

FROM VENUS WITH THE GOOD ORANGES

“Go ahead, you pick out the oranges. You always get the good ones.”

My husband said this to me last week in the grocery store, and I was at first tempted to interpret it as man-speak for “I’m too lazy to walk down the produce aisle, so you do that while I stay here and lean against the cart.” But we were both standing right there, before a pyramid of citrus, with him deferring to my apparently superior fruit selecting skills. So I picked up one orange after another, turning them over, shifting slightly to the middle of the aisle to compare a few under different lighting. I went on to do much the same with bell peppers and bananas before stopping to consider some reduced price cauliflower (the florets were a little too brown for my taste). Feeling accomplished, I left produce and trotted off after my husband, who by now had been lured away by the siren song of potato chips in a can.

Surprisingly, some scientists maintain that I am in fact more adept than my husband when it comes to making these kinds of grocery store selections. It harkens back, they say, to our ancestral days as hunter/gatherers, when men traditionally did the hunting, and women did the gathering.

Back then, if the boys were off tracking and spearing a woolly mammoth, the theory goes, it wouldn’t really matter if the beast were brown or beige or ecru. It could’ve been neon green for all they cared; meat’s meat, and it doesn’t really matter what color wrapper it comes in.

But if women were picking berries, choosing between two very similar seeds, or selecting mushrooms, let’s say, then a mistake could easily result in sickness or even death. The difference between orange and vermillion could very well mean the difference between bitter and ripe, or poisonous and perfectly edible.

While not all scientists ascribe to this theory, they do agree there’s proof that men and women do perceive color differently.

Studies done at Brooklyn College have tested both men’s and women’s ability to discern slight variations in color. The results show women decidedly more capable, while other experiments prove men more adept at sensing moving objects such as small bars or lights (or, presumably, woolly mammoths).

I have a theory of my own regarding women and color, and believe we’re not only better at seeing subtle differences, but that we *enjoy* the whole experience of making a choice far more than our male counterparts.

I’m told there’s a whole chapter in *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, that compares the shopping experiences of buying a new shirt for both men and women—hunters and gatherers.

A man walks into the store, goes directly to the clothing rack, makes his selection, bags it and takes it home. Mission accomplished. Return to the roost with the prize.

But a woman will take her time. She’ll feel all the fabrics, hold up a selection, compare it to a thousand others. She’ll imagine what’s already in her closet with a photographic memory that details every piece to possibly coordinate.

Some women—the truly gifted—will mentally match shoes, belt, jewelry, scarf and purse before leaving the aisle.

I know I’m perpetuating a stereotype here, making generalizations that’ll anger some who say women are better than that. But it’s been my personal experience that women spend more time *selecting* coordinated clothing than most men spend *wearing* it.

Just the other day I had to stop my husband from leaving the house in two different colored socks, explaining that just because they’re “both blue” doesn’t mean they match.

The problem here, ladies, is that the clothing industry has tapped into what may be a hard-wired desire to “gather” clothing, and turned it against us for their own profit. They call it “fast fashion”, a phrase that disguises the trend for what it really is: disposable clothing.

Not all brands and retailers have hopped on the wear it/trash it bandwagon, but many have. You’ll recognize their clothing by its ridiculously low price, and by its remarkably low quality.

This is the \$5 T-shirt that comes in 72 different shades, but doesn’t survive a second trip through the washer. The cloth is paper thin and the label reads Made in China or some other faraway place like India or Pakistan.

Like most things disposable, this relatively recent take on textiles is bad news for the planet. For starters, those Asian countries where the most of

the clothing is produced are home to lax environmental regulations (not to mention labor practices that leave workers in abject poverty). By some accounts, the process of dyeing our textiles is responsible for 20% of global industrial water pollution.

Dye houses use massive quantities of water, which are often discharged as untreated wastewater directly into rivers and streams.



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Summer Schedule

Creepy Crawlers - "Hunt & Seek"

Monday, June 20, 10 —11:30 am

The "Crawler" program is open to all 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Each month's topic focuses on some aspect of nature, and includes age-appropriate activities. The program is free for CCEEC members. A \$3 donation per child is requested of non-members.

Art Workshop – "Our Summer Birds"

Friday, June 24, 10:00 am - Noon

Join instructor Jean Perry for a fun drawing and watercolor workshop inspired by the birds that migrate north to spend summers with us. CCEEC will provide models, and a brief demonstration will get participants started.

The program is designed for teen through adult, and old clothes are recommended. Space is limited, so call to register. Fee to be announced. Materials supplied.

