

September 2023

South Schuylkill Garden Club

Third Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 PM

First United Church of Christ, Schuylkill Haven

www.southschuylkillgardenclub.com

www.facebook.com/soschuylkillgardenclub.com



Cultivating the Community Newsletter

Weather Folklore for September

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, September is the gateway into autumn. Nature is in transition as temperatures drop and leaves change. During this month, there's lots of activity from both man and the natural world as preparations for the upcoming winter get underway. Our ancestors paid close attention to signs from nature as they prepared for harvests and the cold winter months ahead. They then turned those observations, which have been gathered over a long period of time, into proverbs that were then passed down from generation to generation.

You'll note much of the September weather lore sayings are mostly associated with rain (September is historically a rainy month) and its effects on valuable crops and harvests, which our ancestors relied on for their livelihood.

- Whatever July and August do not boil, September cannot fry.
- As September, so the coming March.
- Fair on the first of September, fair the entire month.
- If the storms in September clear off warm, all the storms of the following winter will be warm.
- When September has been rainy, the following May is generally dry. When May is dry, September is apt to be wet.
- Thunder in September indicates a good crop of grains and fruits the next year.
- The first snowfall comes six weeks after the last thunderstorm in September.
- As the weather is on the day of Mary's birth (September 8), so it will be for four weeks.

- If the weather is fine on St. Gorgonius' Day (September 9), it will continue fine for forty days. If it rains, there will be a lot of bad October weather.
- No rain on the Holy Cross (September 14), no rain for six weeks.
- If on September 19 there is a storm from the south, a mild winter may be expected.
- If there is clear weather on St. Maurice's Day (September 22), heavy winds will rage in the following winter.
- On Michaelmas Day (September 29), the heat leaves us. If St. Michael brings many acorns, Christmas will cover the fields with snow.

September 19, 2023 6:00 PM

Program: "Picnic at Jersey Acres/Stone Mountain Winery"



A tour of Stone Mountain Wineries conducted by **Kyle Heffner** (wine master). Learn about viniculture, wine making and sampling.

Bring a covered dish/picnic type to share

Paper products supplied by SSGC



A lawn chair and walking shoes are a good idea.

Note: 6 PM - start time for picnic and tour

Limited restroom facilities at the Farm

September 15 at 9 AM

Decorate Schuylkill Haven Railroad Station

Schuylkill Haven Borough Day

Sch. Haven Borough Day is coming fast - **September 30**. We need your help. Besides jams and jellies, we are looking for members to donate **baked goods**, which are always a good seller. We will have the clear clamshell containers (for baked goods) at the September 19 meeting at Jersey Acres/Stone Mountain Winery. Please help the club by baking goodies to sell.

We also need members to sign up to help with running the stand at **Haven Borough Day**. Please respond back to kamorgan11@gmail.com with the time slot you plan to man the stand.

Schedule:

o Set-Up 6:30-9:00

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

o Operation 9:00 – 12:30

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

o Operation/Teardown 12:30 – 4:00

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Dried Fall Foliage Workshop

On another note, about Haven Borough Day, we are asking members of the club to dry flowers to sell at this event. Hydrangeas, oat grass, sedum, cattails, etc. are always good. Looking for eye-catching dried flowers/weeds. From this gathering, we will be meeting on September 20, starting at 9 a.m., at **Kathy Townley's** home for a workshop to put these dried flowers/weeds into arrangements for sale at Borough Day.

Kathy's address:

120 Shoreline Drive, Pine Grove, PA 17963
(Tan house with burgundy roof and stone front)
(Plenty of parking in the back)

Hope that the membership can help the club by harvesting/drying flowers/weeds. Looking forward to this workshop.

District II/III News - Jane Kruse

Sept 11	District Annual Meeting Lights to Remember, Flowers of Hope Host: Wyomissing GC	Double Tree by Hilton 701 Penn Street, Reading Have license plate # at registration table for free parking.	Beverly Bowman 610-698-6123
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Other Notes:

Jams and Jellies – The tree fruits are abundant this year for making made into jams and jellies. Time to cook up a batch of jam or jelly for selling at **Sch. Haven Borough Day** which is **September 30th**.

