

Woodland News

SERVICEBERRY BLOOMS: A SURE SIGN OF SPRING

Harry Blanchet
Penn State Cooperative
Extension Agent

Natural events signify the coming of spring for many Pennsylvanians. Some people think of the first robins singing or forsythia bushes blooming as harbingers of spring. Others look for the appearance of white serviceberry blossoms. Serviceberries are shrubs and small trees that grow in woodlands and thickets throughout Pennsylvania. They are easy to overlook during most of the year, but in early spring, they become conspicuous because their blossoms brighten drab woodlands.

Serviceberries are important for wildlife. According to Dr. Susan J. Aldworth of the Botany Department at Iowa State University, at least 22 species of birds and 11 species of mammals eat some part of serviceberry plants. Serviceberry shrubs and trees not only flower early; they also are one of our first trees to produce fruit. Thus, the berries are a significant source of food for nesting and migrating birds that are returning to Pennsylvania from their winter ranges. Catbirds, northern flickers, robins, thrushes, waxwings, orioles, and grosbeaks consume service-

berry fruits in late spring and early summer, while ruffed grouse browse the buds in winter. Serviceberry fruits, bark, buds, and twigs provide nourishment for black bears, beavers, foxes, red squirrels, rabbits, hares, and white-tailed deer.

People as well as wildlife eat serviceberry fruits. Native Americans mixed serviceberries with venison and bear meat to make pemmican. Today, people use serviceberries in pies, jellies, and jams.

One interesting thing to learn about a plant or animal is the origin of its common name. Serviceberry plants also are called sarvisberry, sarvis, shadbush, shadblow, and Juneberry. One possible origin for the name "serviceberry" was to signify the reappearance of circuit-riding preachers in rural parts of the Appalachians after their absence in winter. The preachers conducted services for prayer meetings, weddings, and funerals. Thus, to some people, the blooming of serviceberry trees and shrubs meant preachers would soon be returning to conduct services. The common name "sarvis" may have derived from the way the word "service" sounds in certain dialects. Some authorities dispute the above explanations and believe that both terms refer to a similar English

fruit tree known as "service" or "sarvis."

"Shadbush" or "shadblow" probably originated because the tree blooms at about the same time that shad run up Atlantic Coast rivers to spawn. Juneberry refers to the month when the fruits ripen over much of its range.

Whatever the source of its common names, there are several species of serviceberries and a variety of preferred habitats. For example, some species occur on dry hillsides, while others thrive in wet areas. The growth form can also vary by species. Some tend to become small trees, while others are more shrub-like. As is often the case when there are a variety of forms and habitats, identification to an exact species can be difficult. The identification problem is compounded because nurseries have developed cultivated serviceberries, and there are many naturally occurring hybrids.

Serviceberries are favorite plants for many gardeners and people who enjoy the outdoors. They are native to Pennsylvania and attractive year-round. The flowers brighten dreary spring woodlands and foliage adds color to autumn landscapes. Serviceberries also are an important source of food for wildlife.

The Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program provides private forestland owners with information and assistance to promote healthy and productive forests. Call the Forest Stewardship Program toll free at (800) 235-WISE to request the following free publications that provide more information about serviceberries and wildlife — 1) Forest Stewardship Bulletin #5: Wildlife; 2) Pennsylvania Wildlife #7: Landscaping for Wildlife; and 3) Pennsylvania Wildlife #10: Neighboring Natural Landscaping.

'Greenworks' TV Show Receives Top National Awards

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co) — The "GreenWorks for Pennsylvania" television series has won top honors in the 2001 Videographer Awards.

"The strength of the 'GreenWorks for Pennsylvania' television show is its ability to show people in action," said Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Secretary David E. Hess.

"Pictures provide a much more powerful tool in communicating the message of environmental stewardship to the audience, especially to students."

The GreenWorks program "The Environmental Classroom" received the top honor "Award of Excellence" in the Programs/Community Access category, as well as "Honorable Mention" in the Creativity/Editing category. The episode was edited by Mary Erades.

The Environmental Classroom features students at the Monagacci program at East Hills Middle School in Bethlehem, Northampton County, who are learning more by integrating environmental education into their curriculum.

Another episode, "From the Bay to Pa.," shot by videographer David Sarasti, received an "Award of Distinction" in the Creativity/Cinematography category. This "GreenWorks" episode travels the Chesapeake Bay watershed through areas of Maryland and Pennsylvania to show

how people's actions hundreds of miles away can impact the Bay.

The "GreenWorks" shows awarded were chosen from more than 2,400 entries from the United States and several foreign countries in this year's competition.

"GreenWorks" is produced by the Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania (EFP) in partnership with the DEP. "We are honored to receive these awards for the show," EFP Executive Director Timothy J. Schlitzer said. "Our goal is to inspire everyone to get to get involved with protecting our environment by showing positive stories of people working to do that on 'GreenWorks.'"

EFP funds environmental education and improvement projects from contributions made through payroll-deduction programs set up by employers and the commonwealth, and other donations.

To date, 83 stations in Pennsylvania carry the show. Any broadcast outlet in Pennsylvania may request the series, and copies of each show may be purchased from EFP for a minimal charge.

For a listing of stations carrying GreenWorks and information on particular broadcasts, visit the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, visit the GreenWorks website at www.greenworks.tv or call EFP at 1-877-PAGREEN.

We Salute Our Farming Industry

COME SEE THE NEW Mid-Mount Mowers

From

GRASS HOPPER

Starting as low as

\$6,795

Powder Coated Tough™
Fusion-Bonded Finish for
Chip and Rust-Resistance

GRASSHOPPER DOES IT ALL.

Distributed By:

**LAWN CARE
DISTRIBUTORS INC.**

311 Willow St., Terre Hill, PA 17581

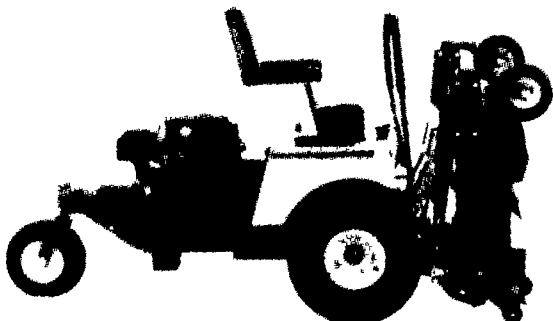
717-445-8431

Call for the name of
your nearest dealer

Financing Available. Call For Details.



Liquid-Cooled
Diesel Model 3210
Gasoline Model 325
Also Available M'428D - 28 HP Diesel



Zero-Turn Grasshoppers
with front mounted mowers
have the DuraMax™ 90°
Flip-Up™ Deck for easy blade
change, storage and transport.



Air-Cooled
Gas Models
220 & 225



Mow Circles around the others.