

**All Gardens
Great & Small**
by
York Co.
Horticultural Agent
Tom Becker




**Peterson Wins Reading
Fair Award**

Every year the Reading Fair recognizes two outstanding FFA members. These members have to be outstanding in a particular area of agriculture and must be 1996 Keystone Award winners.

Crystal Peterson, member of the Twin Valley FFA, is one of the winners of this prestigious award.

Crystal is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Peterson of Honey Brook. Crystal has been very active in Food For America and Tel-Hai pet therapy, which she was chairperson of for two years. Crystal also served as a chapter officer.

She has helped with tree planting, the county milk shake wagon, the Hay Creek Fall Festival, the American Agriculture Day Breakfast, and has attended the County and Collegiate FFA Leadership Conferences.

She has participated in area dairy foods contests and received a gold and a 3rd place medal in the Pennsylvania FFA Dairy Foods contest. She was a member of the Pennsylvania FFA team which earned a bronze medal in the 1994 national FFA dairy foods contest.

Crystal was also a member of the 3rd place state FFA nursery-landscape team in 1995. She has attended the Made for Excellence and State Legislative Leadership conferences. She received the agricultural processing and horti-

culture foundation medals. Crystal was a 1996 Keystone Degree recipient and one of our chapter stars. Crystal was graduated from Twin Valley in 1996 and looks forward to a career in horticulture.

**Olexa Wins Allentown
Fair Award**

The Allentown Fair presents an award to an outstanding FFA member. They have to be outstanding in a particular area of agriculture and must be a 1996 Keystone Degree recipient. Raina Olexa, member of the Twin Valley FFA, won this award.

Raina is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Marino of Birdsboro, a 1996 graduate of Twin Valley High School, and a member of the Twin Valley FFA at Morgantown.

She is an outstanding example of FFA leadership in action. She served as chairperson of the Twin Valley FFA's Agriculture in the Classroom program this past year. In tis capacity, she was responsible for setting up and organizing 90 programs about agriculture in the elementary schools of the Twin Valley School District. Topics included agriculture is everywhere, agriculture in early America, agriculture at Christmas, plants as food, animals and food, honey and bees, pet care, trees and forestry, wetlands, reptiles and amphibians, rainforests, insects, etc. Most lessons are geared to fit into the science curriculum of the third grade classes.

Raina was responsible for setting up the schedule of classes with the elementary principals and teachers, making sure instructional materials were available, arranging transportation for the agriculture students who were

doing the programs, and helping to prepare the students who did the actual teaching. Each program was about 30 minutes long with most starting with a skit and progressing through hands-on demonstrations and including a worksheet packet to take home.

In March, Raina began to organize the most difficult part of this educational program. She chaired the committee which organized a tour of the high school agriculture facilities for all of the third grade classes. This two-day affair rotated 250 third grades through eight teaching stations at the high school and involved 125 high school agriculture students as presenters.

Raina had to plan for busses and arrange schedules with the three elementary schools, assemble supplies at the high school, schedule high school student presenters so they didn't miss too many other classes, and supervise the actual tours. She has done an outstanding job as the chairperson on these activities and will be missed.

In her spare time, Raina was also involved in the state FFA chorus, participated in the county interview contest, and received silver medals in the state FFA record book contest for records on her pet rabbits and work experience. As a junior she designed and printed a recruitment brochure for our agriculture program as part of a visual communications/agriculture project. She received the agriculture communications proficiency award as a result of this publication.

**Woollybear Forecasts A
'Snow' Job**

I love fall weather. On warm days in the fall, I'm back dodging the woolly bear caterpillars crossing the road. Depending on your location, you may know them as woolly worms or blackened bears.

Can the orange band on the banded woollybear predict a hard or easy winter? In American folk wisdom, a wide band means hard winters and a narrow band means easy winters. Old-timers also say dark on the ends predicts a bad fall and spring. And, a wide (orange) center band means a longer milk period in the middle of winter.

Although fun, folk wisdom has little base in science. Woollybears make very poor forecasters. The banded woollybear (Isa isabella) is actually the hairy caterpillar of the Isabella Tiger Moth. It overwinters as the caterpillar and eventually becomes a small (two inch) yellow moth with a few black dots on the wings. The banded woollybear has a pale yellow, long-haired cousin — the yellow woolly bear (Diacrisia virginica) who turns into a similar-sized and patterned whitish moth.

According to Eric Day, an insect ID specialist for Virginia Cooperative Extension, woollybears do a better job predicting summer weather. How? When woollybears have an abundant food supply in the summer, it's mostly orange. If it had a bad sum-

mer, it will be mostly black.

Others suggest the coloration of the caterpillar indicates the maturity of the caterpillar. But, when is it full grown? The caterpillar is fully grown the closer we get to winter. It should be over two inches long with a broad colored band or red-brown bristles.

Woolly bears feed on mainly wild plants but also on corn, birch, and a wide range of weeds. They frequent meadows, pastures, uncultivated fields, and road edges. They seldom attack crops or ornamental plants in the garden.

Woollybears do have a short life. This is true even before they slowly cross roads perpendicular to traffic. Woollybears seek shelter in the winter and emerge hungry in the spring.

So, if you see an all-black or all-orange caterpillar crossing the road in late October; it's probably not the woollybear. It is more likely the larvae of another caterpillar: the great leopard moth, or, the yellow woollybear. But it's still fun for the great and small gardener to talk about the woolly bears and the weather.

Soon, we'll be checking the hornet's nest or the yellow jackets or crickets to forecast weather. I think not!!!

Any questions regarding the above article can be addressed to Tom Becker, Penn State Cooperative Extension, at (717) 840-7408.



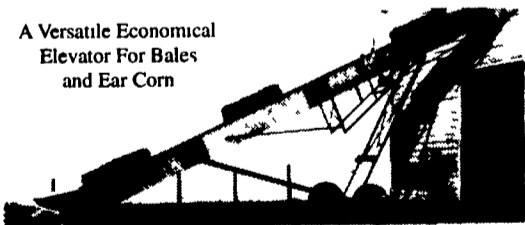
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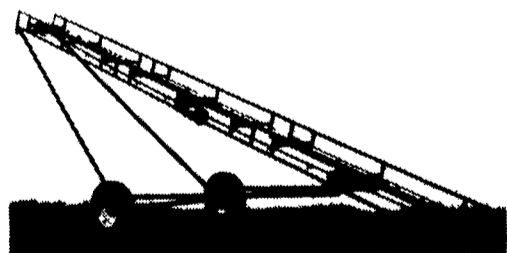
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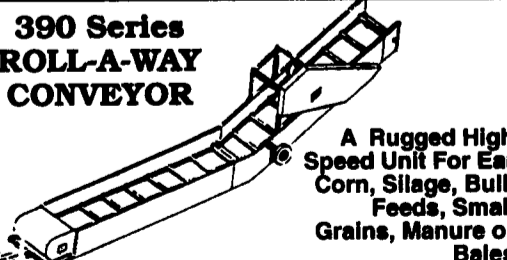


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