Sweet Arrow Lake Restoration Celebration has been moved to **October 15, 2023**, to coincide with other activities going on at the lake. More information to come.

Grandma's Tips for Gardeners

We started a new column, "*Grandma's Tips for Gardener's*", and are looking for those gardening tips that may have been passed on to you or a gardening tip that you have found works for you. You are invited to share your tips for successful gardening.

- Place moth balls in your flower beds to keep the rabbits from eating your flowers. - Grandma Stump.
- To get rid of slugs, place hollowed-out orange rinds upside-down in the garden. The next morning, collect the rinds. They're usually full of slugs and snails. It's a quick, easy and safe solution.
- After picking up black walnuts or husking them, use a cut green tomato to remove the stains from your hands.
- When harvesting broccoli heads, cut the stalks at an angle to prevent the remaining stalk from filling with water and decomposing. The side shoots can then produce better broccoli.
- Keep bugs from your rose plants by planting chives around them. It looks pretty, plus you can clip some of the chives for use in salads.
- Hang a hummingbird feeder above your rose bushes to keep aphids away.
- Spring bulbs can be planted in areas that are typically shaded by deciduous trees.
- Do not over fertilize inpatients or they will only produce leaves. If this happens, just wait. In time they should start blooming again.
- Wrap strips of newspaper around the roots of cabbages before planting. This prevents cutworms from getting at the plant.
- When gathering seeds, always take them from the largest, healthiest blooms. Leave the flower on the plant until it is completely faded, and the seed head is dead. Then remove the head and place it on a paper plate to dry. Shake out the seeds into a bag and store them in a cool dry place.

- When planting carrot seeds, put the seeds in a row but do not cover with dirt. Instead, walk down the row. That presses the seeds into the soil just enough.

WATER YOUR PLANTS AT NIGHT IN THE SUMMER

- If you water your garden at the peak of the sun's heat in summer, your plants will likely become dehydrated. Our grandparents knew that the best time to water the garden during the hotter months is at night. This gives plants enough time to absorb the water before the sun rises again in the morning, while the lower humidity at night reduces the risk of disease.

ADD CRUSHED EGGSHELLS TO YOUR SOIL

- Just like banana skins, eggshells harbor a surprising quantity of nutrients, including calcium, that can benefit your garden. Grind your rinsed eggshells down finely and sprinkle the fragments onto the soil. A layer of shell is also said to help deter many pests and moderate the soil's acidity, resulting in happy and healthy crops.

HOW MUCH WATER?

- Most in-ground garden plants grow best with 1 to 2 inches of water per week. If not enough rain falls, water deeply once a week instead of lightly each day. Frequent, shallow watering only moistens the top of the soil and encourages the plant's roots to move there instead of growing deeper.

DON'T BUY SEEDS, CREATE YOUR OWN

- Did you know that you can grow a plant from a single seed? Every fruit and vegetable we eat starts life this way, and everything from an avocado pit to seeds found inside a pumpkin can be replanted. For the most part, scrape a handful of seed from the chosen vegetable, soak in water, then rinse and allow to dry for a week before storing in an airtight container.

FEED BANANA PEELS TO TOMATO AND PEPPER PLANTS

- Potassium-rich banana peels are excellent for plants like tomatoes and peppers. Simply bury them in the soil near your plants where they will release nutrients as they break down. Or make banana tea for your crops by adding banana peels to a jar and covering them with water. Let it brew for a week and serve directly on the root-soil.

DON'T DISCARD YOUR COFFEE GROUNDS

- You may recall your grandad tipping his cold coffee over the plants - and with good reason. Coffee contains beneficial nutrients, such as phosphorus, potassium, nitrogen and magnesium. Coffee grounds can also improve drainage and water retention in the soil, plus they're said to attract earthworms too. Don't layer too much coffee grounds into beds, as it could lead to mold growth.

NATIVE SPECIES OF PLANTS

- Native species of plants are often better adapted to growing in your region than plants from other places in the world. They also are better for local pollinators that evolved with them. If you want to grow plants to support pollinators, avoid newer cultivars with double flowers because all the extra petals make it harder for insects to reach the nectar and pollen.

