

# Kids' KOrner

## Twin Girls Raise Twin Donkeys

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FRIENDS COVE (Bedford Co.) — When the school bus grinds to a stop in front of the home of William and Charlotte Schaeffer on Friday afternoon, there is excitement in the air.

It means double fun as Heather and Margaret, the Schaeffer granddaughters, age 11, get off the bus ready for a weekend on the farm.

During the week the girls live with their mother, Liana Alteamus. But, on weekends, they join farmer dad, Charles, and pack as much farm life as possible into every waking hour.

The girls carry their twin life into the animal world. Each spring they get a pair of lambs, as identical as possible. They feed, brush, and practice leading in preparation for fair time.

In past years, Heather exhibited the reserve champion carcass lamb and Margaret won a trophy in the lead line.

During the fair of '93, Margaret had a third place carcass lamb and won a showmanship trophy. Heather almost equaled her sister.

The girls tend their sheep and help their dad with the milking. If it's a busy season, they do most of the milking and help with the feeding.

Both twins love farm life and their most special reason might well be their two miniature donkeys. Heather has a donkey named, "Jennifer," and Margaret owns "Baby Doll."

Since they are the only donkeys entered at the Bedford Fair, the girls don't have much competition, but they do attract a lot of attention. Twins with twin donkeys!

The girls always like to share the story of the crosses on the donkey's backs.

"Mary, the mother of Jesus, rode to Bethlehem on a donkey," explains Margaret. "And, later, Jesus died on a cross. And, our donkeys both have a natural cross on their backs close to their manes. We think it is there because it is a symbol of Jesus on the cross."

All donkeys have this cross although it may be more difficult to see on those with a darker color.

A donkey is known as an equine in the animal world. There are only three types of equines, a horse, a donkey, and a zebra. A mule is a cross between a horse and a donkey.

Margaret especially had a great time in animal dress up competition at the fair last summer. She put butterfly wings on "Baby Doll," while she dressed as a sunflower.



Heather and Margaret with Baby Doll and Jennifer. Heather has the braid.

The twins have had their donkeys for about four years. "They are what started us going to the fair," Margaret explains.

Farm life isn't all play and Heather and Margaret both do their share of farmwork. In the summer, they help their grandma in the garden and enter fruits and vegetables in fair competition.

They also help with farm chores and take care of their own animals. "But donkeys don't take a lot of work," Heather points out. "They either graze or eat their hay. We keep them in plenty of water."

Both girls have been hoping that their donkeys might have babies in the near future. "But, dad says it's too early to tell," explains Heather. Until they find out, however, they have curtailed the donkey riding they often enjoy.

Heather and Margaret are both members of the Bedford 4-H Sheep Club and attend the sixth grade at Bedford Middle School.



Margaret (left) and Heather Schaeffer with their Suffolk market lambs while the rest of the flocks looks on. The twins began showing lambs at age 6.

## Why Leaves Change Color

Autumn coloration is primarily based on spices, genetics, and environmental factors as they relate to carbohydrate accumulation in the leaves. The pigment responsible for the pink, red and purple colors is anthocyanin. The accumulation of carbohydrates in the leaves favors the formation of this particular pigment. This pigment is generally found in the cell sap. Yellow and orange colors come from the pigments called carotene and xanthophyll.

As temperatures decline in the fall, the leaves stop producing chlorophyll, which is the pigment responsible for the green color of leaves. Species that contain large amounts of carbohydrates begin to form anthocyanins in their leaves. As the chlorophyll in the leaves begin to break down, the anthocyanin pigments are unmasked. In those trees that do not produce anthocyanin, the breakdown of chlorophyll exposes the more stable yellow and orange carotene and xanthophyll pigments. Yellow-poplar and hickory are examples of species that have

