



# PAWPAW PICKIN'S



State Chapter:  
Ohio Pawpaw Growers  
Association

Autumn 2013

Volume 13, Issue 2

## Thoughts and Observations From the Prez

**W**e appreciate your patience during our transition from a paper newsletter to an electronic format, and in the formation of the North American Pawpaw Growers Association with the Ohio Pawpaw Growers Association as the first state affiliate. Some of the changes are obvious but others will not be obvious to most members.

The change to the newsletter was necessary for several reasons. The first reason to change was because if we wanted to add a page to the newsletter we needed to expand by 4 pages due to the size of the paper and the printer. The second reason was that the US postal service was requiring us to print, at least the outside cover, on 70 pound paper. The printer's equipment would not fold the 70 pound paper, thus, it was folded by hand! The cost of printing was also becoming a factor.

The newsletter is currently a bi-annual publication but could be published more frequently if the editor receives additional material that is suitable for the news letter. The additional material could include pictures, observations, stories, comments, letters or notes on pawpaws, etc. Collecting data about your pawpaws and entering this data from different growing regions of the US and around the world in a database is an ongoing goal of the editor.

As with any change, we are behind in updating the membership, the two websites (Ohiopawpaw.com and NAPGA.com), and the fall newsletter. We hope to be back on track by the first of 2014.

Those paid members who do not currently have an e-mail address in our database will be contacted to see if they do have an e-mail address. If they do not have an e-mail address, they will continue to receive a hard copy of their newsletter until their current membership expires. There is an option for those without an e-mail address and they may pay an additional fee to continue receiving a hard copy of the news letter.

The OPGA Board approved deleting the individual membership status. Current membership levels are: student, family, and life membership.

*- Ron*

*We receive requests for information and questions about our activities. All of this information is just a few mouse clicks away on the NAPGA/OPGA website at*

***Ohiopawpaw.com***

*All of our past newsletters are archived at Ohio State University AG link on our website.*

### Mission Statement

**NAPGA**

**is an organization of pawpaw enthusiasts, backyard and commercial pawpaw growers, small and large, dedicated to promoting the superior traits of the pawpaw plant and fruit, developing a pawpaw industry and marketing plan, preserving and studying the wild pawpaw genetics.**

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Please check with Ron (Botrytis@fuse.net) regarding your membership status.

# Pawpaw Fruit Leather and Unripe Fruit Warning

There was a dramatic increase in the incidence of individuals getting sick this year due to pawpaw fruit leather. In the Pawpaw Patch Newsletter (vol. 20, No. 1, 2013, page 3) they printed a brief article by Jim Anderson. Jim states, "This year I tried to preserve some of my pawpaws by drying them down. I mixed 3:2 by weight pawpaw pulp and apple, with lemon juice to cut some of the sweetness. I used a commercial produce drier and made 'fruit leather,' or rollups. When I sampled some a few hours later I had an odd irritation in the back of my throat. Several neighbors I gave some to ate a lot more, and also within an hour told me that they were having acute nausea and vomiting, with light headedness...." The editor of the Pawpaw Patch recommends, "don't consume pawpaw fruit leathers." The Pawpaw Patch is published by the Pawpaw Foundation.

The Missouri Nut Growers Association newsletter (Vol. 13, No. 4, page 12) printed an article by Dennis Strahle. Dennis states, "We in the MNGA of the north (Michigan!), have concluded that dehydrated pawpaws will make a person ill for about 24 hours. I am one who got ill...it was nasty. At least 2 others as well."

"I only ate a couple of pieces of dehydrated pawpaws at about 4:00 p.m. The aroma was caramel-like and just wonderful. The flavor was very enjoyable. I wanted to eat more, but only made a little splash in the dehydrator that was filled the rest of the way with apples. I also offered some to my wife when she got home. Thank goodness she did not try it!"

"I awoke at midnight feeling nauseous. I emptied a waste basket, set it next to me in bed, and went back to sleep. I awoke again at 3:00 a.m. and headed to the bathroom. I could tell that vomiting was inevitable. Darn, I was right. Cleaned up from that and had the urge to sit on the potty. In a second or two, the rest of my insides were purged."

"That was it for the vomiting, but I was not quite so quick to settle at the other end. I went on a BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast. My wife is an RN and it is what she recommends for such symptoms). I settled to normal shortly thereafter."

"I asked within the MNGA (Michigan) group and found that I was the third this fall to react likewise to dried pawpaws."

