



Photo by J.M. and E.T.

The Venus flytrap only grows in North Carolina and a small part of South Carolina.

Venus flytrap unique to Carolinas

Carnivorous plant only grows in 75-mile radius around Wilmington

By C.C., R.H. and C.L.

Did you know there are plants in North Carolina that can eat flies, ants, beetles, slugs and spiders, and if hungry enough, maybe even tiny frogs?

Venus flytraps are one of only a few hundred kinds of carnivorous plants, which means they eat meat. Venus flytraps eat insects for extra nutrients, but they also need water, gases and sunlight like other plants.

They only grow in a 75-mile radius around Wilmington.

Venus flytraps were discovered by Arthur Dobbs in 1760 while he was the colonial

governor of North Carolina.

The plant has been protected by state laws since 1956. However, according to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, poachers have been stealing Venus flytraps for decades. They then try to sell them for 25 cents each.

Some conservationists worry the poaching could endanger the existence of the Venus flytrap. Laws have been created to make it a felony crime to poach the Venus flytrap.

If you want to learn more about this meat-eating plant, please visit the following websites.

MORE ABOUT VENUS FLYTRAPS:

- <http://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/venus-flytrap/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/28/us/venus-flytraps-poaching-north-carolina.html>
- <https://www.applepestcontrol.com/5-facts-about-venus-flytraps/>
- <https://www.livescience.com/58021-venus-flytrap-facts.html>
- <https://botany.org/bsa/misc/cam.html>
- <https://www.britannica.com/plant/Venus-flytrap>

OPINION

Say 'no' to straws

By R.H.

I think getting rid of straws is really important because they are killing a lot of animals in the ocean and polluting it, too. That causes danger to the ecosystem.

Animals might think straws are food to eat, and they are not something good for them. Straws are a problem for animals in and out of the ocean, and they contribute to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

Straws and other plastics are so bad for Earth and animals that some places are trying to help the environment by passing laws to ban the use of harmful plastics.

According to fastcompany.com, "New York City, Hawaii and California have pending straw ban legislation." There are also cities in Washington, New Jersey and Florida working to pass laws banning straws. In the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II has banned plastic straws and bottles from all royal estates and cafes. Even Starbucks has vowed to ban all single-use plastic straws by 2020.

MORE INFORMATION #StopSucking:

- <https://www.fastcompany.com/40580132/here-are-the-u-s-cities-that-have-banned-plastic-straws-so-far>
- <https://www.eater.com/2018/7/12/17555880/plastic-straws-environment-pollution-banned-alternatives-ocean-sea-turtle-viral-video>

Help the monarch

By M.B. and X.M.M.

Close your eyes. Imagine a butterfly. Most likely, you have imagined a monarch butterfly, with its beautiful attributes. Monarch butterflies are becoming an endangered species of butterfly.

According to The Wildlife Society, "a decision will be made in June 2019 on whether the monarch butterfly will be placed on the endangered or threatened species list."

Each year in both spring and fall, the migration brings the monarch

butterflies to North Carolina. Monarchs have bright colors of orange and white, and black outlines on their wings. The colors warn predators that they are poisonous. These wonderful creatures do not eat nectar from flowers like other butterflies do. Instead, they eat a plant called milkweed. This plant might seem harmless, but milkweed is poisonous. The monarch is able to eat it, and that is where this beauty gets poison.

Monarch butterflies are decreasing in numbers

How You Can Help Save the Monarch Butterfly:

- <http://nc-culture.com/monarch-butterflies-will-we-lose-them-how-nc-can-help/>
- <https://monarchjointventure.org/get-involved/create-habitat-for-monarchs/#prettyPhoto>

because of loss of habitat and climate change. Their source of food, milkweed, is being destroyed by the use of pesticides. You can help by creating a monarch waystation and growing milkweed.

Honeybees vital pollinators in NC

By V.P.-C. and T.R.-S.

Honeybees were named the official state insect of North Carolina in 1973. It is actually an official state symbol in 17 states, but honeybees are not even native to our country. They are from Europe.

Honeybees are important in North Carolina because they are pollinators. They pollinate cotton, fruits,

vegetables, flowers and more. They make honey, which is used in foods for people. They help plants survive because they grow and produce more plants. People can eat the fruits and vegetables and breathe the air produced by the plants.

People can grow plants in their gardens to attract bees. They can also create bee homes.

Florence wrecks havoc

By A.A., A.N. and E.M.

Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina on Sept. 13, and caused a lot of damage.

