



# LOUISIANA MAYHAW ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

### Editor's Shake

I just wanted to touch base with our members from a personal standpoint. For the last couple of years I have been editing and publishing this newsletter for the Louisiana Mayhaw Association. Coincidentally, or perhaps tragically, I have also been holding the office of President of this same organization. I am happy to recognize the progress achieved by the organization during this time, but am acutely aware of the potential yet to be achieved. It has been my pleasure and distinct honor to serve as your President for the last two years. From our pool of members, many great leaders and successful business men and women may be found. From this pool our next President will emerge. I declare, at this time, to fully support that individual in their struggle to raise our organization to greater heights. We have seen, and continue to see, the emergence of new markets for mayhaw based products, the legislative confirmation of the Mayhaw as the Louisiana State Fruit Tree, and a nationwide awareness of and demand for mayhaw fruit, trees and juice. My message today is much the same as it was two years ago when taking this job. Plant more mayhaws! The demand is there, and will be for a long time to come. We have better trees than ever before, producing more and higher quality fruit than ever before. As my old buddy Paul, and former LMA President likes to say, "If you are growing mayhaws, you are in the catbird's seat." Johnny Smith, LMA President & Editor

### Upcoming Events

**March 21<sup>st</sup> 2015** 8AM – 1:30PM

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mayhaw 101**

El Dorado Conference Center  
311 South West Avenue  
El Dorado, AR

This is a free mayhaw clinic with demos, seminars, cooking contests, mayhaw orchard tour and much more. For more information go to [www.mayhaw.biz](http://www.mayhaw.biz)

**April 11<sup>th</sup> 2015** 8AM – 12pm (tour of Billy Craft's mayhaw orchard afterwards) see agenda at [mayhaw.org](http://mayhaw.org).

#### **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisiana Mayhaw Association Conference and Field Day**

Presentations will be made on Pest Control in Mayhaw Orchards, Mason Bees for Optimum Pollination, Jelly Making, Growing Mayhaws in Georgia, Frequently Asked Questions, Grafting Demonstration, Q & A with the Panel of Experts and the Mayhaw Cooking Contest. Once again the conference will be held in conjunction with the Central Louisiana Garden Expo slated for April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. This year, the conference will be held on Saturday inside the Evacuation Center south of the LSU-A campus on Hwy 71 S. The team at the LSU Research Center at LSU-A campus has graciously asked LMA to once again be part of their Garden Expo weekend to be on hand to answer the many mayhaw questions presented to them during the Garden Expo. We are excited to partner with them to raise mayhaw awareness, provide singular education and to happily serve all interested in this unique and growing industry.

## **Soil Fertility Management for Mayhaws** by Billy Craft

We all need a well-balanced and nutritious diet for us to stay healthy, productive, and have a good quality of life. To have healthy, successful, and high producing mayhaw trees, the tree must be getting the nutrients, water and proper pH from the soil. Nutrient shortages, lack of water and low pH levels will result in less fruit production, poor tree health and reduced profitability for the mayhaw growers. Significant amounts of nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, potash) are removed annually from the soil by the mayhaw plants in their production cycle. Mayhaw orchards will become gradually depleted of the balance of the nutrients in the soil. When a deficit of phosphorus and potash occurs, it depresses plant growth and fruit production. I've looked at thousands of mayhaw trees in the swamps of central Louisiana, and the average production on big, mature trees is less than 5 gallons. I had a 14 year old tree in my orchard this past year that produced 25 gallons.

There are very few soil types in Louisiana that contain an ideal mixture of nutrients and the proper pH level. The upland, piney woods soil types are the worst in inherent nutrient balances and pH levels compared to Red River and Mississippi River soil deposits. Therefore, we growers in the piney woods have more of a challenge compared to delta landowners. Mayhaw growers must accept the fact that some additional nutrients are required so the mayhaw plants can obtain their fruit potential and stay healthy and growing.

Soil testing is the best way for most growers to stay on top of their soil nutrient status. Most county agents with the LSU Cooperative Extension Service will may your soil sample to LSU for testing. It costs about \$10 per sample and you will receive the status of the nutrients in each sample and the

pH level. The sample results will also give you the recommended amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potash needed to correct deficiencies.

Timing of the nutrient application is also important. Late summer and early fall are excellent times for this addition. The added nutrients will continue to be absorbed by the mayhaw trees as long as the roots are active (soil temperature above 45 degrees Fahrenheit). The nutrient additions will be taken up by the roots and stored until the beginning of the spring growth.