Sara Jean Peters, editor of the Missouri Nut Growers

Association newsletter stated, "heating destroys many of the flavor nuances that differentiate various cultivars so dehydrating pulp would be a logical option for preservation. Some individuals are sensitive to pawpaws on first exposure, others develop a sensitivity after years of symptom-free consumption." (Reprinted with permission by Dennis Strahle)

The NAPGA and the OPGA have warned individuals about eating pawpaw fruit leather and unripe fruit. Unripe fruit can also cause stomach distress. Several years ago, a friend of mine baked a cake with unripe fruit for a small group of teenagers. They all got cramps and some other symptoms of stomach distress.

Until further research is done to determine the active causal agent(s) that is/causing the symptoms, unripe pawpaw fruit and pawpaw fruit leather should not be consumed.

## Notes on the 2013 N.A. Pawpaw Crop

*Dr. Ron & Terry Powell*

Terry and I noticed this year that the majority of the ripe fruit dropped in the Cincinnati, OH area the last week of August and the first two weeks of September. We had a couple of weeks with no rain and very hot weather over 90 degrees. The overall quality of the fruit was much poorer than in previous years. The pulp was not smooth or custard-like but "mealy" and chunky. Instead of a good



floral aroma, there was little aroma of the ripening and ripe fruit. I can usually smell the ripening fruit hanging in the trees but not this year. The fruit had very little typical pawpaw flavor but more of an alcohol flavor was evident this year.

(picture of IXL)



# Pawpaw Planting at Wilmington College

by Dick Glaser

On June 19th and 20th, North American Pawpaw trees were planted at the Wilmington College farm, Wilmington, OH. Locations for the trees were staked out on the 19th by NAPGA/OPGA member Dick Glaser and Monte Anderson, Professor of Agriculture at Wilmington College. The following day, several student workers planted fourteen

in agriculture and 12 hours of electives. In partnership with the NAPGA Ohio chapter, Wilmington College will be on the cutting edge of new agriculture trends.

The college's commitment to this type of partnership is noted by Lee Hieronymus, 1969 Wilmington College alumnus, farm owner, and a member of Wilmington College's Presidents Advisory Committee who stated, "this kind of cooperation really makes Wilmington work, we have to keep this edge of being progressive" (Wilmington New Journal).



Monte marking planting line



trees which were provided by Dr. Ron Powell. Included in the planting at the site was Quaker Delight,

bringing the 2003 award-winning fruit back to Wilmington College. As of mid September, the trees have been staked, mulched, and protected with plastic containers. They all appear to be doing well.

Wilmington College has an active agriculture program, with around 120 students majoring in agriculture production as well as vocational agriculture education. Beginning fall semester of 2013, a new "sustainability" minor is to be offered. The new minor features an inter-disciplinary curriculum with 12 hours



Wilmington student planting crew: Cody, Brik, & Allison

# “Simple Gifts”

When I think of America, I think of the land, America's ridges and hollows, creeks and rivers, small towns and crossroads. When I think of America, I also think of traditional American folk music; the paintings of Winslow Homer, Thomas Hart Benton, or the Hudson River School; and homemade foods, recipes passed down over generations, and \*real\* smoked meat. As for music, listen to "Shenandoah," "Wayfarin' Stranger," or Shaker Joseph Brackett's "Simple Gifts," which became the musical heart vine running through Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring." As for art, view Thomas Cole's "Home in the Woods," Asher Brown Durand's "The Catskills," or Homer's "For to be a Farmer's Boy." Pick pretty much \*anything\* by Benton, but I'll take "Jessie with Guitar." As for food, I still remember my late grandfather's backyard smokehouse on Chicago's Southeast Side, his house flanked by steel mills, Calumet River barge traffic, and the klaxons of industrial America. Back in the 1960s and '70s, he smoked slab bacon, homemade sausages, and ham hocks using apple and cherry wood that my father and I helped to haul, split, and chop, and I wish I could still taste those smoked meats now.

And when I think of America, I think of *Asimina triloba*, the North American Pawpaw. Not apples or pears, or blueberries or cherries (and definitely not kiwis), but pawpaws. Pawpaws belong to that older America I long for, an America before asphalt and concrete, steel and glass—and certainly not plastic—an America of small towns, fishing holes, "back forties," and still further back, bark canoes, flintlocks, and moccasins. Pawpaws are as colorful as a painting, from the lush maroon of their early spring blossoms to the light green of their ripe fruit and foliage, from the soft yellow-orange of their flesh to the dark chocolate of their bean-sized seeds. And pawpaws are a feast, eaten as is, or rendered in recipes for homemade cookies, quick breads, or sweets, recipes handed down through families and between friends. A pawpaw is something a certain kind of grandfather would give to a certain kind of grandchild. Quite simply, a pawpaw makes you want to break-forth in song.

