Is it a cantaloupe? Is it a honeydew? Or is it a watermelon? No, it’s ARAVA! An arava is a type of galia melon, which was originally developed in Israel and is a cross between a cantaloupe and honeydew. This hybrid is resistant to powdery mildew and takes about 77 days for maturity or bloom (although it is taking me longer).

You can distinguish arava from cantaloupe in the early stages by its smooth, dark green flesh with small freckles versus the ribbed texture of the cantaloupe. However, they will look very close to a cantaloupe at maturity.

As a result of the spring fever and eagerness to plan my garden, I discovered organic arava seeds online through Johnny Seeds. The arava fruit immediately piqued my interest because it was something different that I have never grown before, and like any other gardener, I was excited to learn something new.

Since the weather was fairly cool, I grew the seeds inside using my seed “jump start” kit on April 23, 2013. In a matter of a couple of weeks, the sprouts started pushing through the seed starting soil! Maintenance was very easy thanks to the seed kit because it has a water reservoir that keeps the roots moist. Every other day, I misted the top soil so it would not get too dry due to the grow lights, which were on a timer for every 12 hours. Additionally, I fertilized the seedlings every two weeks.

About a month later (May 21, 2013), I decided it was safe for my arava “babies” to harden off. I hardened the seedlings off for a week (although, I wished I gave them more time) before transplanting them in an 8x8 raised garden bed along with honeydew and cantaloupe seedlings. I added straw to hold in moisture in the soil; unfortunately, it helps grass grow in the beds, so, I would advise to use newspaper underneath the soil, like our fellow Master Gardener friend Jasper advised me. Also, I recommend adding a row cover to promote more warmth and growth since aravas prefer warm temperatures. Furthermore, use plant labels (believe me, I have mistaken the arava plant from cantaloupe many times in the beginning!)

The arava plant still continues to flourish to this day. I have not had any insect or disease issues so far. Moreover, I have not applied any chemicals – totally organic. I continue a similar maintenance schedule as I used when growing them inside. Hopefully, in a few weeks, I will be sinking my teeth in and enjoying this tasty fruit! I will keep you updated! Until then, continue happy gardening! =) For more information on growing the arava, check out [http://www.johnnyseeds.com/p-7514-arava-fi-og.aspx](http://www.johnnyseeds.com/p-7514-arava-fi-og.aspx) and [http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/galia-melon-nutrition-selection-storage](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/galia-melon-nutrition-selection-storage).

What’s New at County Fair?....Lots!!!

By Ann Richards

Fair flower beds are looking good...thanks to people who helped plant this spring and all of the rain provided. The rain garden concept is working very well for the beds on the side of the Auditorium. Rain gutters will not be needed.

John and I have weeded several times and continue to battle. Weeding help will be appreciated. Garden hoses are stored in the front of the beef barn and next to the T shirt booth. Dragging garden hoses in hot weather is the best total body work out! A good way to prepare for your next stress test.

The fairgrounds continue to be used for many events. The girl and boyscout day camps were very successful. 4-H livestock shows and training sessions were very well attended. Another well attended 4-H event was a Food Preservation Work Session conducted by UME-Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Liat Mackey. The Spring Festival and Crab Fest were huge successes. Animal Fair is a growing event, Flea Markets are helping people recycle what they no longer need and the recent Habitat for Humanity furniture sale was very successful. Tractor Pulls, a Hospice Benefit Car Show, Bike Rodeo, Rabies Clinic, and Dog Obedience Training is scheduled for August. The Penn Line Tree Co. is renting the auditorium for an employee training week in August and will use the pear trees for pruning practice. A fortunate partnership!

The new field Rest Rooms will be completed by fair and they will be spectacular! Many new improvements are making creature comfort a reality for people and animals. The Flower Building has a new copper color steel roof and soy foam insulation. The new LED lighting and insulation will make the building brighter, cooler and more comfortable for flowers and volunteers. Lighting on the entire fair ground has been changed to LED thanks to a partnership with SMECO. Wayne Mast of Wayne’s Signs, who also owns those magnificent draft horses who perform at fair, is donating a new sign for the corner of the grounds at Rt. 5. There will be many things to be proud of at this year’s fair! Bring your flowers and vegetables for exhibit. Entry day is September 18th. Fair dates are September 19 - 22. Fair Catalogs will be available in the Enterprise on August 2nd and in the libraries after that.