In my orchard, I use 13-13-13 in small amounts for the first 3 years of growth. By the 4<sup>th</sup> year, the young trees are blooming and producing berries. So, starting at age 4, I eliminate most of the nitrogen application and concentrate on adding phosphorus and potash. If vegetative growth is lacking, small amounts of nitrogen can be added after fruit harvest. Following are the rates of phosphorus and potash I use in my orchard:

### **Rates for Phosphorus**

1. Phosphorus = 2 pounds per 1000 sq. ft.
2. A mayhaw tree at age 10 with a 20 ft. limb-spread is 20 ft. X 20 ft. = 400 sq. ft.
3. 40% of 2 lbs. = .8 lb.
4. 1 pint of phosphorus weighs 1 lb.
5. The amount of phosphorus per tree is .8 pint.

Note: Most bags of phosphorus sold at Coops and feed and seed stores contain 46% phosphorus. That is why you only need .8 pint per tree of the above size.

### **Rates for Potash**

1. Potash = 3 pounds per 1000 sq. ft.
2. A mayhaw tree at age 10 with a 20 ft. limb spread is 20 ft. X 20 ft. = 400 sq. ft.
3. 40% percent of 3 lbs. = 1.2 lbs.
4. 1 pint of potash = 1 lb.
5. The amount of potash per tree is 1.2 pints

Note: Single bags of potash usually contain 60% potash, hence the reason you only need 1.2 pints per tree of this size.

Example #2 for Potash:

1. A young mayhaw tree with a limb spread of 5 ft.
2. 5 ft. X 5 ft. = 25 sq. ft.
3. 2.5% of 3 lbs. = .075 pounds
4. Amount per tree = .075 lbs.
5. 1 pint of potash = 1 pound, or 16 ounces.
6. .075 lbs. = 1.2 ounces/tree of this size.

Note: Your results from the LSU Lab on the recommendation will probably give you the amount of each nutrient per acre to be applied. The most economical application is to broadcast the fertilizer under each tree.

### **All in the Genes**

by Johnny Smith

I'm no scientist. I have no formal training in the ability to grow anything other than disdain. However, I do have the ability to observe, no matter what Deb tells you. Anyway, I often think trees are not so different in some ways than animals. You can properly feed, groom and treat an animal to be the healthiest and most productive it can be, but it will be limited by its genetic make-up. You also don't raise milk cows for beef if you have access to a top quality beef producing breed of cow. The same can be said of mayhaw trees. Crossing one breed of cattle with another can, at times, produce a specimen of much higher value than either of the parents. Many recognized cattle breeds today are products of such unions. Again, that is the case with mayhaws. Today we have Maxine, the excellent selection James Eaves discovered near DeRidder, La, as well as the G series discovered by Bobby Talbert near Gist Texas. They are Texas Star (G-1), Spectacular (G-2) and Royal Star (G-5). A tree which could be called a June haw was discovered in the Sabine River swamp near Toledo Bend and introduced by Billy Craft several years ago, called Cajun. Billy has used

this tree and many others to create exceptional mayhaws. Trees with qualities considered exceptional have been found in the wild and introduced into orchards from East Texas to Alabama. Many are named, some are not. Crosses made using some of these trees have given us some of the best mayhaw selections available, such as Red Champ, Surprise-and some not yet named or introduced. In my orchard, I have close to 100 individual trees, unique from any other tree in the orchard. Sure, I have a dozen or more each of some exceptional selections, but I also have representatives of mayhaw "groves" from throughout the South. Some of these trees are considered "junk." Some have great potential as ornamentals, with incredibly showy bloom production, but won't hold fruit until fully ripe. Some are great producers but have smaller berries. Some have no thorns, while some seem to have nothing but thorns. Some want to grow straight up while others want to spread out flat. However, their greatest value may be that they contain genetics unique to families of trees now wiped out due to reforestation, urbanization, etc. Crossing trees taken from different locations can and will produce some exceptional trees in the future. I look forward to preserving the varied genetics found in different regions and continuing to experiment with them. If you are able to explore any wild stands of mayhaws near you, look for the exceptional. You may not find a Maxine, or Red Champ like we can now put in our orchard, but it may be the parent of the next great tree. Look for things like late bloomers. Look for trees which bloom fully at one time. Fruit size does seem to matter to some people, but if you are making juice, look for trees able to hold their fruit until peak ripeness. Preserving the genetics of the wild mayhaws, I feel, is important. Remember, also, what you don't preserve today, may be gone forever tomorrow.



When they come out of the field like this, cleaning and culling time is minimized.

My wife and I raise meat goats along with growing mayhaws. I know, that's not a smart combination. However, the breed we maintain is the New Zealand Kiko. It is a very hardy breed, requiring little maintenance, growing rapidly and producing a large quality animal. The Kiko was created by crossing several other breeds, with strict culling throughout the development process, producing a goat which exceeds all other meat goat breeds in practically every category of measurement. This is the same method available to us, as developers of exceptional mayhaws. Today, we have, mainly thanks to Billy Craft, a higher number of quality tree selections available to growers than ever before.