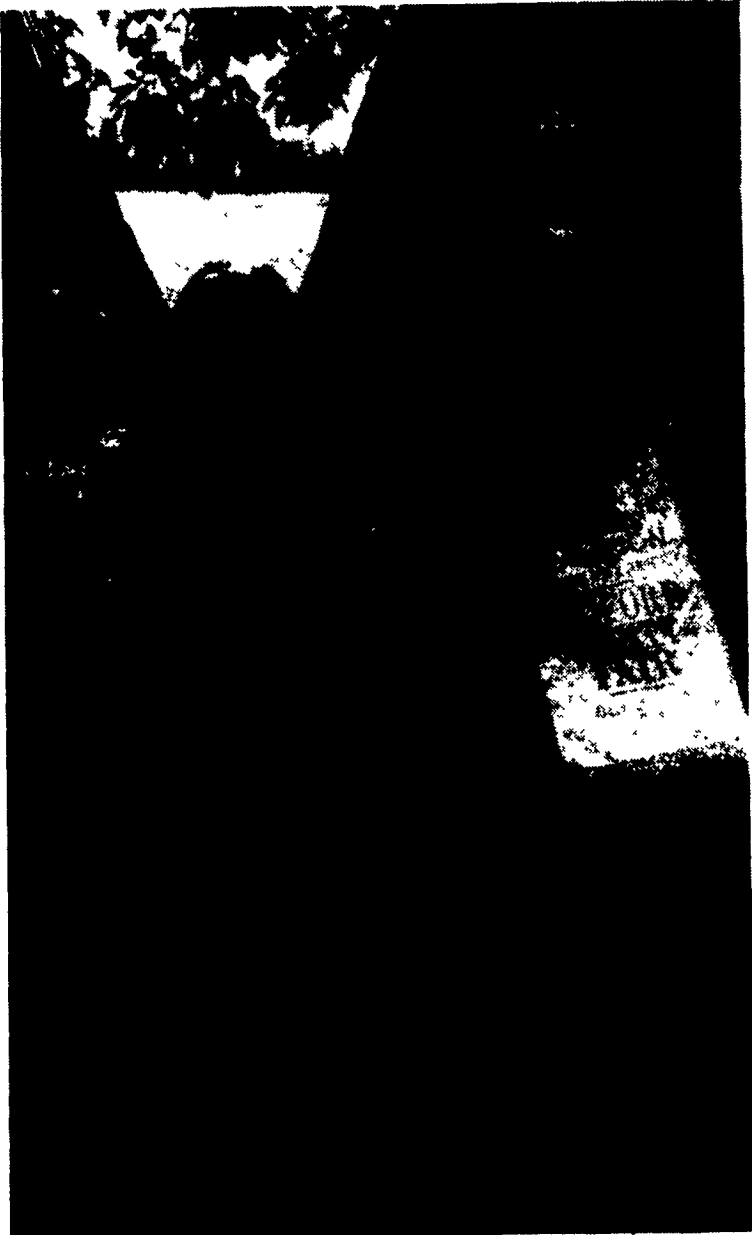
mostly yellow colorations. Some species produce some anthocyanin pigments and together with the carotene and xanthophyll pigments can produce brilliant orange coloration as is found in sugar maple.

Some species such as alders and black locust exhibit little color change and trees such as black walnut, elm, basswood, and sycamore range in color from rusty green to yellow. The yellow and brown coloration of beech and some species of oak is caused by the presence of tannins in the leaves. Poplars, honeylocust, ginkgo, beech, and birch change to yellow of various shades. The most dazzling displays of color are seen in the red, purple, and oranges of red maple, sugar maple, sassafras, sumac, and scarlet oak. Trees of the same species often exhibit different coloration and the color peak can occur at different times.

Any factor that influences the production of carbohydrates will favor anthocyanin formation and

bright autumn colors. These important environmental factors include temperature, light, and water supply. Adequate rainfall during the growing season encourages the production of sugars and carbohydrates and contributes to a better coloration. However, other factors can offset good growing conditions. Maples that have been damaged by pear thrips or trees defoliated by elm spanworm will have less brilliant fall colors as defoliation lessens the amount of carbohydrates in the leaves.

Lowering the temperature above the freezing point favors anthocyanin formation. Severe early frosts actually make autumn colors less brilliant than they would be otherwise. Bright light also favors anthocyanin formation and these bright red colors are often only found in leaves exposed to bright sunlight. Dry conditions in the late summer and fall favor the formation of anthocyanin. Rainy and/or cloudy days during the time this pigment is being formed will decrease the intensity of fall colors.



The twins show off some of the awards they have won through the 4-H club.