National Pollinator Week Celebration

Saturday, June 25, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

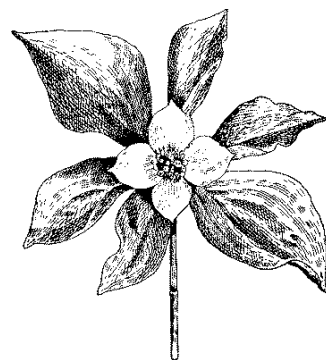
Come visit the Master Gardener Perennial Herb Garden at CCEEC, and celebrate National Pollinator Week! Bring your gardening questions and check out the work this Penn State Extension program has accomplished. Master Gardeners will be on site and will also offer some native plants for sale. No registration necessary.

Kids' Week! - Monday through Friday

June 27 – July 1, 10:00 am to Noon

An annual day-camp where kids will make new friends, explore a variety of topics, and get outside! This year's session is open to students entering grades K to 6. A \$35 fee is requested for each child. **Topics to be Announced**

*Please register
for all
programs
in advance
by calling
(570) 645-8597.*



*Unless noted, all ages are
welcome at each program.*

Art Workshop

"Animals in Our Woods"

Wednesday, July 13, 10:00 am - Noon

Join instructor Jean Perry for this acrylic on canvas workshop, and create a summer landscape with the animal of your choice. Instructions and a brief demonstration to begin, followed by a fun morning of creativity.

The program is designed for children up to age 15, and old clothes are recommended. Space is limited, so call to register. Fee to be announced. Materials supplied.

Creepy Crawlers - "Kritter Kapers" -

Monday, July 18 —11:30 am

The "Crawler" program is open to all 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Each month's topic focuses on some aspect of nature, and includes age-appropriate activities. The program is free for CCEEC members. A \$3 donation per child is requested of non-members.



Summer Schedule

Papermaking

Saturday, July 23 —10:00 am

Take a time out from the world of disposables, where “stuff” seems to have little value. Slow down and create something simple yet beautiful—your own paper.

Learn the age-old art of papermaking, and try your hand at the craft. The process takes time, so projects will be left to dry at CCEEC until pick-up on Saturday, July 30th.

The program is designed for ages 10 and up, and free for CCEEC members. A \$5 donation per person is requested of non-members. Space is limited, so call to register. Materials supplied.

Art Workshop

“Botanical Art: The Flower”

Wednesday, July 27, 10:00 am - Noon

Join instructor Jean Perry for this watercolor class, and delve into the scientific art of botany studies. The morning begins with a discussion on flower anatomy, procedure, and color theory, followed by sketching and painting.

Beginner through expert are welcome. The program is designed for ages 18 and up, and old clothes are recommended.

Space is limited, so call to register. Fee to be announced. Materials supplied.

Unpampered Chef Party

Thursday, August 18, 6:00 pm

If you’ve got cookware, dishes or kitchen utensils collecting dust, don’t throw them away. Bring them to our “Unpampered Chef Party” and trade in for someone else’s unused items!

Kitchen and small household items are welcome, provided they are relatively clean and in good working order. No registration required, though donations to cover the cost of light refreshments are appreciated.

Birding: Beginner Level and Up

Sunday, August 28, 9:00 am

EEC volunteer and birder extraordinaire Rob Bergstresser leads this easy walk for all ages and interest levels. Rob begins with a short introduction on how to properly use binoculars and field guides, then heads out onto the trails to look and listen for birdlife.

Dress for the weather. Participants are asked to bring their binoculars and field guides, though a few of each will be available to borrow. The program is free for CCEEC members, and a \$5 donation per person is requested of non-members.

Grass Pellet Workshop & Demonstration

Saturday, September 17

The Pocono Northeast Resource Conservation and Development Council is planning a program on the use of local grasses as biofuel. Farmers, rural business owners, and interested individuals are invited to attend this free seminar.

Will Brandau of Woodcrest Farm in Wapwallopen will share what he’s learned through years of personal experience in growing his own home heating fuel. His program will include an indoor discussion session, followed by an outdoor pellet-making demonstration, using readily available equipment.

The project is being funded with a Rural Energy for America Program, Renewable Energy Development Assistance grant, through the USDA’s Office of Rural Development. Call for more information or to register.



Creature Corner



Above, before and after—four hungry house finches beg for food. Only one stopped long enough to pose for the camera after release.