I find other people's reactions to pawpaws to be puzzling. There are the self-important smirkers and sneerers, usually city or suburban dwellers: "Well (smirk-sneer), \*I\* never heard of them." I guess

that's to be expected, since most people today are wired, uploaded, downloaded, digitalized, and virtual, but there is nothing "virtual" about a pawpaw. The reaction, though, of supposed country folk puzzles me most. People from prime pawpaw country have often looked at me cautiously, if not a bit afraid (like students wary of a pop quiz on English grammar), before admitting that they never heard of a pawpaw. They \*heard\* of this or that town or creek \*named\* as such, but never thought it \*meant\* anything. \*Sigh\*.

Both groups, however, expect me to have pawpaws at hand and on demand, which is not the case. Each fall, I have to scramble and scrounge for myself, and I am not always successful. But there is a solution to the availability problem: grow your own. A decade or so back, I experimented with culling and propagating pawpaw seeds, and for several fall through spring cycles, I was fairly successful. The following is neither formal nor scientific, but rather informal and experiential. Adapt as you see fit, using materials at hand and your imagination.

First, clean the seeds thoroughly, and it's best to use your tongue! As a pawpaw ripens, the flesh surrounding each seed becomes gelatinous—and delicious! As you finish with each seed, place it on a plate with a well-soaked paper towel. Unlike flower or vegetable seeds that need to dry thoroughly for subsequent germination, pawpaw seeds need to be kept moist. As they dry out, their chances for germinating greatly diminish. Don't let their leathery covering fool you; instead, use it as a guide or a marker. If the covering dries out, looking like stale milk chocolate instead of wet dark chocolate, weep.

When you have the number of seeds you wish to work with ready, you'll need a medium and a carrier. I used a galvanized tin pail that had seen better days. With a hammer and nail, I punched about a dozen holes in the bottom for drainage. I next placed a shovelful of black soil from my compost box into the bucket, then gently tamped it down with my hand. I placed the pawpaw seeds on top, spreading them out evenly in a layer, before covering them with another shovelful of compost on top, several inches deep. After giving it all a thorough soaking, I placed a layer of grass clippings on top



## Simple Gifts (cont)

to act as a moisture-retaining mulch. As this all took place in early October, I placed the bucket in my garage, to allow for the seeds to go through the normal freeze and thaw to the end of February. At that time, I moved the bucket into my basement, placing it near the floor drain to accommodate the excess water as the bucket thawed.

In late April, I removed the top layer of mulch and compost by hand, and then carefully tipped the bucket on its side, letting the contents fall onto a wooden-framed sieve that my grandfather made back in the 1970s. With my hands and the garden hose, I carefully sluiced the rest of the compost away from the seeds, many of them had the tips of their dull-white tap root showing. I placed the best seeds, those with exposed tips, into medium-sized clay pots, one each, filled with rich compost. With a box cutter, I cut the bottoms out of smaller plastic pots that I had saved over the years, in order to make protective collars against squirrels and rabbits. After inverting these collars over the tops of the clay pots, I nestled them into the soil.

From my experience, pawpaws are "slow movers," and it would often take until late May or even mid June before the young seedling would break the surface of the soil and discard the remains of its leather seed covering. Indeed, pawpaws don't put on height and heft until the end of summer and into early fall. As for the other seeds, I planted them here and there, keeping track of a few, while letting nature take its course with the rest. \*Where? Sorry, not telling\*!

If you follow these steps, or their approximation, by the beginning of their first fall, the seedlings should be minimally established to transplant. As for the two trees I have in my backyard (now about seven years old and just starting to produce a small number of fruits this year), I waited an extra year before transplanting them from their pots. Before their first winter set in, I dug a large hole in my garden and put them, pots and all (along with three others), into the hole and filled the space around them with soil to keep the roots protected from freezing. Suffice it to say, I had \*mojo\* back then.

So much for \*how\*, now for \*why\*.

