

# Earthly Elements

"Helpful Information From The Trenches"

Issue 3

*Fall Edition*

September 2009



Photo Courtesy J. Griffith



## BIRD OR BUG?

This interesting creature is known as a Hummingbird Clearwing Moth or Common Clearwing. It's scientific or Latin name is *Hemaris thysbe*, either way....it's a BUG! They reside & travel throughout the eastern half of the U.S. & Canada, ranging as far north as the Yukon!

**Description.** From our photo, it's easy to see why many gardeners mistake this moth for a small hummingbird. They look & behave very similar to the real hummingbird. The green body "fur" & burgundy wing scales imitate the markings of a small ruby throated hummingbird. In the garden, these moths hover briefly, sip

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nectar for only a few seconds before darting off to a new flower. They feed through a long feeding tube called a proboscis. Favorite flowers include honeysuckle, beebalm, phlox, lilac and wild bergamot.

**Life Cycle.** Hummingbird Moths lay small, green eggs on the undersides of leaves in early spring. The eggs hatch into larvae (caterpillars) with a prominent horn on the rear. When full grown the caterpillars climb down to the ground & form dark-brown cocoons in the leaf litter (pupa stage). Here in Michigan, one generation is typical, but two generations (spring & fall) may occur if the summer is very warm. This year because it's been such a cool summer, we'll only have one generation.

**Predators.** Creatures looking to make a snack or meal of Hummingbird Moths include: birds, mantids, spiders, bats, & other moth & caterpillar-eaters. The fact that they look so much like hummingbirds does also offer them some protection.



## "October's Party"

October gave a party;  
The leaves by hundreds came -  
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples,  
And leaves of every name.  
The Sunshine spread a carpet,  
And everything was grand,  
Miss Weather led the dancing,  
Professor Wind the band.



—George Cooper

## Meet Mr. Turkey!



Isn't he just the most beautiful bird you've ever seen? This is one turkey that will never be served up on a dinner plate. Well, not anytime soon anyway.

With Thanksgiving closer than we'd like to think about, here's a little "turkey history" & interesting info about this amazing bird.

In the early 17th century when the English settlers came to New England, they were already well acquainted with turkeys and brought European varieties, sometimes referred to as "tame turkeys" with them. The settlers also found wild turkey in the forests and started cross breeding them with the European varieties early in the 19th century. This is the time when the American turkey breeding began in earnest.

Heritage Turkeys are the ancestors of the Broad-breasted White (European) & wild turkeys. The Heritage breed includes several varieties within it: Standard Bronze, Bourbon Red, Narragansett, Jersey Buff, Slate, Black Spanish, & White Holland.

Later added to the standard was the Royal Palm. “Mr. Turkey” is a Royal Palm variety.

Today, the common Broad-breasted White industrial breed of turkey comprises 99.99% of the supermarket turkeys sold today. Large corporations have dominated turkey production & breeding since the 1960's, choosing the Broad Breasted Whites because of high breast meat production in a short period. The industrial variety cannot mate naturally because of the male's protruding breast. All industrial turkeys are propagated by artificial insemination. The birds cannot run or fly naturally, & are much less active than Heritage breeds.

The Heritage Breeds were near extinction in 1990 but have been quietly gaining a renewed market & respect due to their flavor and superior biological diversity. Heritage turkeys are closer in taste to wild turkeys, but are several pounds larger. This breed **IS** capable of reproducing naturally & has a life span of 15 to 18 years. They're also considered to be healthier due to the fact that most live a “free range” lifestyle. Their meat contains far higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, which help prevent heart disease.

Raising Heritage Breeds is more costly & time consuming. While supermarket turkeys grow to an average of 32 pounds over 18 weeks, Heritage birds take anywhere from 24-30 weeks to reach their market weight. But those who have tasted Heritage Breeds say the cost & the wait are well worth it. The price for one of these thanksgiving turkeys? I hope

you're sitting down....how about \$120.00 for a 10 pound bird!! My guess is that in this economy not too many of these birds will be shipped off for thanksgiving dinner this year.