### **Mayhaw's needed !!**

By Sam Crouch

A few years back, a representative of Blue Bell Ice cream contacted the Louisiana Mayhaw Association (LMA) interested in the possibility of producing a Mayhaw flavored ice cream. Mr. Billy Craft ( LMA board member) asked the Blue Bell caller how much juice would they require. The inquirer responded, "Let's figure on just one day of production. So, we need around 100,000 gallons." After hearing this, Mr. Craft told the caller, "Well, you will not be having a Mayhaw flavored ice cream because we aren't producing that much commercially available fruit in the whole of America."

Truth is, we don't have a clue as to the total production of Mayhaw per year in America. We do have very good numbers from the Louisiana Extension service served by Louisiana State University. They have production numbers collected in the state of Louisiana going back 20 years. The last year of data in 2013 shows that Louisiana produced approximately 700K pounds of fruit from native trees and 500K pounds of fruit from producing commercial orchards. This makes a total of 1.2 M pounds combined which equates to 270K gallons of raw fruit.

When we realize that there is so little production of Mayhaw in the "whole" of America to meet the needs of just one ice cream company for just one day of production, it is obvious that we need more Mayhaw producing trees and farmers. Today we are pressed to just meet local demand, much less meet the requirements of a national market.

Here are some useful numbers about Mayhaw:

Description	Number	Units
Pounds of berries per gallon		4.5 pounds
Number of trees per acre	70	25 foot spacing
Avg. annual production per tree		10 gallons
Avg. annual production per tree	45	pounds
1st year of berry production	5	years
Juice produced from 1 gallon of berries		1/2 gallon
Price for berries (retail 2014)	\$2.25	pound
Price for berries (wholesale 2014)	\$1.65	pound

Let's take these numbers and do some analysis. In an orchard at 10 years of age, we should see 70 trees averaging 45 pounds of fruit per tree. That's a total of 3,150 pounds per acre. At the current retail price of \$2.25 per pound, we could reasonably expect to earn

\$7,000 per acre. Even at the wholesale price of \$1.65 per pound, we would earn \$5,200 per acre. Those are very inspiring numbers for a prospective grower.

The Louisiana Mayhaw Association is dedicated to informing the public and growers about the unique qualities of the Mayhaw tree and its fruit. The saying goes, "If God made a more delicious jelly, he kept it for himself" Let's continue to spread the word. We need more Mayhaws !!

Sam Crouch, Board Member LMA

For more information on mayhaw trees and other products, go to [mayhaw.org](http://mayhaw.org)

### **Mayhaw Legend, Bill Moore**

I was recently honored by a visit from Legendary Mayhaw Grower and Researcher, Mr. Bill Moore. Mr. Moore is an expert on mayhaws and what makes them "tick." I learned more valuable information in a one hour visit than I've probably learned over the last 5 years. Bill and his wife own and operate Mayhaw Research Center near Orange Texas. They have been in business for over 25 years and have some 200 mature trees. He harvests over 2000 gallons of fruit per year and sells to individual customers and wholesale. Bill began researching mayhaws over 30 years ago before anything was written on them. He has tested and tried most of the named varieties known over that time period in the climate and soil which God allotted to him. We did a little horse-trading and I got a couple of Winnie 7 trees from him for a couple of Red Champs. It sounds like the Winnie 7 is an outstanding selection for the climate and soil along the I-10 corridor of Southeast Texas. Many of his customers request fruit from this specific variety year after year. I understand it is a large fruit which holds well on the trees and is resistant to bruising or spoiling in high temperatures. He states it has been very resistant to fire blight at his place. It is an early bloomer, with a long

bloom cycle and extended harvest period. It sounds like a good selection, especially for growers in southern regions. I look forward to including them in my orchard and adding them to the gene pool.

Bill is writing a book entitled "The Mayhaw Manual." In it he will share valuable information on plant hormones and how they regulate physiological processes in the plant, the importance of chill hours, weather condition factors, soil conditions and many things you need to know to help your trees reach their full potential. During our visit, I learned several things which I am anxious to put into practice, both in my greenhouse and in my orchard. It was, indeed an honor to meet and visit with Mr. Bill Moore. I hope to visit his place in the future and learn more from his words.



Another nice, huge, early berry- G-2

(Spectacular) If you don't mind chancing late freezes and staggered ripening.

**See you at the conference.  
Come join us April 10<sup>th</sup>  
and 11<sup>th</sup>. Take in the  
Garden Expo on April 10<sup>th</sup>  
and visit us at the LMA  
Booth. Get fired up on  
Mayhaws April 11<sup>th</sup> at the  
20<sup>th</sup> Annual LMA  
Conference and Field  
Day. Good folks, good  
food, good time.**