



# NAPGA E-zine

A Publication of the North American Pawpaw Growers Association

Volume 2, Issue 3

August 2015

## The 17th Ohio Pawpaw Festival

September 11-12-13, 2015

Lake Snowden, Albany, OH

Friday 4 pm—12 am

Sat. 10 am—12 am

Sun. 10 am—5 pm

[Ohiopawpawfest.com](http://Ohiopawpawfest.com)



## 8th Annual NC Pawpaw Festival

Saturday, August the 29th

10 am—1 pm

1450 Fairchild Rd., Winston-Salem., North Carolina

This is a free event and samples of food all made with pawpaw will be available as long as it lasts.

**For more information contact**

**Derek Morris or Mary Jac Brennan at 336 703-2850**

## Annual Pawpaw Folk Festival Wilmington State Parks

Wilmington Delaware

August 22 from 10 am—4 pm

[Elizabeth.Drummond@state.de.us](mailto:Elizabeth.Drummond@state.de.us) or 302-577-7020

The NAPGA Facebook page is up and running. Greg and Susan Hoertt have set up a Facebook page for the NAPGA / OPGA. Check it out! They invite you to like the page at: <http://www.facebook.com/NorthAmericanPawpawGrowers> Please let Susan and Greg know that you appreciate their endeavors by sending them pictures or short articles about the NA pawpaw at [pawpawjunction@yahoo.com](mailto:pawpawjunction@yahoo.com).

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## Choosing A Good Starter Soil

Whether you grow North American Pawpaws as a hobby or grow commercially, most of us want to control costs. One area where I would not cut corners is with your potting soil

We learned an expensive lesson over the 2014 growing season when we switched from a blend of coarse vermiculite and organic amendments to a locally produced potting "mix". The mix was sold by a local mulch company at a fraction of the cost and it represented a big time savings versus buying and mixing the components ourselves.

Everything went well with the new soil at first and we planted well over 100 bare root NA pawpaws, persimmons and black walnut trees. But when the leaves began to form, they were very small and more pale than normal on all three species. By this time, we would normally see large, deep green leaves.

At first we thought it could be the summer heat. We then moved about half the trees into a cooler location with approximately 80% shade. After four weeks, this did not produce any improvements. We carefully monitored the moisture in the soil and the temperature under the shade averaged about 80-85 on the warmest days.

After consulting with Dr. Powell of the NAPGA, we determined the most likely suspect was this new soil. It was the only real change we made in several years of successful cultivation.

While we cannot be certain about that was wrong with the soil, it was most likely a bacteria or fungus. It was also most likely formed after the soil was bagged. And I noticed that unlike previous soils we used, these bags had no ventilation holes.

We will not reuse the old tree pots until they are rinsed in a 10 percent solution (1 part bleach for every 9 parts water) of bleach and water to kill any remaining pathogens. We lost almost all the trees by the end of last summer and several more over this

past winter so I guess you could call it an expensive lesson. While our seedlings had vigorous, fibrous root systems when planted, an inspection of roots this spring showed only a few, wiry roots remained on the trees.

Soil is one of the basic ingredients in a successful growing hobby or commercial growing operation.

In addition to starting with quality potting soil, knowing what could be living in the soil, we are now wearing nitrile gloves when planting and wipe down our planting tools with alcohol before we start planting.

And be sure to keep grafting knife, pruners and any other tools sterilized periodically to increase your probability of success.

Happy Growing from Tony Russell, OH

## Growing NA Pawpaw Seed: Tips from Joe Grant, MI

Joe Grant has some tips for planting NA pawpaws from seed. I want to reiterate some points on planting NA pawpaw seeds that some newbie's may find helpful. 1) be sure seeds have been kept damp and stratified ( kept cold in storage over winter). 2) DO NOT LET SEED DRY OUT. 3) plant seeds in deep containers (or directly in ground) at least 1 inch deep. NA Pawpaws like slightly acidic soil (pH 5-7). plant with widest edge of seed down. There is no need to "nick" (scar) the seed to help taproot emergence. Remember, not every seed will sprout. 4) the taproot will emerge from the seed in 18-24 days and be about 10 inches deep when soil temperature is over 70 degrees. After this a shoot will emerge with no leaf (cotyledon). 5) Remember to keep the seedling(s) watered and shaded for the first 2 years of slow growth while the root system gets established. Overwintering the saplings indoors is not recommended. 6) saplings should start to develop fruit after 6 years when they reach about 6 feet in height.

