



LOUISIANA MAYHAW ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

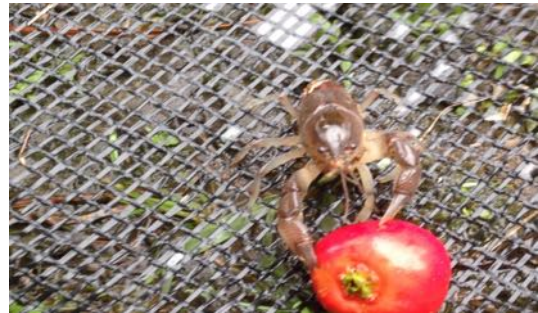
BUMPER CROP CAN'T SATISFY DEMAND

After the coldest and longest winter in memory, growers were a bit anxious about this year's mayhaw crop. This anxiety was shared by both growers and buyers throughout the South after last year's failed crop. For the second year winter was unusually severe in the South and over much of North America. However, cold weather this last winter appeared to be as beneficial to berry production as last year's was detrimental. As last year's crop was perhaps the worst in 20 years, for many, this year's was possibly the best in that same time period.

Several factors seemed to come together to create this perfect storm. Last year's rainfall was back to near normal rates, beneficial to trees throughout the summer and fall, reducing stress which affects all areas of the health of the trees. The high number of cold hours this past winter (temperatures below 45 degrees) seemed to be very beneficial to mayhaw production, just as apple trees benefit from it. Consistent cold weather seemed to retard blooming just enough to get most varieties past those late freezing nights. Although some areas suffered some bloom loss on certain varieties, overall, the percentage of blooms becoming berries seemed exceptional this season.

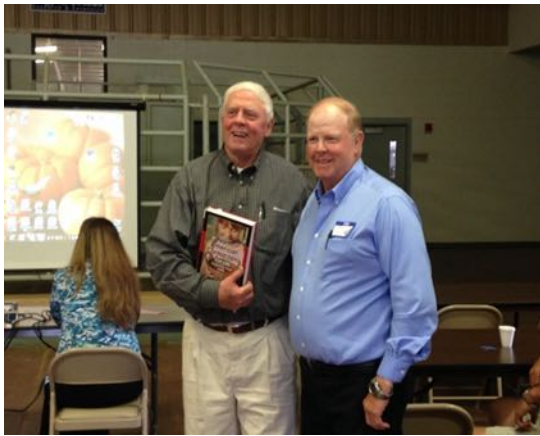
Some growers reported harvests three times better than 2012. The 2013 harvest was so poor that this year's crop exceeded it 10 to 11 times in some cases. Maturing trees producing more fruit in some orchards must be credited for some of the increase, but near ideal environmental conditions accounted for most of the increase.

Despite record harvests being reported, demand has still overwhelmed the supply. Part of the demand, "awareness" and "new interest" in mayhaws is due to last year's shortage. When



Everyone wanted berries this year

people can't get a product, that product becomes highly desirable. A contagious feverous desire occurred as people spoke of this shortage to neighbors, friends and acquaintances. People previously unaware of mayhaws suddenly had to have them. New product ideas were discovered and, in some instances, rediscovered. Large quantities of mayhaw berries and juice were needed to produce beers, wines and other spirits. Dressings, sauces and marinades using mayhaw were produced. Northern jelly makers were hearing about mayhaw and placing their orders. LMA members advertising on the "Where to Buy" page at mayhaw.org were swamped by calls and emails wanting our products. Plans are underway to revamp the page, adding new products and services, as well as making it easier for buyers to navigate to the product of choice and the seller nearest them. "Where to Buy" is definitely the best advertising engine in our industry, selling everything we can produce from berries to trees in record time. The lesson from this season has been-grow more mayhaws and let the public know you have them! Join LMA and advertise on "Where to Buy."



Bobby Talbert (right) presents book to Billy Craft (left) at LMA annual conference.

LMA 19th Annual Conference Great Success

This year's conference was held in conjunction with the 1st Annual Central Louisiana Garden Expo adjacent to the LSU-A campus south of Alexandria, LA. Speakers were Dr. John Pyzner discussing Weed and Pest Control, Mr. Bobby Talbert on Starting and Maintaining a Mayhaw Orchard, Allen Brown on Growing Mayhaw and other Hardwood Seedlings and Billy Craft and Johnny Smith on Improving and Researching New Varieties. Also, a Q & A session was had with all the speakers on the panel.