For more info check out the Heritage turkey website at:

[heritageturkeyfoundation.org/](http://heritageturkeyfoundation.org/)



## Bonfire



## Delights

Those wonderful moonlit fall nights are close at hand & there's nothing better than a blazing fire to warm the cool air. Fix yourself a nice **HOT cup** of “Bonfire Punch”. Or toast up some marshmallows & have some fun making “Peanut Butter Smore's” (a new twist on an old favorite). Enjoy these seasonal specialties while you watch those flames dance! Here's the recipes.....

### Bonfire Punch

- 2 T Honey
- 6 Cloves
- 2 Cinnamon sticks
- 4 fl oz Currant C (or other black currant drink)

1 sliced orange (for garnish if desired)

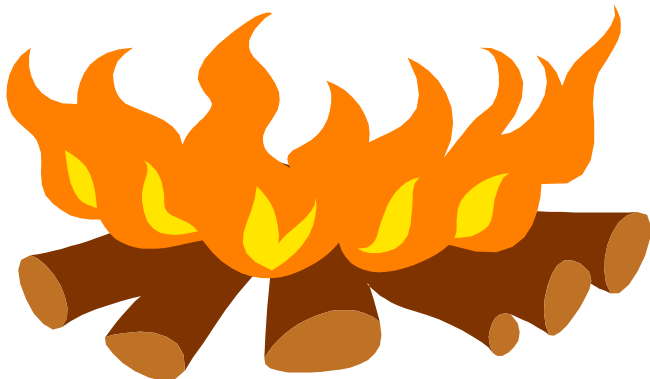
Put 2 pints boiling water in a pan with the 2 T honey, 6 cloves & 2 cinnamon sticks; bring to a boil. Remove from heat, let flavors infuse for 15 minutes, then add the 4 ounces of Currant C or other black currant drink & 10 ounces of orange juice. Reheat all ingredients on medium heat.

To serve, strain out cloves & cinnamon sticks. Garnish each drink with orange slices.

## Peanut Butter S'Mores

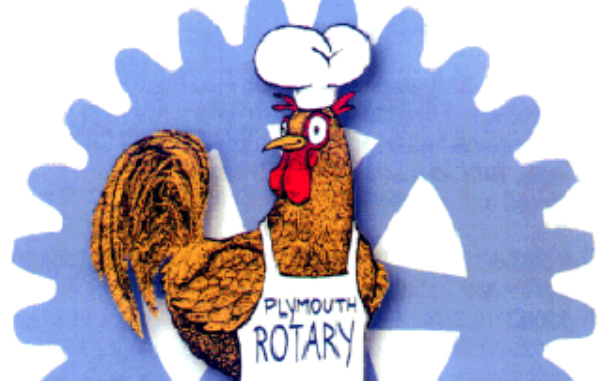
2 (1.6 oz.) pkg. chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, unwrapped  
8 graham cracker squares  
4 large marshmallows

First.....find the perfect stick for toasting marshmallows on the campfire. Place 1 peanut butter cup on each of 4 graham cracker squares. Spear marshmallows on clean stick or long fork; toast over campfire or over grill on low heat. Place one toasted marshmallow on top of each peanut butter cup; top each with cracker. Press/hold together while chocolate melts.



## Plymouth Rotary Club

### 54th Annual



## CHICKEN Bar-B-Que

Kellogg Park/Downtown Plymouth  
**Sunday, September 13th 2009**

11:00 am to 5:00 pm (or until sold out)  
Tickets: \$10.00 (presale) \$12.00 (day of)

Contact Plymouth Chamber of Commerce  
**734-453-1540** for details

## What & Where

### Tollgate Fall Fair

**September 19th 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

at MSU Tollgate Gardens  
call **248-347-3860** for directions & info

**FREE PLANTS! FREE PLANTS!**

### Novi's Fall Perennial Exchange

**September 26th 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM**

at Novi Civic Center  
call **248-347-0460** for directions & info

Contact us at 734-416-0866 or [sandra@earthenjoy.com](mailto:sandra@earthenjoy.com)