The rain caused flooding in several parts of the state. As a result, at least 110 hog lagoons overflowed. Hog lagoons hold pig waste, and when they overflow it enters the environment polluting in the soil and water. When pig waste enters rivers, it can cause algae blooms and kill mass numbers of fish and wildlife.

The flooding also caused the deaths of many livestock animals. As of Sept. 18, it was reported that 3.4 million chickens and turkeys, and 5,500 hogs had drowned in the flood waters.

In addition, the hurricane caused crop losses. At press time, farmers were still determining the damage to crops including tobacco, corn, soybeans, sweet potatoes and cotton.

By C.C.

TOP CROPS OF NC

- Tobacco
- Soybeans
- Corn
- Apples
- Peaches
- Hay
- Cotton
- Peanuts
- Sweet Potatoes
- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Wheat

TOP LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS OF NC

- Hogs
- Milk
- Eggs
- Turkeys
- Beef Cattle
- Ducks
- Broilers

(5-12 week-old chickens)
 Source: www.netstate.com/economy/nc_economy.htm



Photo by J.M. and E.T.

North Carolina is the #1 producer of sweet potatoes in the United States.

NC ranks 1st in sweet potatoes

Nearly 60 percent of the U.S. supply of sweet potatoes comes from our state

By M.B., E.M. and D.R-X.

Did you know the state of North Carolina is the number one producer of sweet potatoes in the country? Well, it is, and that is because of the moist, hot climate and rich, fertile soil.

Almost 60 percent of the U.S. supply of sweet potatoes comes from North Carolina. Native Americans grew this sweet treat all the way back in 1492 before the colonists arrived. In the 16th century, the southern states were also inspired to grow sweet potatoes so everyone could have a taste of this healthy vegetable.

If it is sweet, then it must be unhealthy you may be asking. Well, it actually provides benefits for your health instead. They provide vitamin A, fiber, potassium, and carbohydrates, and they are only 100 calories.

Besides being healthy, sweet potatoes are unique in how they look. With its red-orange peel and bright orange inside, a sweet potato pops out beside other potatoes.

Maybe you would like to make sweet potatoes for your next holiday meal.

SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Ingredients

Filling:

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, (more for the dish)
- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes (3 to 4 large potatoes)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 cup brown sugar (packed)
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs

Topping:

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans

Directions

- For the filling: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F and butter a 2-quart baking dish. Whisk together the butter, mashed sweet potatoes, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, salt and the eggs in a large bowl. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.
 - For the topping: Combine the flour, brown sugar, butter and salt in a medium bowl until moist and the mixture clumps together. Stir in the pecans and spread over the top of the sweet potatoes in an even layer. Bake until mostly set in the center and golden on top, 25 to 30 minutes. Serve hot.
- Source: foodnetwork.com

Peanuts among top cash crops for state

Southern farming owes thanks to Dr. Carver's contributions

By X.M.M. and D.R-X.

Peanuts are in the top 10 cash crops for North Carolina. It is one of the top-producing states for peanuts. A cash crop is a crop that makes money for those who produce it.

According to the Plant Pathology Extension of North Carolina State University, peanuts grow on more than 90,000 acres in our state. They grow from May through late September, and farmers harvest them from "late September to mid-October."

Have you ever heard of George Washington Carver? He was born a slave, but he later became an important person who discovered many ways to use peanuts. According to the American Peanut Council, "Dr. Carver proposed that peanuts be planted as a rotation crop in the

MORE ABOUT PEANUTS:

- <https://www.peanutsusa.com/about-peanuts/the-peanut-industry/7-peanuts-a-brief-history.html>
- <https://www.biography.com/news/george-washington-carver-facts-national-peanut-month>
- <https://plantpathology.ces.ncsu.edu/pp-field-crops/pp-field-crops-peanuts>

cotton-growing areas of the Southeast where the boll weevil insect threatened the region's agricultural base. Not only did Dr. Carver contribute to changing the face of southern farming, but he also developed more than 300 uses for peanuts, from recipes to industrial products."

CLASSIC PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

Ingredients

- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda

Source: Allrecipes.com

Directions

- Cream butter, peanut butter, and sugars together in a bowl; beat in eggs.
- In a separate bowl, sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt; stir into butter mixture. Put dough in refrigerator for 1 hour.
- Roll dough into 1 inch balls and put on baking sheets. Flatten each ball with a fork, making a crisscross pattern. Bake at 375 degrees F for about 10 minutes or until cookies begin to brown.