SOAK YOUR SEEDS TO SPEED UP GERMINATION

- Growing plants and vegetables from seeds can take weeks if not months, but crafty gardeners have come up with time-saving methods to speed up the process. Most seeds only need heat and moisture to germinate, so place your seeds in a jar with water up to 24 hours before planting. Keep them damp and warm – you shouldn't typically leave them for more than a day. This should be enough to encourage the germination process.

How to Conserve Water

So, a few months ago prior to the rains, I was thinking we were in for a drought this year. That lead me to come up with a list of how you conserve water. Then the rain came and came and came. *That brought the weeds.* I divert from the topic, now back to conserving water.

Please send your water conserving list to kamorgan11@gmail.com and let's see how we can help each other.

Conserve Water:

- I conserve some water by emptying my dehumidifiers and water plants both inside and outside the home with that water.
- I use a rain barrel to collect water runoff.
- Bricks in the tank of the toilet
- Turn water off when brushing teeth.
- Skipping the pre-rinse before loading your dishwasher.
- Use a low flow shower head.
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Start a Love Affair With Garlic

Superstition has it that wearing garlic around your neck will keep the vampires away. But honestly, if you wear garlic around your neck, everyone will leave you alone. Eating garlic is another story. Nearly every culture on Earth has a recipe or two that includes garlic, either a little bit for flavor or as the main ingredient. And it seems that people either love it or hate it -- nothing in between.

Garlic is easy and fun to grow; for every clove you plant, you'll harvest a full-sized head filled with cloves. To get beautiful garlic heads that will store well into winter, plant the cloves in the fall, around

Labor Day. The goal is to get the cloves in the ground during warm weather for good root formation. It is a good sign when you see green shoots peeking above the soil in late autumn. Don't worry – garlic can tolerate frost. Don't plant garlic from the supermarket as it has been treated to sprout. Get your "seed" garlic from a reputable local nursery or mail-order supplier.

When you're ready to plant your garlic, carefully break it into individual cloves. It is best to do this right at planting time so the cloves don't dry out. Plant each clove, pointy end up, 4-6 inches deep (2 inches of soil over the top of the clove), leaving 6 inches between each clove. Garlic roots like to go deep, so well cultivated soil is a big help. Poke holes in the ground and drop one clove in each hole, covering up the entire batch with a rake at the end.

Plant the biggest cloves and eat the rest. Your garlic will send up green shoots this fall, go dormant over winter, and then continue growing next spring. After the leaves grow in June, a seed scape will form on top of the stem. Remove it to redirect that extra energy toward producing a larger bulb. Those little morsels are great in a stir-fry.

Harvest the bulbs when the lower half of the leaves turns brown. Test one or two plants. You should be able to see the shape of the cloves beginning to bulge through the wrapper. Harvest can begin as early as the first week of July, depending on the variety. Leaving garlic in the ground too long will not result in bigger bulbs, but rather dried out, split, and nearly useless ones.

You will need to cure the garlic bulbs before storing. The entire plant, leaves and all, should be allowed to dry for two or three weeks. Do not wash the bulbs or expose them to water. Tie up a dozen or so bulbs with string or wire and hang them in a well-ventilated place. You could also

pack them loosely in a large mesh bag and hang them somewhere with good air circulation. If you do find any that are molding, throw them away as soon as possible. After the garlic has cured, cut off the tops 1 inch above the bulb and trim the roots.

Store the bulbs in a ceramic garlic keeper or a burlap bag. Do not store garlic in the refrigerator or it will try to sprout.

When using garlic in recipes, remember that the smaller you cut it, the stronger the flavor. Chopping finely or pressing a clove exposes more surface to the air, causing a chemical reaction that produces that strong aroma and flavor. Try not to burn garlic – it will become bitter.

If garlic gives you the dreaded garlic beath, try chewing fresh mint leaves or parsley to neutralize the odor. But if you really want to ward off the vampires, eat lots of garlic and breathe your garlic breath with pride.

Lori Rose

Pennsylvania Gardener ♦ *September/October 2018*

A Little Dirt Never Hurts