As each day, month, and year goes by, we lose land. Woodlands, farmers' fields, and back forties

become highways, strip malls, and housing developments. There has to be some form of push-back, some type of action taken for the sake of nature and the outdoors. The cultivation and planting of pawpaws is just one way of pushing back against the asphalt and concrete, a way of giving something back to the American landscape. Are you in need of a windbreak to protect your home from winter blasts? Why plant bland conifers or non-native ornamentals? Plant pawpaws. Do you have an orchard of some type with room to spare, or a long fence line? Plant pawpaws. Have you cleaned out a patch of woods on your property for whatever reason? Plant pawpaws. Are you afraid that you're losing your children or grandchildren to television, the Internet, the latest whatever ... or to worse? Plant pawpaws. You'd be surprised what can be cured by afternoons of sun and soil, sweat and smiles shared between children and parents and grandparents. Simple gifts.

I have been addressing all of you in the hope that we all share a love for the homemade, for the old songs, and for the grandfatherly things that can't be replaced by the Internet.

And especially, for the land. And I'm addressing all of you in the hopes that you are people who still know how it get things done, and will.

**In memory of Dick Buckley, Chicago radio's jazz great, who knew how to.**

*by John Vukmirovich*

*John Vukmirovich is a self-taught naturalist, specializing in, among other things, gray catbirds, sandhill cranes, and the North American Pawpaw. In 2011, he authored a proposal to the USPS arguing for the issuance of a first-class postage stamp commemorating the pawpaw. The proposal was, unfortunately, rejected in early 2013. He has plans on reviving the project in 2016, the first year the proposal would be eligible for resubmission. He also considers himself to be one of the last Dharma Bums.*

Editor's note: From Wikipedia. The *Dharma Bums* is a 1958 novel by Beat Generation author Jack Kerouac.

The semi-fictional accounts in the novel are based upon events that occurred years after the events of *On the Road*.

# Tropical Rice Pudding

by Terry Powell

We often think of rice pudding as a cold weather dessert, but it doesn't take much to turn it into a refreshing summer treat. Eliminating warm spices, like cinnamon and allspice, and adding pawpaw and lime zest, gives this recipe an exotic, tropical flavor.



## Ingredients:

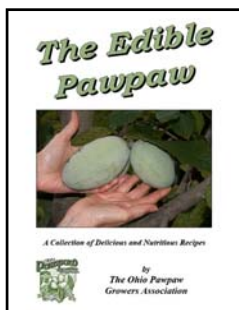
- 1 cup uncooked long grain brown rice
- 1 medium ripe pawpaw, peeled, seeded and mashed (approximately 1 cup pureed pulp)
- 1 cup sweetened almond milk\*
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh lime zest
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

- ◆ Cook rice according to package directions.
- ◆ When rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, stir in pawpaw pulp, almond milk, zest, and salt.
- ◆ Cook, uncovered, 15-20 minutes or until liquid is almost absorbed.
- ◆ Remove from heat and stir in vanilla if using.
- ◆ Chill until ready to serve.
- ◆ Variations: add slivered almonds and/or coconut.

*Allergy warning due to almond milk or added nuts.*

## Request for Pawpaw Recipes

"The Edible Pawpaw" recipe book is **sold out but** we have reprinted 100 copies.



It's time to begin work on a second North American Pawpaw cookbook! Please send your pawpaw recipes and suggestions to

**Ron Powell**  
**6549 Amelia Dr.**  
**Cincinnati, OH 45241**  
OR  
**Email: Botrytis@fuse.net**

**Don't let your NAPGA/OPGA membership lapse. Call Ron or send him an email. Don't miss any important benefits of NAPGA/OPGA membership.**

## Prolific N. A. Pawpaw

by Derek Morris, Winston-Salem, NC

'Prolific' is a variety selected by Corwin Davis of Michigan in the mid 1980's. This is a variety that wants to produce and comes into bearing a year or two earlier than most others. It is a very healthy, lush and strong growing variety that is also particularly ornamental. Prolific' pawpaw has very long leaves that are the most linear of any I have observed thus giving the tree a very refined appearance.. This variety sets quite large oval shaped fruit and is prolific in its production. In my climate it ripens later than most others and ripens along with the variety 'sunflower'.

It is one of the more unique varieties regarding flavor and texture and is usually liked much by those tasting it for the first time. It is The favorite of at least two pawpaw guru's I know. 'Prolific' has a texture that somehow seems chewier and more dense than most and has a distinct coconut element's in its flavor that I do not detect in other varieties. It also has a slight bitter finish that may be off putting to some though it appears that some individuals do not detect this trait. The bitterness, in my opinion can be likened to the bitterness one would get in a cup of black coffee, in other words not overwhelming. Others may disagree. In fact in a NC taste test we conducted several years back two participants wrote that 'prolific' had coffee notes in its flavor but that they liked it very much and was the overall favorite of one of these participants. Many commented on its unique thick texture.

