

BRR ALLIANCE INC.

Building Bridges to a Brilliant Future

Garden Patch Pg. 1

Fruit Trees in our Backyard - Peaches

As a child growing up in WNY there was always something exciting to look forward to in spring and summer. One of those great memories is picking fresh fruit from our backyard trees or going to pick fruits at the local farms. Varieties of fruits including cherries, plums and of course peaches were always popular. To this day, nothing compares to that first sweet juicy peach of the season.



The scientific name *persica*, along with the word "peach" itself, comes from an early European belief that peaches were native to Persia (modern-day Iran). The Ancient Romans referred to the peach as *malum persicum* "Persian apple" the scientific name, *Prunus persica*, literally means "Persian plum", as it is closely related to the plum.



The peach was brought to the Americas by Spanish explorers in the 16th century, and eventually made it to England and France in the 17th century, where it was a prized and expensive treat. The English brought peaches to North American colonies in the early 17th century, planting them in Virginia. Although Thomas Jefferson had peach trees at Monticello, United States farmers did not

begin commercial production until the 19th century in Maryland, Delaware, Georgia, and finally Virginia.



Peaches are probably the fussiest of the fruits to be grown in WNY. Peach trees can grow in USDA Zones 5 to 8, but do especially well in Zones 6 and 7. If you live in one of these zones, you can focus on choosing a variety based on its flavor and harvest-time. If you live in colder regions, there are some varieties that are more cold tolerant that you can choose, Madison is one of those varieties.

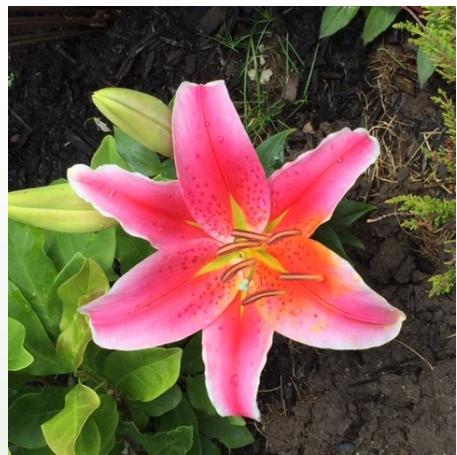
Peaches grow in a fairly limited range in dry, continental or temperate climates, since the trees have a chilling requirement. Most cultivars require 500 hours of chilling around 32 to 50 °F. During the chilling period, key chemical reactions occur, but the plant appears dormant. Once the chilling period is complete, the plant then enters a time when they set buds and wait for warm weather to grow. Peaches are highly sensitive to spring frost when buds and blossoms can be damaged.



Even with all these constraints peaches do remarkably well in our area. There are a number of dwarf varieties which will do quite well. Be sure to choose a site with well-drained, moderately fertile soil in full sun. Be sure to avoid low areas because frost can more easily settle there and destroy your peaches. In spring you will enjoy the most beautiful pink blooms and in summer the most delicious peaches.

Qtr. 3- 2017 7th edition

Summer-Time Blooms



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Did you know...

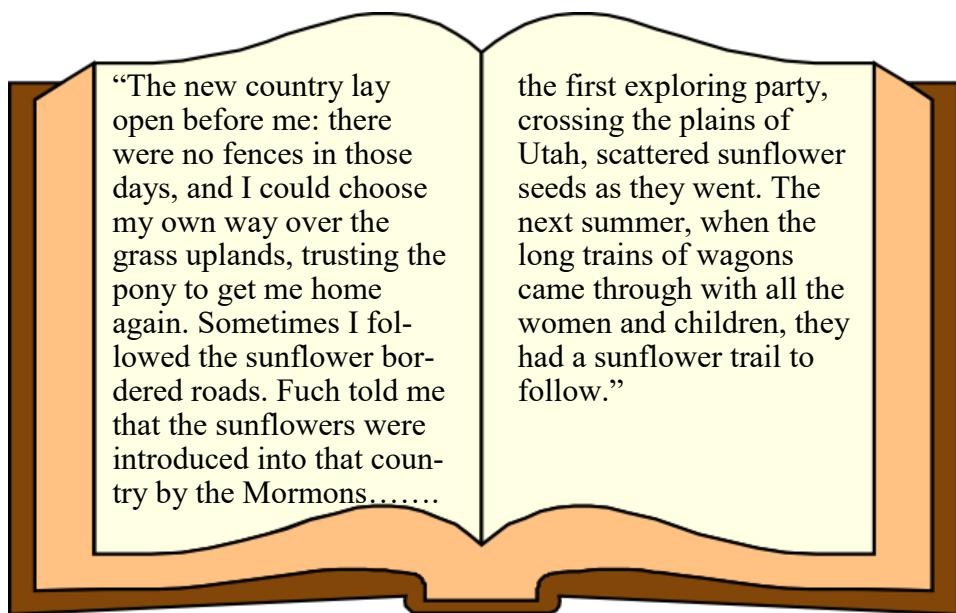
- That we gave away 3,000 sunflower seeds for our 1000 Sunflower Project.
- That we have 75 different people and groups participating.
- Our sunflower project has its own web page:

BRRAlliance.org/sunflower



My Antonia Willa

Cather, in her novel My Antonia Willa, describes the settlers' practice of spreading sunflower seeds as they drove, to serve as a kind of floral trail marker for future wagon trains.