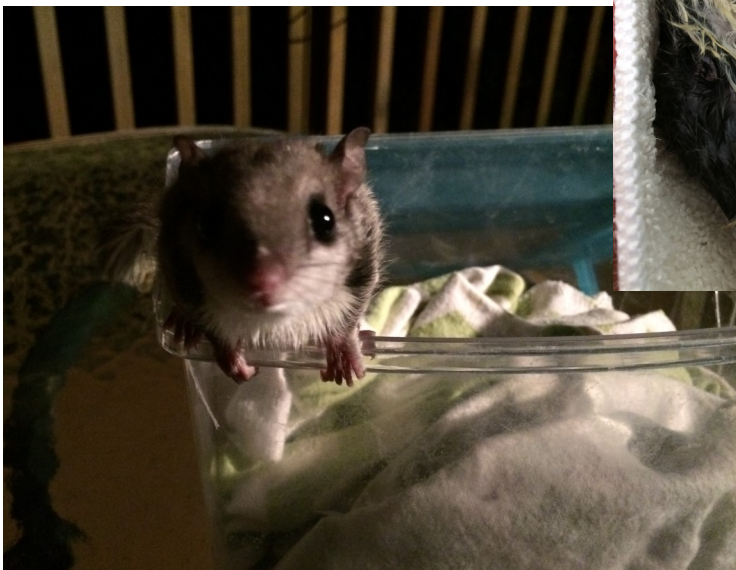


Top right corner—cuteness overload! An orphaned mallard duckling is hydrated and checked over before being fostered out to a wild duck mama.

Below, before and after—a flying squirrel caught in a glue trap was freed by a woman who used olive oil to loosen the glue. After several warm water baths at CCEEC, his fur was back in shape, and he was released into the night sky!



Bottom right corner—two little orphaned mourning doves take a break from begging for food to strike a pose. Dove babies don't gape the way finches and other songbirds do, and must be tube fed on admission.





Our thanks to the Franklin Township Lions Club, the Marian High School P.A.W.S., and Carbon County 4-H Ambassadors for their recent donations. The funds helped us feed and care for the bald eagle at left, who came in weak, thin, and suffering from a broken toe. As this newsletter goes to press, he's being prepared for release!

CCEEC is grateful for the tremendous amount of support we receive from the community, and from the PA Game Commission. Officers White and Bentzoni helped arrange transport for the bird from Mountaintop.



The above-mentioned donations also helped purchase live fish, the preferred diet for the American bittern below. The endangered bird was successfully rehabilitated and released, and was eating roughly \$15 worth of fish per day by the time he was ready to go.

Much more common (and cheaper to feed) the Canada goose below recovers after being hit by a car.

At bottom right, it's certainly not the bluebird of happiness—more like the common grackle of discontent. Orphaned grackles always seem so unhappy, though we try our best to keep them comfy and well-fed!



Special Summer Events

Rattlesnake Run

Saturday, June 18, 8:00 am

This is the fourth year for CCEEC's 5K run and one mile fun walk, held at Lehigh Gorge State Park. There are free T-shirts and organic baked goods for participants, and runners have the chance to win some unique awards.

The event is open to all ages and levels of ability, with new runners especially welcome. Call for more details.

Whitewater Rafting - Sunday, July 17

9:30 am – 3:00 pm

This fundraiser is made possible through the generosity of Whitewater Rafting Adventures of Nesquehoning, and is open to ages 5 and up. For the low cost of \$25 for CCEEC members, and \$30 for non-members, you can enjoy the summer float section of the Lehigh. Bring a lunch, bring a friend! Pre-registration and pre-payment required. Payment and registration deadline Friday, July 15.

CONSERVATION CAMP—Monday through Friday, August 8 to 12

Applications are now being accepted for our annual Conservation Camp. This weeklong event takes place at Hickory Run State Park, and allows children ages 8 through 12 the opportunity to connect with nature through hands-on, feet-in activities.

Campers enjoy hikes, crafts, games, whitewater rafting, campfires, and plenty of healthy, outdoor play. By the end of the week, we're all tired and dirty—but full of new experiences to remember.

For more information, or to begin the registration process, call CCEEC.

Naturalist Notes—By Jeannie Carl

This year's Envirothon topic was "Invasive Species". I showed various pictures of non-natives to some students, all causing a negative reaction—until it came to the house finches. Opinions seemed to change because the finches were "cute".

I don't think I changed many minds about the house finch, despite reminding them that they were indeed invasive species. Noting that they have displaced native purple finches did little to diminish the "cute" factor.

House finches were released in the 1940's in New York, where they were being sold illegally. To avoid fines, vendors released them to escape prosecution. Today, their numbers are estimated to be 1.7 billion across North America!

House finches are small-bodied with fairly large beaks for the size of their head. The wings are short, making the tail seem long by comparison. Many finches have notched tails, but the house finch has a relatively shallow notch in its tail. Adult males have red around the face and upper breast, with a brown and tan back, belly and tail. In flight, the red rump is noticeable.

Adult females aren't red, but plain grayish-brown with thick, blurry streaks and an unmarked face. Finches eat a variety of plant material including seeds, buds and small fruits.