Probably because of its dense texture it is one that ages well and is good tasting at most stages of ripeness though the bitterness may be more pronounced in advanced stages of ripeness. This trait seems to be true with many pawpaw varieties and needs more testing in different climates. In addition to its dense texture and great seed to flesh ratio, I would rate 'prolific' a good variety based on its unique coconut flavor for the commercial orchard as well as the collector. It will also be among the last varieties ripening for those wanting to extend the season.



*A five year old N. A. Pawpaw tree with a double stem planted in the street lawn at my daughter's home in Cincinnati, OH split due to a heavy rain and strong winds. The tree was repaired by removing the broken stem and painting with an asphalt tree coat. The remaining stem survived but the leaves sunburned in the hot summer sun.*

*- Ron*



# Massive Injuries Repaired on a Large North American Pawpaw-Tree

by Woody Walker

In 2009 a neighbor showed me a giant pawpaw-tree in his yard that was injured by two ice-storms in Kentucky. During the previous winter there was a record ice-storm that left some Kentucky residents without power for weeks. It broke off



the tree's largest limb, and a few years earlier there was

an ice-storm that broke-out the south-half of the crown. After the ice-storms there were summer-droughts that killed mature-hardwoods in the area. The tree



was alive, but it wasn't doing very well.

According to the neighbor this pawpaw tree originated from an orchard that operated during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The tree was early bearing. It produced ripe fruits in early August — a month ahead of other Kentucky pawpaw trees. The fruits were large and tasty with firm-flesh averaging 1/2 pound. The skin was rugged and blemish-free and it resisted deep-bruising — a nice pawpaw-fruit altogether. The flavor won-over some new pawpaw-converts as well. I thought the tree was worth saving, and the owner allowed me to take care of his tree. Each year I



pruned dead and unproductive limbs and sealed-off injured wood.

By 2012 the tree was hollowing-out. I decided it was time for major-repairs. The trunk was split from the top to the lowest-branch and a crack was developing from the ground upward. The owner allowed me to proceed so I purchased materials for \$120 at



Lowes and started repairs in February and March of 2013 when the weather permitted.

I used steel-rebar to ream out the hollow-core for the top 20 feet of the tree and a vacuum-cleaner-hose to extract the sawdust. Then I hand-sprayed the inside surfaces with Garden Safe Fungicide 3 and added about 2 cups of Bayer termite granules from the top to about 2 feet above the lowest-branch where the south-crown broke-off and the hole bottomed-out. I added two more cups and sealed it from above with plaster-of-Paris to stop termites or carpenter ants coming up from the ground. I filled in all the voids with Great Stuff urethane sealer and let it harden.

Next I started on the exterior with a hand-drill and rotary-wire-brush along the trunk-split in the upper half of the tree. I removed soft-wood and I stopped when I found healthy bark. I applied two coats of Valspar marine spar-urethane to the exposed surfaces and filled in voids with Bondo two-part resin-putty. I sutured across the split with 1/4 mesh galvanized screen and construction staples. I filled in the voids with Bondo-putty and applied exterior paint. I went over the entire tree with a wire brush to remove lichens and to prep diseased wood for Valspar and pruning-sealer treatment. I finished out the repairs with the lowest branch that broke-off in the ice-storm.

Altogether I invested 30 hours of labor. About a month later the owner's health took a turn for the worse with some complications from cancer therapy. He decided it was time to have his privacy. That was ok by me — I figured it was his tree and he could do what he wanted with it. The tree provided me with a lot of grafting material, so it was definitely worth my trouble.

The tree looks quite vigorous and healthy now, and it's rapidly developing a new branch on the south-side of the trunk. The owner isn't expected to live much longer. I decided it was just best to part with the tree and move on to my next task which is to propagate tree grafts. England's Nursery and Orchard in McKee, KY is currently assisting me with this effort.

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## ***Pawpaw Pickin's***

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**6549 Amelia Dr.  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45241**

***Fall 2013***



### **NAPGA/OPGA Dues**

Please check the mailing label when your dues expire. We are now able to print mailing labels with each member's anniversary date. Dues are now being collected on your anniversary date.

Please renew your membership with NAPGA/OPGA to show your support. Your continued support is needed for education about and promotion of North American Pawpaws.

Go to **Ohiopawpaw.com**, for a membership form.

Membership dues are:     **\$20.00 — family membership**  
                                          **\$5.00 — student membership**

Send dues to:     **NAPGA / OPGA, % Dr. Ron Powell**  
                                  **6549 Amelia Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45241**

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