Sign up to represent the Master Gardeners in their booth during the fair. It is a wonderful opportunity to see old friends and meet new ones...while teaching them the attributes of the MG programs.
Blueberries
- Hot, dry weather in June and July stresses blueberry plants. Stress symptoms include, leaf browning, small fruit size and fruit drop.
- Be sure to keep your blueberry plants properly watered. These plants will not tolerate heat and drought. Extreme drying now will kill the branches and also damage flower/fruit buds setting for next year.

Figs
Harvest figs when they are slightly soft. They may suffer minor insect damage during the ripening process and ants may enter the small eye at the bottom of the fruit as the fig ripens. This is a small price to pay for fresh, tree-ripened figs. If you are having problems with birds or squirrels, invest in some bird netting to cover your bushes.

Perennials and Annuals
Late August through September is usually a good time to transplant, divide and plant perennials such as daylily, liriope and Echinacea. (HG 99) Be sure to keep them well watered during dry periods.
- Annuals and perennials, like yarrow and salvia, may have grown spindly and are not flowering well. Cut them back to encourage re-bloom. Deadhead the spent blooms of annuals like zinnias and marigolds. This will encourage them to continue blooming more vigorously.
- Plant hardy mums for fall color this month so they will become well established prior to the winter.

Poison ivy (HG 34) foliage can be effectively controlled with a labeled herbicide applied to the foliage later this month. You will have to make multiple applications to significantly weaken and kill the plants. If you cannot reach the foliage to spray, cut the vine down to the ground. Treat the cut surface still attached to the roots, with glyphosate or triclopyr. Do not handle the hairy poison ivy vines with bare hands even after they have died back.

This is a good time to apply glyphosate to control bamboo shoots and other hard to control weeds because this is when the plants are transferring nutrients to the roots. (HG 28)

TURF
- Mid-August through mid-October is the best time to start new lawns and renovate or overseed existing lawns. We recommend a turf-type tall fescue cultivar at a rate of 4 lbs. of seed per 1,000 sq. ft. of area for overseeding, or 8 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. for new lawns.

If your lawn area contains more than 50% weeds, consider a total lawn renovation. Newly seeded turf must be watered regularly. See HG 102, Lawn Establishment, Renovation, and Overseeding.

Crabgrass is forming seed heads at this time. Control severe crabgrass problems next spring through the use of pre-emergent herbicides. Over-seeding your lawn this fall will thicken the turf will also help combat crabgrass next year.

TREES AND SHRUBS
Fall webworm is a late summer pest is a 1-2 inch long hairy caterpillar that creates large tent like nests on the ends of branches of various shade trees and shrubs. It is unsightly but causes little damage. They can be left alone or knocked out of the tree with a broom, by a hard water spray, or pruning them out and disposing of them in the trash.

Bagworms are very noticeable and feeding on many trees and shrubs. They are usually not a problem on deciduous plants, but should be controlled on evergreens. It is now too late to spray them with a biological control product. Where possible, remove bagworm bags from evergreen trees and shrubs, especially spruces. Throw them into a bag and place in the trash. Do not just drop them to the ground as they will crawl right back up the plant.

August is frequently dry. If so, water deeply by allowing water to soak the soil directly underneath and around newly planted trees and shrubs. Check the depth of water penetration into the soil by digging a small hole after watering. Hard-crusted mulch will repel water and needs to be broken up with a rake or hoe to help the rain and irrigation water to penetrate the soil.
From the Technology Tree...

Here are a few apps for you techie MG’s. The first two listed are used by MG Kurt Reitz and he has provided a little blurb about it.

“I use “Florifolio” as a guide to native plants....”

