

Elizabeth Ludlow Bowman: Tips for the Compleat Gardener — The roots of ginseng

Ginseng is native to North America from Quebec to Alabama and west to Nebraska. A smooth-skinned, five-leafed perennial with pale yellow flowers in July and August followed by a cluster of bright red fruit, it prefers the rich woodland soil, which is getting hard to find.

Ginseng is also native to China, Japan and parts of eastern Asia. Physicians there have found it useful in treatments of a wide range of conditions, especially fatigue of body and mind. It is also known as *Aralia quinquefolia*, red berry and man's health for its ability to invigorate.

The plant's generic name in Asia is panak, from the Greek word meaning panacea, something used to heal a wide range of

conditions. In the quest for healing, ginseng became overharvested, which caused the government of China to prohibit harvest on Chinese soil.

The word ginseng is said to mean "the wonder of the world" and in a way it connects all manner of people. When the enterprising Jesuits saw the Chinese need for ginseng, having noticed it growing in their own forests, were quick to establish a lucrative connection. Farmers in Wisconsin have been raising and exporting ginseng for over a century and production in the Appalachians is booming as a matter of fact causing "ginseng wars."

In Kentucky the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to stop international sales of ginseng

because it is protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. The residents make a large portion of their collective livelihoods farming and selling ginseng and so are at war with the organization.

If you have the land and are of a mind to become a ginseng grower you will find it is a slow-growing crop for the patient farmer because the roots are not ready to harvest for five years and then it is best done in autumn when the farmer can harvest the ripened seeds while digging up the root. It is claimed that one cannot grow a new crop on land previously used for ginseng but there is a tradition among certain Native Americans to ensure survival of the plant by harvesting

after the seeds ripen and fall to the waiting soil, which leads me to believe it will grow in the same soil. Who really knows?

Deer eat the leaves and wild turkeys go for the seeds. In Western medicine ginseng is used as a tonic to settle the stomach or as a tea to soothe the nerves and stimulate the body. In Eastern medicine it is used for almost every ailment and can be chewed as a root, taken as a capsule or sipped as tea. It is also eaten as a root vegetable side dish but at the price of \$80 to \$150 per pound I think it is a bit pricey for that use.

If you hope to become a seller of ginseng Mrs. M. Grieve gives a detailed description of how one prepares the harvested roots for the market in her "A Modern

Herbal," a reference book for every gardener. I first read about ginseng in a book called "Nature's Garden" by Neltje Blanchan. It is part of a reference series called The Nature Library printed by Doubleday in 1904.

Chinese ginseng, growing larger than the American variety, is said to have "yang" energy, which is known to warm and invigorate while the American ginseng is thought of as "yin," which is cooling and calming.

In a way it is interesting that the Chinese get a large percentage of their ginseng from North America. This column emerged from a request and I am open to their answers.

Spring's coming.
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NH-S school board questioned on appointment process

Elizabeth Bowman

The Feb. 18 meeting of the New Hope-Solebury School Board had barely begun when Solebury resident Melvin Band objected to the minutes of the previous meeting, which did not reflect his request that the names of all the candidates for the recent school board appointment, not just the three who were publicly interviewed, be listed.

The process by which the board narrowed the slate down from 13 to three has not been disclosed. Later in the meeting Band challenged the lack of discussion preceding an immediate, unanimous vote for Daniel Dupont. To the observer it seemed a decision had

already been reached before the public interviews.

Superintendent Ray Bocutti spoke on the issue on everyone's mind, makeup time for the snow days and will it impact graduation.

Bocutti reviewed the state requirements with those present, saying that the Pennsylvania School Code requires 180 days in attendance and NH-S had included two extra days but at this point four days still need to be made up.

The calendar for this year designates April 21 and June 18-20 as those days. The administration recommended moving graduation up to June 19 and asking for an exception from the state for seniors not to be required to show up

the day after graduation.

The exceptions come with a financial penalty, in the case of graduated seniors the fine is \$444 but if the whole student body were excused the fine is \$6,303. NH-S is asking the state to grant an exception for this year's seniors and waive the penalty. The board agreed to change graduation and add the designated days.

Board member Sandra Weisbrodt objected, suggesting days from spring break be used instead. The proposed calendar for next year is available for scrutiny with some other days being targeted as make up days to vote on at the next meeting on March 4.

Bocutti informed the public of a \$50,000 donation from an

anonymous donor who had once before made a similar gift. Bocutti outlined how the previous donation had been utilized as the donor requested to enhance the k-12 gifted program and a three-year technology plan. The superintendent said he has reached out to k-12 fine arts and gifted teachers for innovative proposals.

During the public comment part of the meeting Beth Simon, president of New Hope-Solebury Education Association, voiced disappointment that the new board declined to have a meet-and-greet with the association, with the excuse that contract negotiations are ongoing.

Simon said, "We have gone eight months without a contract

and the board has never before refused a social gathering with this excuse."

She asked the board to reconsider because the association would like a transparent relationship between the groups.

At the end of the meeting President Harraka said that he thought the criticism raised by Mrs. Simon was not fair. He said the board is committed to creating a positive association with the education association.

Mrs. Simon responded that there was no intimation that the board wasn't working on the negotiations — only that it wouldn't meet and greet.

The next meeting is on Monday, March 4.

NH-S board hears options for high school upgrades

Elizabeth Bowman

The New Hope-Solebury School Board saw designs for the revitalization of the high school facilities presented by Kevin Godshall at last week's meeting.

Godshall presented three options; the first creating a new gymnasium for the middle school

with repurposing of the existing gym. The new facility would connect some halls and rooms that are not now connected and create a long corridor through which the public could get to the sports facilities without access to the school areas. That option costs \$30-35 million.

