

Points East

By:
Ike Adams

I've forgotten exactly how the subject came up but one of my friends confided today that she had found some animal waste in her back yard that had huge seeds in it were shaped like lima beans. We were speculating on what could have swallowed seeds that big while, why the critter might have swallowed them and what they were in the first place. Without driving all the way out to her house and performing my own inspection, I figured they were seeds from a Kentucky coffee tree. That still didn't explain why an animal would have swallowed them whole, but at the time it was the only thing I could think of.

A few hours later another friend wanted to know, "What's the name of that fruit they call the Kentucky banana?" And of course, even today in the hills knows he was talking about a pawpaw. (My spell checker is telling me now that there is no such word, but I'm sticking to my guns on this one.)

Anyway, it immediately dawned on me that pawpaw seeds were what my other friend had found where the animal in question had relieved itself in her back yard. In fact, I've probably passed some myself when I was much younger.

For those of you who don't know about pawpaws, they grow on a small, gray bark tree that actually isn't much larger than a big shrub. The stump in rare cases might get up to six inches in diameter and they might reach 20 feet in height, but more commonly they are about three inches and perhaps 12 feet tall. The leaves are shaped sort of like a magnolia, only not as large and the tree itself bears a fruit that many mountaineers consider to be a rare delicacy. If you've ever been to Leitch County, chances are pretty good that you've seen a pawpaw tree without knowing what you were looking for. For that matter, there are a couple within 100 yards of where I live in Garrard County.

My Grandpa, Mose Adams, had a hillside pasture that covered several acres where a few head of livestock grazed in the summer time and it was covered up with pawpaw trees, some of which are standing to this day. During the fall, and sometimes when I was growing up, it was not uncommon for my family to have weekend guests in October from places as far away as Indiana, Michigan and Ohio

who had made the trip for the express purpose of getting a bucket full of pawpaws.

Pawpaws will grow in just about any kind of soil condition, but the flesh is much more tasty if they are in highly acidic soil. Except for an inch or two of rich topsoil, Pap's old pasture was basically acid and sulfuric acid so his pawpaws were exceptionally tasty.

The mature fruit is oblong and looks sort of like a short, lumpy link of Polish sausage. This time of year it turns from emerald green to brownish yellow as it begins to ripen. The flesh is really the color of a ripe banana, but that's where the comparison ends. Pawpaws taste nothing like bananas and they do in fact, contain more dark-brown seeds that are similar to small lima beans than edible flesh.

The best way to eat them is to gently squeeze them until they mellow up to the same consistency as pie pudding and then eat them like watermelon. You kinda squish them around in your mouth and spit out the seeds. The seeds are slick as oiled glass so it's not hard to swallow one now and then. And if you don't worry much about what you're swallowing or if you're just plain lazy, you can eat a lot more pawpaws a lot faster by swallowing seed and all. They are most flavorful after they have been frost bitten a couple of days. I personally like to let them lie on top of a fence post until they sour, but that preference has been known to make others' connoisseurs gag. On the other hand, the ones that I have found in Garrard County do not taste nearly as good as the ones on Blair Branch. We don't have enough acid down here except, perhaps, in my garden.

Anyway, I have to find my friend a pawpaw here in the next couple of days so she can make the comparison and verify that her visiting critter did deposit pawpaw seeds in her lawn. She has high acid soil too and I have suggested that she simply cover up the stool with a shovel or so of dirt and let them sprout. They ought to come up good because, after all, they are already fertilized.

The more I study on it, the more I am liking the notion of planting some where I struggle to grow vegetables. It would be interesting to see how they go over at the Garrard County Farmer's Market.

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



Golden Leaves

Well, it seems they are late this year. Or maybe just choosing where they want to show off their new fall colors. I am talking about the fall colors all of us have been waiting for since mid-August. A few days ago I noticed the two trees in the yard of my neighbor, slyly changing their summer uniform of green, one branch at a time in the top of the trees, to a new outfit of red and gold. The colored leaves dancing in the breeze were readying themselves to replace the green lawn below with a carpet of many colors. The change taking place was giving passers-by a first glimpse of the beauty to follow when they are in full color. A little while later was evident on 1-75 between here and Berea. The trees were dressed in a variety of pale gold and pink with an occasional splash of flaming red from one tucked among the pines, looking as if it was trying to hide from prying eyes as it flaunted its brilliant dress of autumn for the world to see.

The exquisite beauty of the Appalachian Mountains, with the scenes changing daily as southern winds bring in, and add to, more colors of every shade and hue, is such that only a Devine Artist with a magic brush could use so effectively. The song, "How Great Thou Art," always comes to mind when I see them fully dressed in the glory of autumn colors. As the season changes and reaches the height of beauty I will be describing it, as I see it from the hill tops and valleys below, for this is my favorite time of year and I enjoy telling others about it. It is now I miss the freedom of being able to go and come as I please.

Oh no, I haven't been forbidden to drive in 1 year and my drivers license renewed but I have voluntarily quit driving alone except for the short trips around town. I know I am no match for the younger ones darting in and out of traffic without a thought of signals or driving rules. Sometimes I wonder if they take time to see the world about them. Do they really see the beauty of flowers beside the winding roads or the color of the changing mountainside? Do they see the still water of the lake or the bubbling stream below the bridge? I hope so, for we only travel through life once and there is no turning back to see what we have missed. Even though my car stays parked in the garage most of the time, the call of the open road is loud when the mountains and valleys begin bidding me, "come and see what the Great Artist has done this Autumn, we have some new color combinations to show you." Maybe the gold in the leaves is what I have been looking for since I passed into the "golden years" I have heard so much about. One thing for sure, I haven't found it anywhere else.



New Career Center to open at Rockcastle Library

This Thursday, the Rockcastle County Public Library, in conjunction with the Gear-Up Program and Berea College, will be opening its new Career Center and Study Room. Due to the generous donation of grant money from the Gear-Up program and Berea College, the Library was able to establish a room that is focused toward teens and their parents in preparation for College and Choosing Careers. The room is equipped with two state of the art computers that are connected to the Internet, a new printer and over 100 Career related books, computer software programs and other various materials. Some of the resources included in this room are materials on preparation for such tests as the SAT, ACT, GED, as well as access to BRIDGES.COM; a helpful resource that provides Career Interest Inventories, information on colleges and college preparation, and other career related information and outlooks. In addition to these resources, the Program will be offering new laptop computers that will be available to be checked out by qualified parents and individuals that go through a specific class with the Gear-Up Program. There are also a wide variety of books and manuals related to choosing careers, career information sets and books for parents on helping children

study and prepare for the future. From time to time, Gear-Up will be hosting educational classes to train parents and students on the use of the various materials, laptops and of helpful resources like Bridges.com. This exceptional project is being led by Drama Gentry of Special Services at Berea College and Andy Beitcher of Gear-Up, Kristiana Burk, the Director of the Rockcastle County Public Library states that, "The possibilities and wealth of information that this new career center offers is a great asset to our community, especially for the parents of teens as well as middle school and high school students preparing for the future. It is never too soon to start thinking about Career Paths and College Preparation and we are thrilled to be able to offer this new service to our patrons. The Kick-Off Night for the New Career Center will be this Thursday Evening at the Public Library from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be offered and the public is encouraged to support the efforts of the Library, Gear-Up and Berea College as well as to check out the new valuable services that are being offered. The Library's hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 to 5, Thursday, 10 to 8 and Saturday 10 to 4. For more information call the library at 256-2388.

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