Florifolio is a guide to native plants of the Northeast. It is well thought out and includes images of foliage -- both spring and fall, flowers and occasionally seed. It has a collection of useful filters that can generate lists of native plants for various gardening applications. The main weakness of this app is the limited number of plants in its database relative to the number of native plants growing around us. It is also not very well supported at the moment and not been updated for a couple of years. It is available for the IPhone and IPod touch only. For what it is, it an excellent app with a lot of potential. See http://florafolio.holimolimedia.com/ for more information.

Audubon Wildflowers, Green Mountain Digital, $3.99, iPhone, iPad, Android, Nook, Kindle.

Kurt said he also uses many of the Audobon apps as well, but “the downside of the Audubon apps is the are not scaled to our area, tending to cover too wide an area with too little data to be truly useful.”

Over 1700 North American wildflowers, searchable by region, shape and color. If you have 1.25 GB to spare on your device and you like the Audubon guides, this is a nice one to have. Includes a NFWI (not functional without Internet)”NatureShare” feature, with user submitted photos of plants, birds, and other wildlife. Offline browsing of wildflowers by shape, family, or name. Also offers advanced search by about 20 features such as flower size, bloom month and color and habitats. Each entry has several nice photos, a description page and range map.

vTree, Michael Whitt, free, iPhone/iPad and Android.- this application was passed along from another newsletter. I have not tried it or know anyone that has. MG’s are invited to take a look and send in a review for the next newsletter!

Virginia Tech digital dendrology. NFWI(not functional without Internet) until you download the 650 MB of data. Includes information for more than 900 trees, with a brief description for each and several photos of leaves, seeds, flowers, bark and distribution. Has keys for identifying trees.

You May Have Noticed..?

Here are a couple of notifications from the HortTips Newsletter Vol. 1, No. 5; perhaps you have noticed the wheel bug and (hopefully not!) Rose Rosette in your garden? All of the Hort Tips newsletters can be found at this link: http://plantdiagnostics.umd.edu/content/educational-resources.cfm.

Not completely harmless, this beneficial insect can “poke” people with its long beak. According to University of Florida, “its bite usually is more severe than a bee sting, and both nymphs and adults should be avoided or handled with caution.”

However: “The wheel bug belongs to a family of insects commonly referred to as assassin bugs. Assassin bugs are some of the most important beneficial insects in our gardens. They feed on a wide variety of pests including caterpillars, plant hoppers, sawfly larvae, aphids, and beetles. In autumn, the well-fed female wheel bug lays 10-40 barrel-shaped eggs in a cluster usually on the bark of a plant.” –3 7/10/2013 From Bug of the Week, Michael J. Raupp, Professor, Department of Entomology, University of Maryland

Rose Rosette is turning up on landscape roses.

Rose rosette is caused by a virus, and infects multiflora as well as ornamental roses. The initial symptoms are reddening of the stems and stunted growth. Sometimes there is a proliferation or clustering of stems with excessive soft pliable thorns. The flowers may also abort. Infected roses may die within two years. Early detection is critical to prevent further disease spread within a planting. Infected roses should be uprooted and removed promptly. Remaining roses should be closely monitored for symptoms.
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

*Papilio glaucus*

**Family:** Papilionidae

This is probably a familiar visitor to your gardens right now. Great information can be found at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources website. Here is the link:

http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/Plants_Wildlifemdbutterflies.asp

Another interesting website is the North American Butterfly Association.

http://www.naba.org/

Places to Visit and Tours to Consider...

Here is a tour to consider for next summer! **Paula Pippin** recently attended this interesting tour and passed along this note about it.

