

MASTER GARDEN SERIES

February 29, 2009



"Be careful Clara, that's a fine specimen." 1908 Postcard

LEAP YEAR FOLK TRADITIONS

St. Bridget's Complaint

In 5th century Ireland, St. Bridget complained to St. Patrick about women having to wait for so long for a man to propose. According to legend, St. Patrick said the yearning females could propose on this one day in February during the leap year.

February 29th in English Law

According to English law, February 29th was ignored and had no legal status. Women reasoned that since the leap year day existed to fix a problem in the calendar, it could also be used to fix an old and unjust custom that only let men propose marriage.

The first documentation of this practice dates back to 1288, (supposedly but

disputed) when Scotland passed a law that allowed women to propose marriage to the man of their choice in that year. They also made it law that any man who declined a proposal in a leap year must pay a fine. The fine could range from a kiss to payment for a silk dress or a pair of gloves.

Sadie Hawkins Day

In the United States, some people have referred to this date as Sadie Hawkins Day with women being given the right to run after unmarried men to propose.

Sadie Hawkins was a female character in the Al Capp cartoon strip Li'l Abner, "the homeliest gal in the hills". Many communities prefer to celebrate Sadie Hawkins Day in November, which is when Al Capp first mentioned Sadie Hawkins Day in 1937.

Source: www.Wikipedia.com;
www.about.com; <http://www.lil-abner.com/>

Late February Gardening Tips

Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about 3 weeks.

Late winter is the time to prune many deciduous trees. Look over your plants now and remove dead, dying, or unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk and crossed branches.

Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.

Don't remove mulch from perennials too early. A warm day may make you think spring is almost here but there may be more cold weather yet to come.



Hillbilly Break Food

<http://www.hillbillyhousewife.com/>

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Butter
Apple Butter
Peach Tartlets
Mini Corn Dogs
Tea

At the hillbilly link above, you will find some \$45.00 emergency menus and a

free newsletter by email. They promise
not to sell your name.