

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



along a rippling creek. Autumn-blooming crocus types like the saffron crocus, represent a large group of crocus flowers that resemble the familiar spring blooming crocus. They bloom in September, October, and November in southeast Pennsylvania. *Crocus kotschyanus* is an early bloomer, as easy as Labor Day some years. It has rosy-lavender color flowers used for naturalizing in the landscape. Best of all, all autumn crocus types multiply each succeeding year.

Plant saffron crocus in the spring or late summer, 3 to 4 inches deep in a light peaty or sandy soil. Plant 3 inches apart. Avoid rich heavily fertilized soil for the best flower show. Plant in light shade or full sun. In the late fall and winter, allow their foliage to die naturally without cutting to keep the large flowers erect.

Few realize the saffron crocus is the source of saffron, a pricey thread-like spice sold at farmers markets, grocery stores, or gourmet shops. The saffron consists of

the dark red stigmas (the tips of the pistils on which pollen is deposited during pollination). Mature flowers contain two dangling, long threads which are carefully removed and air dried on paper towels or paper plates. A dark cupboard makes a good environment for drying while air-tight jars work well for final storage. Some

say it takes 4,000 blossoms to provide a source for an ounce of saffron.

Used as a cooking herb, a pinch of saffron adds an unique "one-of-a-kind" flavor and bright yellow color. It adds a wonderful bright yellow color to Pennsylvania Dutch, traditional bread stuffing. Try it in soup, with noodles or as part of cake recipe.

AUTUMN CROCUS

Hidden beneath the collecting leaves of fall blooms is the meadow saffron. Who would have thought an early fall planted bulb (actually a corm) could give a late fall show of color in the same year?

The Saffron crocus, *c.sativus*, has large delicate lavender, purple or white flowers with deep purple veining. The large fragrant flowers have orange-red stigmas used

for flavoring dairy products, preserves and other foods.

Plant saffron crocus in large areas in front of the fall border or tuck them among shrubs and evergreen trees. Tucked between rocks or hidden in a perennial border their short stature of 3 to 6 inches makes them a good rock garden plant. Or, use them in the herb garden along walkways and paths, in pachysandra or vinca groundcover beds, beneath towering trees or

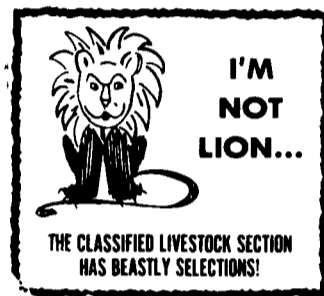
**Better Kid
Care Courses**

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) - Better Kid Care is an educational training program for any child care provider—in home, center, agency, nanny, etc. — sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension in Chester County, Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, Suite 370, West Chester.

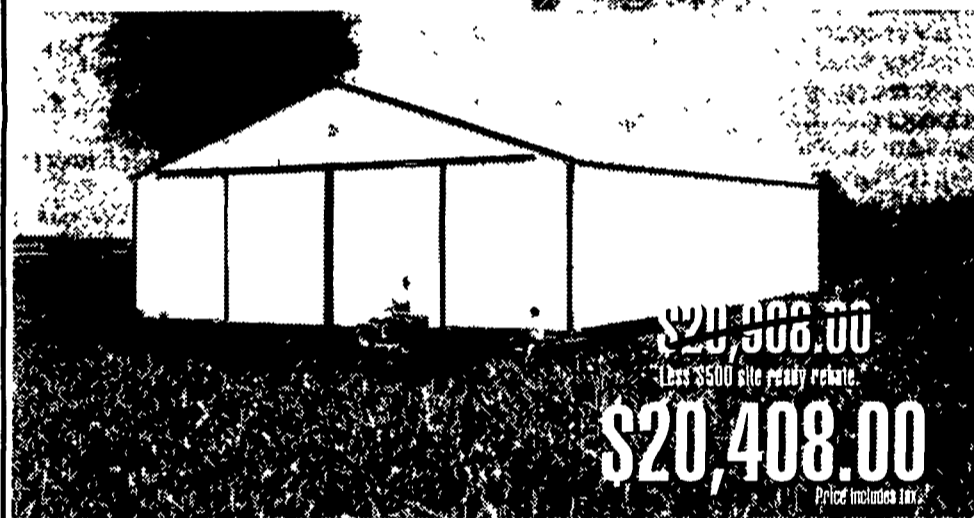
"Learning to Read Before Six?" will be the topic for

Thursday, November 5. "Violence, Kids, Discipline & Keeping Peace" will be held on December 3. Registration for each of these satellite (distance education) programs, which offer DPW credit hours, is \$5 per person due one week in advance. Each program is held from 7:00-9:00 p.m.; seating is limited.

For further information about Better Kid Care, or to receive registration information, contact the Extension office at (610) 696-3500.



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