Pioneer Award presented to Don Lord

LMA was proud to present the 2014 Louisiana Mayhaw Association's Pioneer Award to Mr. Don Lord for his many years of service to the association. Mr. Lord has been a great ambassador for LMA and the mayhaw industry in general, for many

years. He has served in several capacities, holding key offices within the association and continually promoting the industry. He has worked tirelessly, along with the great help-mate, his wife Shirley, to revise the by-laws to properly reflect the goals and missions of our association as they have expanded and been refined over time. His communication skills have been evident from the comments of growers throughout the South as they express their gratitude for his timely and knowledgeable assistance with inquiries about the association and where they can obtain products. Thanks, Brother Don for a job well done—but not complete!



Allen Brown from the Columbia Nursery speaks on growing mayhaw and other hardwood seedlings.

Containerized Seedlings Available

Mr. Allen Brown of the Louisiana Forestry Department, Columbia Nursery, spoke at the 2014 conference on growing mayhaw seedlings. Mr. Brown explained the process of starting mayhaws and other hardwoods from seed and growing them on rows for sale as bare-root seedlings in the winter. The seedlings are used for reforestation, planting a few in back yards, orchards, as well as for grafting rootstock. I spoke with Mr. Brown about the possibility of having the Columbia Nursery grow two year old seedlings, expressly for the purpose of grafting, as larger seedlings are needed

when grafting. He indicated that it may be possible to do this, or even obtain larger one year old seedlings with some adjustments to spacing, fertilization, etc. As a result, the Forestry Department is offering this year, for the first time, containerized mayhaw seedlings. It is expected that a higher percentage of seedlings large enough to graft will be available this winter.



Left to right: James Eaves, LMA Secretary, Senator John R. Smith, Representative Dorothy Sue Hill, Johnny Smith, LMA President.

Mayhaw named State Fruit Tree

The Louisiana Senate and House endorsed making the Mayhaw tree the official state fruit tree. Senate Bill 206 sponsored by State Senator John Smith, R-Leesville, became Act No. 377. The Act became effective August 1, 2014. Thanks go out to Senator John Smith and House Representative Dorothy Sue Hill for their work to make this happen. Pictured above, they are presented plaques of appreciation from LMA under the original Maxine tree. We also thank LMA Board Member Ted Williams for his tireless efforts in lobbying for this legislation.

Senator Smith said it had been necessary for him to explain to some people that the mayhaw is a tree and not a bush. Representative Hill said that some people seemed to believe it was a vine like the muscadine.

It's good to have common sense country folks representing us.

The recognition the mayhaw receives from this official act raises public awareness and will have a positive and long term effect on the mayhaw industry.



The Mayhaw Mafia storms Fredericksburg, Texas, twisting arms, carrying a big mayhaw stick and making jelly deals. Left to Right – James Eaves and Johnny Smith

Who Let the Flavor Out of the Jar?

On the way to Fredericksburg, we stopped at a restaurant and sampled some fantastic dishes prepared with a mayhaw flavored marinade/dressing. It's a fantastic product complimenting beef, pork and chicken. It's even great as a salad dressing- and it's about to hit the shelves of grocery stores near you.

We stopped in Brennan, but Blue Bell didn't have the flavor we thrive on. I guess even big businesses don't always get the score until late in the game.

In the motel room in Fredericksburg, I received a phone call from Matt Paley, a TV producer for the series "Brew Dogs." It's a Scottish TV show about making beer, which has come to America. They were coming to

the NOLA Brewery in New Orleans to film an episode and it was suggested that mayhaws be used in the concoction. Matt asked me if I knew anyone from that part of the state who knew anything about mayhaws. Long story short, the show aired on August 20th featuring Mr. J.J. Warner and his lovely wife, Ann at their beautiful home and orchard in Franklinton, LA. It's certainly good to see Louisiana so well-represented by good wholesome folks. I'm still not sure what those TV guys know about making beer, but I do know they met some folks who know about mayhaws. You can catch the show on re-runs if you missed it. It airs on Direct TV, channel 235 and Dish Network, channel 191 on Wednesday nights.

While in Fredericksburg, James received numerous calls for juice and berries. I received several calls for berries and trees. From Texas to Florida, growers are interested in starting large mayhaw orchards. Demand is high now, but the potential seems unimaginable.

