



# Earthly Elements

"Helpful Information From The Trenches"

Issue 2

Summer Edition

June 2003

## Out & About

Summer is indeed a busy time of year, not just for me but in our surrounding communities. This quarter I'm offering some good things to eat, fun stuff to see and do, hints to help with your lawn during those hot dry spells, & a warning with regard to the dangers of Poison ivy.



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## Strawberry Pie

June is the month of strawberry harvest. Here's a simple but very delicious desert, from Bernice in Canton to help you enjoy the fruits of this month. It's written out with diabetic exchanges. For those who aren't diabetic, buy the regular ingredients containing sugar.

- 1 pkg. sugar free strawberry Jell-O (small)
- 1 pkg. sugar free vanilla pudding (non-instant)
- 1 graham cracker pie crust
- 1 quart fresh or frozen strawberries
- 2 cups hot water
- 1 tub low fat topping (Cool Whip)

Pour 2 cups hot water into a pan and add both the strawberry and vanilla pudding mixes. Bring water to a boil, and boil 1 minute. Let cool. While mix cools, slice fresh or frozen strawberries and place slices at the bottom of pie crust. Pour the cooled mixture from the pan over strawberries. Chill for 4 hours or overnight. Top with whipped topping by spreading it evenly over entire pie.



# Beware—Poison Ivy

Leaves of 3....let them be!!

I had my first, and hopefully last encounter with poison ivy last year. Much to my surprise, I seemed to find it in the most unlikely places....client's back yards! Poison ivy can be found in woods, fields, and sometimes in the garden. It grows in sun or shade, and in wet or dry places. Its growth habit depends on where it's growing, resulting in a trailing ground cover, free-standing shrub, or a vine supported by trees, shrubbery and fences.

All parts of the poison ivy plant contain an oil, urushiol, which causes the allergic reaction. Most poisonings occur during the growing season when the presence of lush foliage increases the chance of contact, but be aware that the dormant stems and roots of the vine can cause winter poisoning as well. Individuals vary in their sensitivity to poison ivy, but repeated exposure can lead to increased sensitivity.

Poison ivy appears in many forms, however, the leaflets vary in size, glossiness, and marginal notching, but always occur in groups of three. If you avoid all unknown plants with leaves composed of three leaflets, you'll be playing it safe.

Poison ivy is difficult but not impossible to eradicate. The chief difficulty lies in the chances of becoming poisoned while trying to remove it. Wear protective clothing, including gloves, whenever you are working near it. Pulling and grubbing are effective means of removal, though they necessitate close contact and will probably need

to be repeated once or twice for complete control. If time is not an object, the vines can be smothered by completely covering them with black plastic for several months. Do not mow the plants as this will spew bits and pieces of poisonous material over the area. **NEVER BURN** these plants as the smoke can cause severe lung damage if inhaled. When removing poison ivy, wear gloves, long sleeved shirt, pants (**NO SHORTS**), and closed-toe boots or shoes. When done, wash all contaminated clothing separately.

Herbicides are effective and allow you to control the plant without getting too close to it. Several commercial products are available (ie: Ortho's Brush-B-Gon). Check

labels to find one that will control poison ivy, and apply it as directed. Many of the herbicides for poison ivy control contain glyphosate. This chemical is systemic. It is absorbed by leaves and transferred to stems and roots, and slowly causes the death of the entire plant. It must be applied to an actively growing plant for this process to take place; do not apply it during a drought when even poison ivy will not be growing. Glyphosate, like most herbicides labeled for poison ivy removal is nonselective and will kill any other plants it contacts.

Where poison ivy has grown up tree trunks or into hedges, cut the vine at ground level. Remove as much of the stump and roots as you can with a hoe or by pulling. As re-growth occurs, apply an herbicide to the leaves, or keep pulling up

*(continued next page)*

the growth. With perseverance, and probably a few itches, poison ivy can be controlled.

Cool water will neutralize poison ivy's urushiol oil, if you rinse **BEFORE** it becomes irritated. If you suspect that you've hit a patch of the stuff, rinse off the exposed areas with a little water. **PLEASE DON'T USE WARM WATER**, as warm water will open the pores in your skin allowing the oil to get in. Use cold water and soap.

