenting that many compounds found in vegetables inhibit the growth of pathogens.

Sulforaphane has been shown to have anti-cancer properties, Quiros said, but the amount present varies widely among varieties of broccoli. Quiros, who was not part of Fahey's research group, said he is doing research to develop varieties of broccoli with higher levels of the chemical. ☼

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My second crop of radishes is turning out the same way the first one did. Yellow leaves and puny to no fruit. My first effort I planted the seed (Cherry Belle) in a potting mix. Then I thought the yellow leaves were due to a lack of nutrients. So the second time I planted them in a mixture of one part potting soil to one part compost. And I've still got the same problem. What beats me is that I grew the same radish in the same window box container two years ago and they were terrific. That's the way it goes sometimes.

I'm finally getting my glads planted, about a month behind schedule. The nice thing is that they will have an extended blooming season, since it is taking me so long to get them all in the ground. The big problem here is I'm running out of room in the flower bed!

My agastache were the first plants up this spring, and are now literally twice as big as their peak last season. They are bigger than my butterfly bush! They've begun to bloom now, making the bees very happy.

The coreopsis I grew from seed last year is blooming like crazy now, as are the Star zinnia. The purple coneflower have also begun to bloom, so there is now a riot of color in the flower bed. ☼

(Continued from page 8)

to make leaf compost to add to my garden." Every fall she triple-digs her 5-foot-wide raised beds as deep as 24 inches. She opens a trench, puts in a 6-inch layer of leaf compost, eggshells, manure, and other organic matter, covers it with soil, then turns the mixture with a spading fork. Next, she puts a layer of leaves on top and covers the whole bed with black plastic until spring. And she does this all herself.

To protect the fruits once they're set, Minnie carefully ties each plant to a scrounged 7- to 8-foot metal pipe, removing all suckers below the first flower cluster. If a fruit shows promise of developing to competitive size, she gently supports its branch with an extra strip of cloth.

**Ken Harper of Columbus, Ohio** (zone 5), backed into tomato mania when his son decided to enter a few tomatoes in a county fair-and won a blue ribbon. "The whole family got real excited," Ken recalls. "I'd always grown a few dozen plants, but the next year, we put out 100 plants. We got up to 500 in 1994." He and his wife give away bushels to friends, neighbors, and co-workers and supply several local nursing homes. He has won prizes at the Ohio State Fair with flawless, 3-pound tomatoes. 'Big Beef' and 'Celebrity' have been two of his championship varieties.

For each of his plants, Ken digs a foot-deep hole and fills it halfway with compost, lots of manure, and a little 10-10-10 granular fertilizer. Each year, he digs the holes in a slightly different spot so the tomatoes are seldom planted where a previous hole was to ensure that new plants grow in nutrient-rich soil.

**Romaine Breault lives near Minneapolis, Minnesota** (zone 4), but that hasn't prevented him from growing big tomatoes. His claim to fame is his success with growing them in containers. "When we moved here," he explains, "my yard was heavily wooded, and there was almost nowhere to garden. Even when I cut down a few trees, their roots were impossible to deal with." So when he came across a few big whiskey barrels cut in half, he bought them for planters. His container-gardening techniques yield prizewinning tomatoes weighing as much as 4 pounds. Each year, he raises only about 14 plants, experimenting with various heirloom varieties. His favorites include 'Cherokee Purple' and 'Radiator Charlie's Mortgage Lifter'.

Breault also pays fanatical attention to the soil. He fills the bottom two-thirds of his barrels with equal parts of peat, perlite, and compost. For the top third, he uses good garden soil mixed with composted manure and, unless there has been no hint of disease, each year he removes and replaces that top layer with new soil and manure. Blossom-end rot often plagues container-grown tomatoes, but Romaine has found that adding 1/4 cup of gypsum to the topsoil has eliminated the problem.

To train and support his plants, he fashions metal cages, sized to fit perfectly inside his barrels. He lets the first main side branch grow but otherwise removes every sucker. He even protects the stems where they protrude from the cages by cushioning the wire with foam pipe insulation.

### **Lots of Loving Care**

Although our tomato growers extraordinaire each have special techniques for growing large fruits, they also have many techniques in common. All start from seed because it's the best way to get healthy, robust plants of the varieties they want as early as they want. They all transplant seedlings into larger containers at least twice before moving them to the garden. They're scrupulous about hardening off, setting plants deeply, and protecting new transplants. They all fertilize regularly during the growing season with a variety of liquid fertilizers, foliar feedings, and top dressings of compost or granular fertilizers.

All of these growers mulch, usually with straw or plastic, to conserve moisture and prevent splashing, which can spread disease. They avoid overhead watering.

Problems with plant diseases or insects are few. Some of this garden vitality may be the product of luck and location--as well as soil-moving--but then, these are the kinds of growers who pick off every yellow leaf and scout diligently for infant hornworms. Their prized plants are also assured plenty of sun and space. In addition, like little garden prodigies, these tomatoes receive a high level of training and support. You won't find any superplants sprawling on the ground.

What can other growers learn from the success of these gardeners? Though they have an extraordinary level of dedication every step of the way, they are not specialists. Similar attentiveness would undoubtedly give any of us big, beautiful tomatoes.

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If I have left out your name, or there are any misspellings or other flubs, please make sure you notify the editor. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!



**LOOKING**

**AHEAD  
FOR**



**AND  
BEYOND**

**July 1  
Monday 7:00 PM**

**Greater Kansas City Gardener's of America Club Meeting**  
**Program: Shade Gardening**  
**Speaker: Rob Mortko**

**Loose Park Garden Center**  
**5200 Pennsylvania**  
**Kansas City MO 64112-2384**

*July 4*

*Independence Day*

*?*

*July 4*

*Member birthday: Jean Simonitsch*

*July 6*

*First picture postcard made*

*July 8*

*Liberty Bell cracks, 1835*

*July 10*

*Member birthday: Gary Hoffman*

*July 11*

*Member birthday: Dolores Lemkee*

*July 14*

*French citizens stormed the Bastille, 1789*

*July 15*

*First Boeing 707 flew, 1954*

**July 15**

**Greater Kansas City GOA Board Meeting**

**Loose Park Garden Center**

*July 17*

*Member birthday: Alice Bracken-Carroll*

*July 20*

*Buzz Aldrin & Neal Armstrong land on the moon, 1969*

*July 26*

*Member birthday: Janet Hodges*

*July 31*

*First U.S. patent issued, to Samuel Hopkins, 1790*

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