Healing Properties of Sunflowers

Historically, several tribes throughout North America - including the Paiute, Dakota and Cherokee - have used sunflowers for healing. Used for wound healing, to alleviate fatigue, respiratory infections and even to remove warts. Some of these uses were adopted by the earlier settlers.

From the book Cattail, Moonshine and Milkweed Medicine.



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Nature Almanac for the Northeast

July

Indian pipes pushing up through the leaf litter. Ten-spot dragonflies skim over ponds. Young cardinal at the feeder – got some sunflower seeds out?



August

Monarchs emerge from chrysalis and take flight. Box turtles feed on woodland berries. Skunks darting around the stone wall.



September

Leopard frogs out in grassy fields. Spider webs throughout the fields. Mushrooms everywhere following rainy days.



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So what is a Community Garden anyway?

There are many definitions of community gardens but really, "a community garden is any piece of land gardened by a group of people, utilizing either individual or shared plots on private or public land". Community gardens provide fresh produce and plants as well as contributing to a sense of community and connection to the environment and an opportunity for neighborhood improvement.

How many gardens do we have in our neighborhood?

We have 4: two in Black Rock:

Black Rock Heritage Garden at Dearborn and Hamilton

Farmer's Garden at Farmer and Guernsey

And two in Riverside:

Ontario St Peace Garden at Ontario near Tonawanda

Esser St Garden at Esser and Henrietta-

Why are these gardens so special?

These are really the only public gardens in our neighborhood. Places where you can stop and pick some produce, learn some gardening and just socialize for awhile.

Can I really pick the produce and take it home?

Yes, these are open gardens which means you are welcome to come in and pick the produce when it is ripe. Please, don't ever pick produce before it is ready. Unless there is a sign or posting letting you know there are reserved beds, the garden produce is there for you to enjoy.

Do I need to pay for the fruits or vegetables?

We don't ask for money but any time anyone helps weed or water, you are paying us through working in the gardens.

You say you need help, but I don't garden?

That is the best part about our gardens. Everyone can come and water or help with weeding. Do as little or as much as you can. It only really matters that you

are willing to be part of our community.

What is missing from the gardens?

Every year our community gardens get better, but they are nothing without community. We have to have people working, socializing, and using our food or it is all just a waste of time. So the most important thing missing from our gardens right now is YOU.

Can I go to the gardens anytime?

You are welcome in the gardens during daylight hours. You don't need permission.

I see people in the gardens, are they lead gardeners or owners or the boss of the garden?

There are lead gardeners there to help make sure the garden is growing food in a safe supportive way. We also have a Farmer in our gardens now to help answer questions about gardening and growing food so if you have questions check the schedule and stop by.

Why do you care about having community gardens? Don't you have enough to do?

Oh, we certainly have enough to do but the gardens are too important. They are a way to show that we have a community and that it is strong. Our oldest garden is now 7 years old and our youngest is 3 years old. We are very proud of what we have accomplished and how much they improve our neighborhoods.

What happens if the community does not volunteer in the gardens?

Because we partner with GrassRoot Gardens we must prove that these are community gardens being used and supported by our community. If we cannot show community support we will end up closing our gardens and the lots go back to the city or the lot owners.

How can that happen after 7 years of running the gardens?

As with so many projects the same volunteers are always in the gardens. If they stop, then that is a decision that will be looked at by the end of the year - the gardens really can disappear.

As we said in the beginning, Your community gardens really need You!!

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Farmer's Calendar Circa 1800

July – This is the most busy month of the year. After you have celebrated Independence it will be high time to fall too with the grass. I hate rum drinkers, -but at this season of the year it will be good taken in moderation. Nothing does a mower good or refreshes him more, than a glass of good rum, occasionally- it makes him perspire freely – and is cooling.

August – This is the best season of the year for mowing bushes. It is high time they were cut off the land; where you mean to sow your rye.

September – Bushes may still be cut; and the ditching business may yet be prosecuted to advantage. Flax seed may be got out, and the flax spread to rot, whenever you have time to attend to it.

Upcoming Events

August 5th - 14207 Day - The Garden Group will have all four of our community gardens open and also we will be looking for any volunteers that wish to help out.

August 5th - Black Rock & Riverside Garden Walk - All four of our community garden will be open.

September - Farmer in the Garden - Every Tuesday and Thursday we will be working in one of our four community gardens. Find the schedule at BRRAlliance.org

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