Option two is a little less

enthusiastic but covers the necessary improvements and a gym costing \$18-20 million. Option three covers what needs to be done and is expected to cost \$14-15 million.

Stuart Perrone, director of business administration, told the board that he spoke with the finance group was told none of

the scenarios would impact on taxes.

Board President Joseph Harraka suggested members ponder the information and that other stakeholders be polled before a decision is reached.

Scott Radaskiewicz, director of information technology, opened a discussion of the cyber

school component of the NH-S curriculum with suggestions that it be expanded to welcome out-of-district students.

He pointed out that the cost of a cyber-teacher would be around \$81,000 whereas if the students that are staying with NH-S have to seek elsewhere it would cost \$125,000 to pay their tuition.

Commissioners expend \$1.338 million on work stations

While winter's wrath forced postponement of the Bucks County commissioners' Feb. 5 meeting, the items of that agenda received consideration during the regularly scheduled meeting of Feb. 19.

The commissioners voted unanimously to expend \$1,338 million to supply and install 462 work stations in the new Bucks County Justice Center.

According to General Services Project Manager Kevin Spencer, the General Services workstation contract for the new Justice Center includes 237 open office stations, 216 private office systems and nine pedestal desks. The average cost per station is \$2,895.

Spencer noted that the \$1,338 million contract was actually rebid, coming in approximately \$100,000 less than the previous number.

County Director of General Services Jerry Anderson added that approximately 520 employees will be moving from the existing courthouse and administration building to the new Justice Center upon completion.

Chairman Robert Loughery unveiled three items from previous agendas, including a pair of Board of Elections contracts for the 2014 advertising of the May 20 primary and Nov. 4 general elections with The Intelligencer and Philadelphia Inquirer newspapers.

Prior to the approval of those items (2-1 vote, with Commissioner Marsaglia dissenting), the board engaged in a discussion of the concept "newspaper of general circulation."

The board approved contracts for Children & Youth Services, among them a \$60,474 agreement with Anchor Moving & Storage of Edgewater Park, N.J., to move the office and their new location off York Road in Buckingham Township.

Also for Children & Youth, Commissioners Loughery and Martin signed off on a one-year, \$7,689 contract with Child & Family Focus to provide specialized foster care (Commissioner

Marsaglia cast a no vote).

The third untangled item involved a \$124,999 contract with Clean Rental Services to provide uniform services to the County General Services department. Marsaglia suggested that the commissioners

form a task force to identify companies that sell American-made uniforms, distributing information to that effect to her colleagues. She voted against the item, as well.

"It's not as black and white as you think it is," Loughery said.

Students encouraged to check out MBIT

Elizabeth Bowman

A team from Middle Bucks Institute of Technology came to the New Hope-Solebury School Board meeting last week to describe some of the programs it offers and the success it has been enjoying "preparing tomorrow's workforce today."

The school offers high school students courses in many occupations from nanny to restaurant

owner and chef. There are programs in mixed media, television broadcasting and small engine repair. Others are able to take these courses in evenings.

It is an exciting place, the presenters said, and the new proposed school calendar is designed to make timing more optimal for NH-S students to take advantage of these courses.

MBIT serves four sending districts, has 800 students 5 percent

currently from NH-S. Students may achieve certification in their chosen specialty and one of the team said last year's 200 graduates got 1,237 certificates among them.

Students are prepared for college and can earn college credit. The majority of graduates go on the post-secondary education and some just get into their chosen profession.

The team invites the public to take a tour or check the school out online.

Advice & Advocacy for the Older Adult

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM POWER OF ATTORNEY ABUSES?

Remember, you must remain proactive even when enlisting the help of trusted immediate family members. Too many people become complacent about the abilities of an Agent under a Power of Attorney. Even the most well intentioned Agent can experience conflicts of interest and temptations to an abuse of their authority. Careful drafting of the document by an experienced Elder Law Attorney can ensure your continued protection.

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REAL ESTATE

Class-Harlan Real Estate adds owners

Class-Harlan Real Estate, Doylestown, has announced a new owner partnership between John J. Stachel, broker, Heather Walton, partner and Todd McCarty, partner.

Privately owned Class-Harlan celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013 and has been operating at the same location, at the corner of State and Main in Doylestown, for all of those years.

The Class-Harlan Commercial, spearheaded by Associate Broker Scott Straszburg, John Stachel was born in Doylestown Borough where he and his wife raised a son and a daughter whose families have grown to include four grandchildren. John Stachel has been licensed with Class-Harlan since 1983 and has been the owner since 1983 and the broker of record since 2000.

Walton, licensed in 2001, has been a top-producing real estate sales person at Class-Harlan since 2005. She and her husband and two sons have lived in Central Bucks County for 24 years. She



Owner partnership has been announced for Class-Harlan Real Estate. From left are John J. Stachel, broker, and partners Heather Walton and Todd McCarty.

has served on the Doylestown Revitalization Board and the Kids Castle Committee. She volunteers for the Bucks County Association of Realtors, the Doylestown Business and Community Alliance, Pearl S. Buck International and the Doylestown Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB).

McCarty is a Penn State grad and was a top producer with Coldwell Banker for 14 years

before joining Class-Harlan Real Estate. He owns one of the most historic buildings in Doylestown, The Doylestown Inn. He and his partners will soon be opening a restaurant and bar in the inn.

McCarty is also active in the community with local charities, fundraisers and food bank drives. He and his wife, Samantha, reside in Plumstead Township and have three daughters ranging from 4 months to 9 years old.

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