

WACHAPREAGUE Times

News, information
& happenings from
the sweetest little
town in the US.

Volume 2

July 24, 2024

No. 2



Dave Moon's Tips for a Great Garden

DAVE MOON LIKES everything about gardening - and it shows. His gardens, on both sides of Paul Street, burst with blossoms, stand lush with leaves, are veritable Edens of vegetables.

He's been gardening since he graduated from college in Middlebury, VT, where he studied chemistry.

A native of Annapolis, MD, Moon, who is close to 86, moved to Wachapreague in 1998. He'd been on the Shore for about 25 years already, teaching math and chemistry at the Eastern Shore Community College.

And all that time, he's been gardening.

In the spring, he starts his plants from seed in a quite small greenhouse that he's constructed so that it is moveable, though it seems to have found a home on the east side of one of his sheds.

He's built an early-spring propagating area out of insulation, with an insulation lid that can be closed against cold weather. And



he's equipped his greenhouse with fans and shades to use when the days are too hot.

The second sowing, which he is starting right about now, he germinates the seeds right in the ground. But that first one, in the greenhouse, he starts usually in March.

Here are some of Moon's tips for a grand garden:

Moon, back page

The Truth about Greenheads

IT'S GREENHEAD SEASON, one of the most annoying - if not THE most annoying - times of the year in our marsh-side haven.

The biting flies are a menace! The bites hurt and bleed, and once a greenhead finds you, she does not give up.

When a greenhead is dressed up, he (or,



more notably, she) is known as *tabanus nigrovittatus*, and is a type of biting horsefly commonly found near marshes and wetlands.

The ones that bite are females, and they bite because - according to Wikipedia - they need to drink an animal's blood in order to produce more eggs.

More? Yup. The females lay the initial group of eggs in the marsh after mating, but then, to lay more eggs, the females come to town, looking for animals to bite (humans,

Greenheads, back page

This & That

THE TOWN TRASH TRUCK has certainly seen better days. In fact, it saw better days some time ago.

The most recent breakdown, which took place during the Firemen's Carnival, almost took the truck out for good.

The Town Council voted in the most recent meeting to start looking for a new (at least new to us) truck.

AND SPEAKING OF NEW, there's a new golf-cart parking area near the town dock, just beside the car parking area. Remember that golf carts have to follow the rules of the road.

MARGIE SPANGLER, a representative of Northern Accomack Community Cats, visited the Town Council in June to talk about the organization's mission of trapping, neutering

This & That, back page

Moon

- **Add manure every year.** He has, for years and years, and his soil is soft underfoot, far richer and far more able to hold moisture than most soil here on the Shore. He uses chicken manure, mainly, and this year, some donkey manure.
- **Change things up.** Try different vegetables, experiment, be bold. Rotate your crops, especially tomatoes, which can eat up some nutrients in the soil. Don't touch your tomato plants when they're wet, as that can spread fungus. New for Moon this year are lima beans and Swiss chard.
- Plant double rows, or even triple. By this, he means, plant your rows of seedlings side by side; you'll double your harvest without doubling the space the plants take up.
- **Weed for an hour a day** minimum, he says, adding that it's easier to weed when the weeds are 1 inch tall, rather than 6 inches tall.



ONE OF MOON'S prized possessions is the hoe that he uses. He says that about 10 years ago, he went to a tool auction of a farmer who had died. Among the many items were two hoes, one that looked new and like a regular hoe, and one that had been cut and shaped differently, and had signs of great wear.

Moon decided that that farmer had known some things that he himself didn't know, and he bought the strangely-shaped hoe.

Years later, it's one of his prized possessions, and he's

shaped his other hoes to resemble that one.

For starters, he says, "Why move a lot of dirt when you can move just a little?" And the smaller size of the hoe lets him get in between those double and sometimes triple rows to do more effective weeding.

The hoe is not Moon's only prized possession. He points out a 1951 Ford tractor, rusty and faded and still in grand working condition. He said he'd used it on the day we spoke.

And in one of his garages is a 1926 Model T Ford, a four-door phaeton, or convertible. It runs, he says, adding that he had it in the Fourth of July parade last year, but not this year.

Some health issues helped bring that decision about, and have cut down on the amount of time he spends gardening, though he is still out there for two or three hours a day.

This year, with the help of a neighbor, Robert Hipple, Moon has started propagating fig trees. Hipple showed him how to scrape off the bark near the end of a slender branch, then feed the branch up through a plastic container with a hole cut out in the bottom.

He fills the container with dirt, and attaches it to a pole to keep it upright.

In a while, you have a fig branch with lots of roots. You cut the branch, turn the tree out of the container and plant it.

MOON HASN'T USED any pesticides this year, and generally doesn't.

He lets the rabbits alone, and they don't seem to do too much harm to his garden.

The worst pests are the crows, who will come in when the seedlings - especially corn - are small, and will pull them up.

This year, he says, has been a great year for the garden. A great year.

Moon is married to Debbie Moon, who was the mayor of Wachapreague for 12 years.

Greenheads

dogs, cats, deer, horses, you name it) and can stay for as long as four weeks.

They feed by cutting into the skin with "scissor-like" mouth parts and sucking our blood.

Females live for three to four weeks and can lay 200 eggs per blood meal. Generally, the eggs are laid on the marsh grass. The larvae - as many as 80 in a square yard of marsh - live in the mud for a year or two, before pupating and emerging as adults in late spring.

Environmental conditions - tide, light and temperature - dictate the emergence and development of the flies. Here, it seems they show up when the temperature hits the mid-80s.

So what can you do? Not much. The Northeast Massachusetts Mosquito Control and Wetlands Management District says that biting flies prefer dark colors to lighter ones, so dress accordingly. Dry off when you get out of the water. And chill out: Increased metabolic activity (along with sprays and perfumes) attracts biting females.

Otherwise, there's not much to be done. There are greenhead traps that you can buy or make, and a webpage by the Rutgers University New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station says that three to five traps near isolated dwellings has resulted in a great reduction in greenhead attacks.

This & That

and releasing cats.

The group does not receive grant money, and it relies heavily on donations and fund-raising initiatives.

It does have traps, which it lends to people wishing to catch feral cats. You can find the group online at accomackcats.org.

The Neuter Scooter, which offers low-cost spaying and neutering of cats and dogs, will be at the Eastern Shore ASPCA, on Route 13, Aug. 8 and 22.

Go to shorespca.com to find the application and other pertinent information.

MARINE LIFE DAY at VIMS will be Sept. 24 this year. It's a truly fun event for the whole family.

THE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S CARNIVAL and the Fourth of July festivities were very successful and fun!

Parade winners were - Boats - the Coast Guard Golf Cart - Steve and Liz Joseph, ice cream truck Bikes - Hunter Winstead Cars - Dave Bright

For all the winners, go to the Wachapreague town page on Facebook.



In Wachapreague, "biker gang" means something a little different than in the rest of the world...

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