Wishin you good pickins!!

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## Pappa Pawpaw's Basement Nursery

I started growing NA pawpaws about a decade ago, after my two sons brought me a big paper bag full of ripe NA pawpaw fruit that they had collected on a canoe camping trip down the Scioto River from Columbus, OH to the Ohio River. The boys said they saw them growing everywhere.

We ate the pawpaws and I saved the seeds and it has been all downhill from there. I live in Victorian Village in Columbus, OH Arena District. In the back yard we have seven NA pawpaw trees big enough to bear fruit, along with what my wife refers to as "normal" foliage.

Nevertheless, each year I start a couple of dozen pots of NA pawpaw seedlings and either sell or give them away by the end of the summer. Here's how I do it.

In the fall, I save the seeds from the fruit I've grown or picked up along the streams. (I used to raid the OSU tree plantings, until they cut them all down.) I wash the seeds and store them in zip lock bags lined with damp sphagnum moss or damp paper towels, keeping them in the bottom of the vegetable bin in the refrigerator.

As you can see from the photo, the nursery is nothing much special. Just a bunch of cheap used plastic nursery pots, stuck in a corner of the basement between the freezer and the basement sink under a couple of fluorescent clamp-on lights. The eight or so pots sit on a wire frame over a rubber heating pad. The lights are on a timer, ten to twelve hours of light per day.



I plant in early February, filling the pots with potting soil and putting five or six seeds in each pot, buried about an inch and a half deep. I water every other day



or so.

This year the first seeds went in on February 8th; and the first seedlings began to poke up their characteristic pink "knuckle" on March 28th. Six weeks or more to germinate is typical, I am told.



When the risk of heavy frost has passed, I move the pots out to a partially shaded part of the garden, in trays under some metal screening.

Squirrels seem to like to dig up the pots, just to see what is in them. The seedlings live under the screening all summer until I sell or donate them.

At this point I have seedlings becoming saplings or small trees at several locations in Franklin County as well as Delaware, Morrow, Knox, Pickaway and Ottawa Counties. And the first



trees from seed in my own back yard already bear fruit. Why do I germinate seeds in those 10" x 6" pots? Basically because they are free. Both of my boys and my daughter in law have

worked for garden centers, and they accumulate bunches of empty pots. Additionally, NA pawpaws grow in patches. In the wild, seeds germinate in bunches, and the strongest seedlings survive. Finally, my annual seed stash is literally a mixed bag. Thus each pot of five or six seedlings has a good chance of having different genetics, helpful in cross pollination I have heard.



Tom H. Nagel, Pappa Pawpaw, Columbus, OH

tomnagel@wowway.com

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## Work Day at Gwynne Conservation Area

London, OH.

I want to thank Karl McCain, Greg Hoertt and Tony Russell for their help in weeding, pruning, and mulching the NA pawpaw plants that the OPGA has established in the Gwynne Conservation Area. This is the site of the Farm Science Review, held each fall at the OSU farm, London, OH.

The pictures tell all.



before



after



unloading mulch

22-07-2015



22-07-2015



## Portage Co., SWCD Grafting Workshop

Lynn Vogel, Portage SWCD Storm Water Educator, and Bob Stehli, Northern Nut Growers Association President organized a NA pawpaw grafting workshop at Camp Asbury, Hiram, OH. Ron White assisted Ron Powell with the grafting demonstrations and represented the Ohio Pawpaw Growers Association. Many thanks to Lynn and Bob for organizing the NA pawpaw grafting workshop. Everyone got to graft their own NA pawpaw plant to take home. Thanks to Ron White for taking and sharing the pictures.



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