July 20 to July 28, National Moth Week, The Smithsonian conducted public tours of its research and collection spaces led by John Brown, Dept. of Agriculture, entomologist. We saw the Collection housed in “compression” galleries, 8’x35’ rolling cabinets, serving to hold all the little pin secured bodies one used to see laid out in glass cases—arguably the largest in worldwide species and historical span (some specimens almost 150 years old). For “eye-candy” he showed us the content of six smaller drawers of spectacular in beauty and size adults. More practically he discussed the purpose and value for research: identification of time- and distribution-morphological trends. Brown described his own work, identification of alien infestations entering the over 50 ports-of-entry by clearing, halting, or quarantining shipments for our protection, a colleague’s work in Costa Rica who is raising larva to adulthood to send parts to the Netherlands for DNA and zebra-coding ID, as well as sending frozen adult specimens and larva, in alcohol, to join the Smithsonian’s larva collection. This larva collection is, without a doubt, THE most complete in the world. Finally Brown described another scientist’s 42 year career in leaf-miner studies, allowing him to assist paleontologists in ID of fossil plant species! (and explained a good means of ridding plants of miners)

**American Museum of Natural History, Happy National Moth Week:**

http://www.amnh.org/explore/news-blogs/news-posts/happy-national-moth-week!gclid=CJj1wpGa bgCFUmi4AodXzwAtA

**Ladew Topiary Gardens**, located in Monkton, Maryland (yes, a little off the beaten path) is a great place to visit. Lovely views and beautiful “garden rooms”. Here is a link to the website http://www.ladewgardens.com/HOME.aspx

Master Gardener, **Anne Rullman** admires the beautiful gardens at the Ladew Topiary Garden.
UPCOMING ADVANCED TRAINING AND MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

September 5, 2013
UME-St. Mary’s Master Gardener Quarterly Meeting
St. Mary’s Fairgrounds Auditorium
Potluck to Begin at 5:30
Business at 6:15

September 5, 2013
Plant Diseases—One-day workshop
Location #2: UME Howard Co.
3300 N Ridge Road, #240, Ellicott City, MD 21043
Date: Thurs. September 5, 2013
Registration Deadline: Aug. 29

Instructor: David Clement, Ph.D, Regional Specialist in Plant Pathology, Home and Garden Info. Center, University of Maryland Extension
Registration Fee: $35 Class limit: 25

Course Description: Plant diseases often seem like exotic mysteries left up to the experts to solve. Well, guess what: we MG’s can now begin to unravel some of these mysteries ourselves.

In this course you’ll learn all about the bacteria, fungi and viruses that cause plant problems. You’ll also learn about their symptoms, cycles and controls. In addition to the lecture and handouts you will get hands-on training with samples.

We hope that you’ll feel comfortable enough with the basics of plant diseases to be able to recognize problems in your own gardens and to use the information competently to help clients at plant clinics.

To register: Use registration form, or send your name, address, email, phone, MG county you work with, name of class you want to take, and a check for $35 (payable to the University of MD). Mail to: MG Classes, HGIC, 12005 Homewood Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

Certificate Info.: This class will fulfill the Plant Disease requirement for your MG State Advanced Training Certificate Course in Plant Diagnostics. To get the certificate you will need to take Plant Diseases, Entomology, a “Ask a MG” practicum and a Plant ID course. Each of these classes is offered at various locations at least once a year.

September 19-22, 2013
St. Mary’s County Fair
Look for Sign-Up Genius message on September 3rd for County Fair display/info table volunteering. If anyone would like to give a brief talk or demo on Saturday afternoon at the fair please contact Jennifer.

September 21, 2013—Southern Region Tree Farm Tour to be held on in St. Mary’s County at the Skyview Farm in Loveville, MD Pre-registration required. https://www.forestryforthebay.org/
Our Vision: The Maryland Master Gardener vision is a healthier world through environmental stewardship.

Our Mission: to support the University of Maryland Extension mission by educating residents about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities.

Work those Tomatoes!

Have you heard of the Florida Weave? No, its not a new line dance...its a method of trelliesing your tomatoes! Maybe you have seen this at some at our local commercial growers farms. There is no reason why a backyard gardener can’t use this method also. MG Bev Middleton says “It’s a VERY USEFUL system -- the best way of supporting tomatoes I’ve ever used. I intend to use it from now on. I think next year I will use it for peppers and eggplant too.”

Check out this helpful video from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension!

http://umaine.edu/gardening/resources/how-to-grow-tomatoes-basket-weave/