If you got it...the best remedy I found was baking soda and water mixed into a paste and applied over the affected area. It stopped the itching and helped heal the blisters.

## **Carrot & Raisin Sandwiches**

*“Choosy mom’s choose carrot & raisin”*....what? Some of you might remember this childhood favorite from the 1950s. It's a really delicious and healthy sandwich filling. If you have an old-fashioned meat grinder, set it up on your kitchen counter and feed in equal parts, the carrots and raisins. Then add a hefty dollop of mayonnaise (you could substitute plain or vanilla yogurt) and mix it in. If you don't have a meat grinder, grate the carrots with a hand grater and chop the raisins with a knife. You can use a food processor, but it might not taste the same.

## **The Grass** *Can Be* **Greener**

### **Hot-weather tips for lawns**

Worrying about the lawn getting brown? Try these tips for healthier lawns in hot, dry times.

#### **Raise mowing height.**

This promotes deeper root growth. Mow off no more than a third of the grass height to prevent stress on lawns.



#### **Keep mowing blades sharp.**

Dull blades injure grass and cause stress.

#### **Water in early morning.**

While the water will evaporate during the day, night watering can cause fungal diseases. The key is to water deeply but infrequently to promote root growth. The rule of thumb is about 1" inch per week, depending on soil type and rainfall. Measure how much water your lawn gets with the use of rain gauges, tuna cans or shallow pans. Turn the sprinkler on, and let the water collect in the can. The can should be set at the farthest distance the water will sprinkle in. See how long it takes to get at least 1" of water in the can. Then you will know for sure that your lawn has the correct amount of water for the week.

Summer is a busy time, the gardens are in full bloom and there's lots to see and do. Here's a local list of happenings:

## Gardener Gatherings

Places to Go & Things to Learn



### What & Where

#### Gardening With Children

**June 5th (7:00 to 8:00 P.M.)**

call 734-397-0999 for registration information

#### Trailwood Garden Club

##### Annual Garden Walk

**June 24th (Noon to 8 P.M.)**

call 734-459-7146 for ticket information

#### Canton Garden Club

##### Annual Garden Walk

**June 28th (Noon to 8 P.M.)**

call 734-455-8283 or 455-4472  
for ticket information

#### Livonia Annual Garden Walk

**June 28th (Noon to 8 P.M.)**

Tickets sold at all Livonia Libraries & City Hall

#### Garden City Garden Club

##### Annual Garden Walk

**July 19th (Noon to 8 P.M.)**

Tickets sold at Garden City City Hall & Barson's  
Greenhouse call 734 - 458 - 7462 for more info

Contact us at 734-416-0866 or earthen-



# Cupid's Favorite



Do you have a sunny dry spot where nothing seems to grow? Why not try an old fashioned favorite that's easy to care for. Cupid's dart or *Catananche caerulea*, a clump-forming perennial, that can be classified as an antique or heirloom flower because it has been in cultivation since at least 1828. The flowers are daisy or cornflower-like, with the size being between 1 1/2" to 2" inches in diameter. They are produced on long stalks above lower growing clumps of grayish-green glass-like foliage. The basal foliage spreads to about 1' in diameter.

The plants thrive in well-drained, sandy soil in full sun. Cupid's dart is one of the few perennials that offer an extended flowering season. They begin to blossom in June and will carry through into September providing fresh-cut flowers for summer bouquets. You can enjoy them throughout the winter months too, as they are an excellent addition to dried flower arrangements.

Cupid's dart is very low maintenance and ideal for a dry sunny perennial border or cutting garden. They can also be grown as a unique accent plant in rock gardens. They're drought tolerant and need little watering. To keep flowers at their best, divide in spring. In fall simply cut back the stems.

*Catananche caerulea* only offers 3, readily available color varieties. Lavender-blue, 'Major'; light blue edges with dark blue center 'Blue Giant' or the silvery white 'Alba'.