I recently took care of a quartet of orphaned baby finches. They are voracious eaters and after feeding them for two weeks in 20-30 minute intervals, and cleaning up after them right after putting food in their gaping mouths, I muttered,

"Is it any wonder your mother found you new babysitters?" Soon they were perching on branches in their enclosure, where I'd sprinkle bird seed and hang millet from small branches.

I think every rehabilitator understands that joyous moment when the babies start to feed themselves. After cleaning their cage and giving them new branches with buds, I turned to clean up all my supplies and much to my relief, all four were eating the buds. Thank goodness!

I still fed them supplemental meals in-between their picking at all the goodies, and after two weeks of self-feeding they showed less interest in me. I had the pleasure of releasing them at my home.

They quickly figured out I wasn't going to just kick them out on their own. I left their enclosure open so they could come and go and hide in there. Nearby the deck railing had a feeding station with lots of yummy seeds and fruit and water to drink and splash in.

Every morning, they would be on the deck waiting for me to fill their dishes. Now, instinct has kicked in and they've ventured out on their own. I miss them. Sorta.

Wait! We just admitted 7 new babies to take their place. Goodbye!

See pictures of the finch quartet on our "Creature Corner" pages.

The bright colors of fast fashion come at a cost, leaving cadmium, chromium, lead and other dangerous chemicals behind in someone else's water.

Dye houses are notorious for depleting local water supplies, leaving little behind for farming. Where agriculture is possible, the most fertile lands may be used to grow cotton, a pesticide intensive—and thirsty--crop. The World Wildlife Fund estimates the cotton needed for one T-shirt's worth of fiber requires more than 700 gallons of water.

All this pollution and waste of resources would be just as shameful if it were used to produce something durable. But remember, this is fast fashion, and the finished product is really destined for the dump.

Nearly all the clothing we buy ends up in a landfill, where much of it fails to decompose. In the United States, this amounts to about 12 million tons of clothing and other textiles per year. I'll say that again, because at the risk of sounding preachy, I think it bears repeating. Twelve million tons. Every year. Twelve. Million. *Tons*.

We buy and buy and buy, so much so that even the paltry 15% of the textiles we do recycle has spawned a profitable re-use industry. Years ago, our coats, shoes and sweaters were durable enough to be donated and re-sold through local charities. Now, even the Salvation Army sells a portion of its donations to recyclers, who turn otherwise useless items into shredded insulation, mulch, carpet padding or cleaning rags.

Some of our recycled clothing does end up in developing countries, and it's ironic that some of these are the same places beset by the environmental problems created by our appetite for cheap duds in the first place.

But there is hope, a bit of light at the end of a clothing-clogged tunnel. Adidas, Nike and Levi now dye with little or no water; Patagonia runs "Don't buy this jacket" ads, asking customers to reconsider rampant consumerism; designer Tom Cridland sells a thirty-year sweatshirt, guaranteed to last for decades; and many brands are signing on to the Sustainable Clothing Coalition, addressing both environmental and social impacts of fast fashion.

As a consumer myself, I try my best to buy responsibly. I do. But sometimes it's tough. When the flip flops are only \$1, and there's a whole wall of them to choose from, I think the primitive female gatherer in me kicks in, and I just want to stand there and look everything over, to compare all those different colors, and to wallow in the pleasure of having so many cheap choices before me.

I do that in the paint store too, staring glassy-eyed at the rainbow of all those little color sample cards. Last week I was there for half an hour comparing ten different shades of brown, when a young man came up next to me. He spent all of fifteen seconds in consideration before picking out the most revolting gray-pink you could imagine. It looked like the color you'd get from running a whole salmon through a blender.

He must have seen the horror on my face, because he asked what I thought, and if the paint would go well with his new red curtains.

"Hmmm, that's a tough one. What does your wife think?"

"Oh, I'm not married," he answered. "It's my first apartment on my own. I'm gonna paint the whole place this color."

"Well, in that case buddy, you gotta go with what your gut says. It's just that... well.. I think 'what your gut says' would be a good name for that particular color."

He looked a little dejected, but ended up buying the paint anyway. Poor guy. I bet he eats a lot of bad oranges.

- Susan Gallagher



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NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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Membership category, please check.

_____ STUDENT..... \$10

_____ ORGANIZATION.... \$50

_____ SENIOR CITIZEN..... \$10

_____ SPONSOR..... \$100

_____ INDIVIDUAL..... \$15

_____ PATRON..... \$500

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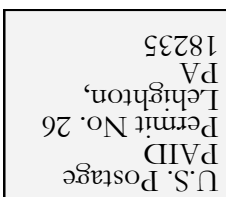
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