We spoke with jelly makers, some wanting hundreds of pounds of fruit, some wanting thousands of pounds, but all wanting it now and next year. Looks like a huge demand for next season- and it's not all for filling a jelly jar.

20th Annual LMA Conference and Field Day

The 20th Annual LMA Conference and Field Day is set for April 11, 2015, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 pm. at the State Evacuation Shelter South side of LSUA on Hwy 71 south of Alexandria LA. We will be in the big Evac building this time, along with the Central Louisiana Garden Expo, which will be going on April 10th and 11th.

At the LMA Conference and Garden Expo:

- Vendor Booths (Lawn, Garden, or related items)
- Educational Seminars regarding everything mayhaw
- Educational Gardening Seminars
- Plants and Supplies
- Question and Answer Panel
- Cooking contest
- Door prizes

After lunch, we plan to visit a nearby mayhaw orchard. Members, you need to put it on your calendar. If not a member, you need to join now and plan on attending in April. The information you will gain and good fellowship you will enjoy are priceless.



LMA Webmaster Grady Tracy and his lovely wife De Anna

“Where to Buy” Page to Get an Overhaul

The “Where to Buy” page at mayhaw.org is, without doubt, the best-selling venue for mayhaw products in the industry. From this page we are able to gauge the demand for mayhaw products by the volume of calls and emails received requesting products. The feedback from customers tells me that over 90% of my sales of trees and berries comes from people visiting this page on mayhaw.org. We have thought to make this site more user-friendly, easier for customers to find sellers with the specific products they seek, and find sellers closest to their location. Also, as demands for new products and services are emerging, we need to be able to expand to include them.

Mr. Grady Tracy, our webmaster and the man who reworked mayhaw.org for us back in 2013, met with the Board to discuss how the changes could be made. He explained to the Board that these goals can be obtained and that he would be glad to work with us to make the necessary changes. A committee was named to iron out details and work with Mr. Tracy in the next few months. Thanks to Grady and everyone contributing to the website, as the demand for mayhaw products and services has grown and continues to grow, our ability to respond will also grow.

Market Price of Mayhaw Fruit

As Mr. Sam Crouch, our Board Member from the Great State of Texas has pointed out, there is no set market price for mayhaw fruit. I spoke with Mr. Keith Hawkins, LSU Ag Extension Agent, about this recently. He sends out a Fruit and Vegetable Price List each month. This price list is developed from weekly price data obtained from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service on prices received at the Dallas and Atlanta terminal markets. Keith forwarded an inquiry to Mr. Kurt Guidry, Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness with LSU-Ag, who collects this data to share with agents and ultimately with growers. He stated that he was only able to find individual growers offering berries, usually for \$10/gallon, but sometimes as high as \$25/gallon. At this time, the \$10/gallon price seems to be stable, with individuals in select markets of the country where fruit is scarce, able to demand higher prices. With the high demand experienced at this time, prices are expected to edge into the \$12 - \$15/gallon range for berries next year. Juice and jelly prices are entirely different issues, but they will certainly be affected by changes in berry prices. It looks as though a market value listing may only be established by getting into and listed with the Dallas and

Atlanta market terminals. This will be something for further exploration. Market price reports can be obtained from selected U.S. cities' terminal markets at ams.usda.gov.



Loss of Bill and Irene Jackson

Horace W. Jackson (Bill) and his wife Irene S. Jackson passed away on June 26, 2014 in Livingston, Texas. Bill was a long-time member of the Louisiana Mayhaw Association, serving on the Board for many years. He and his wife always attended the annual conference, with Bill giving a power-point presentation featuring the hydraulic shaker/harvester he had designed and used on his farm. He was always willing to share the design with anyone interested in building one. Many growers throughout East Texas owe their start to the advice, tutoring and donated cuttings provided by Bill. He and his wife will be sorely missed by all who knew them.

Join LMA or renew your membership!

The Louisiana Mayhaw Association, a group of mayhaw producers spanning the Southeast, is an organization dedicated to educating the public (and us members) on everything mayhaw. We are dedicated to promoting our industry and supporting each other. Members can advertise on "Where to Buy" – the best mayhaw seller on the web; fellowship with other growers, sharing knowledge, experience and resources; receive our newsletter with current events, mayhaw news and articles; and don't forget our annual conference and field day in April with mayhaw experts speaking on what you need to know. Join or renew now and continue receiving the newsletter. Happy hawing!

Johnny