

SUMMER 2021

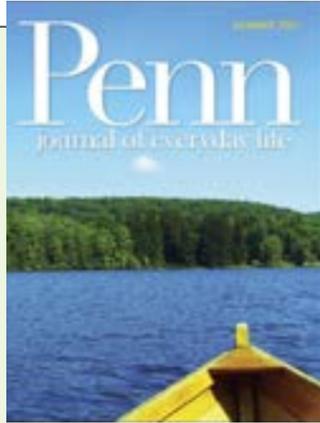
# Penn

journal of everyday life



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## Seasonal: *Picnic*

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**W**e can't wait to get the grill and the old picnic table out of their winter storage for a family barbecue. We make German potato salad, marinate Delmonico steaks overnight and relish fresh corn on the cob. We also bring out

the patriotic dishes, vintage Hartstone red, white and blue. During Covid-19, we used paper plates and plastic cups but, now that we are all fully vaccinated, it's nice to bring out the pottery for our picnics once again. We like the rustic look. Still, maybe this is the summer we will get around to giving the picnic table and benches a new coat of stain.

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## Seasonal: *Firepit & S'mores*

**W**e spent a lot of time outdoors last summer, so we bought a little firepit for cookouts and s'mores. We had forgotten how much fun it was. When we were kids, we used a stripped green branch

to put the marshmallows over the fire. Now we use telescoping metal forks with different color handles to identify each user. But the best thing is, hot dogs and s'mores around the fire taste just as good as when we were kids. Bonus, the firepit gives us a chance to use the branches we collected from the lawn.

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Seasonal: *S'mores Popcorn*

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**T**here are always left-overs after a picnic, so here is one simple way we use up the s'mores fixings. With the recipe from Rice Crispies Treats, we melt marshmallows until they start to caramelize, then stir in popcorn and sprinkle with chocolate chips or broken chocolate bars to make an untraditional s'mores treat.





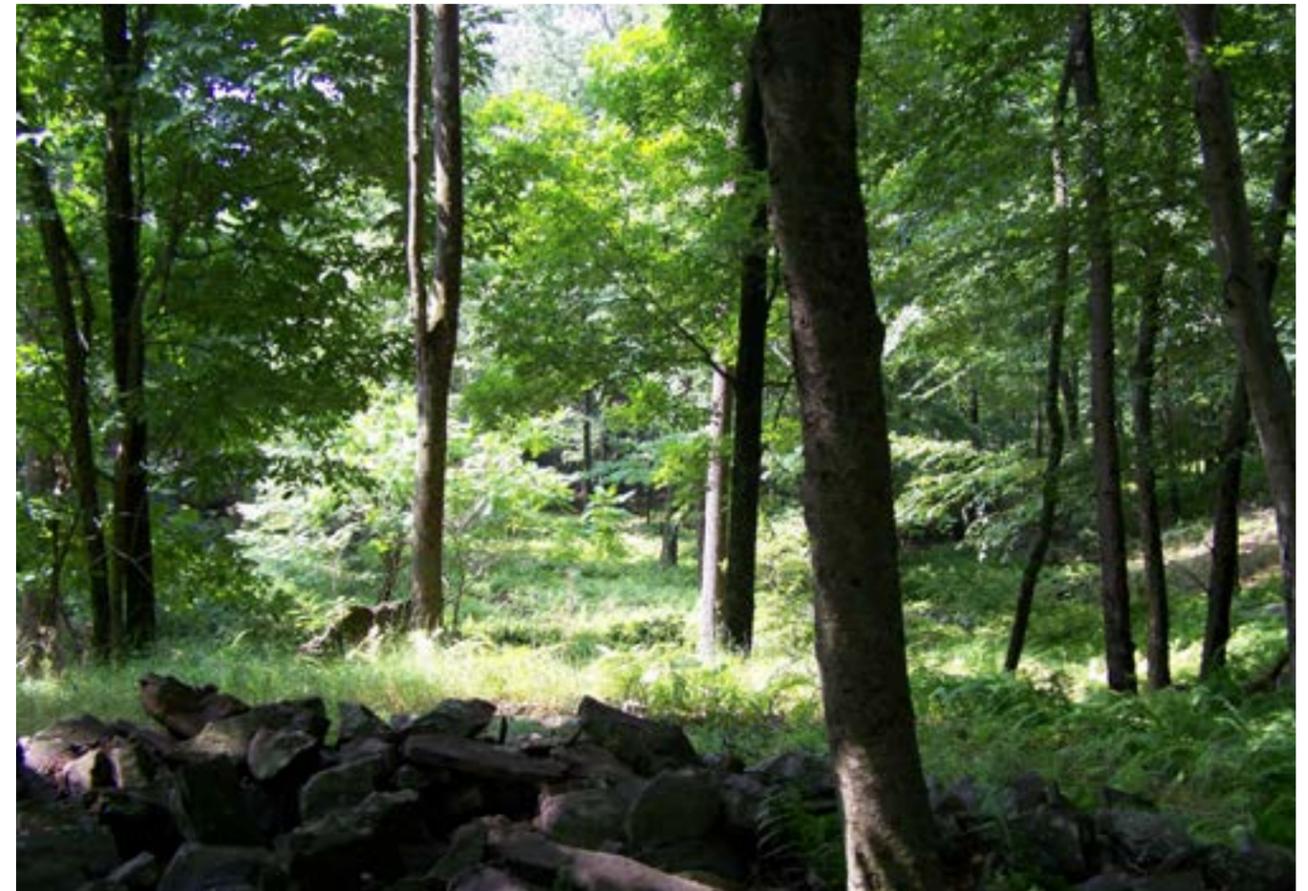
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## Day Trip: *Skytop*

**W**hile Skytop Lodge is most well known for its luxurious facilities, restaurants and events hosting, the real star is the 5,500 acres on which it all takes place. The property is open for exploration, though it really is intended for guests. However, an overnight stay is not required. According to the reservations office, you can just come for golf, lunch, dinner and take a hike or quiet walk.

Skytop chose the Olmsted Brothers landscape architects of Boston (their father designed Central Park) to choose the site for

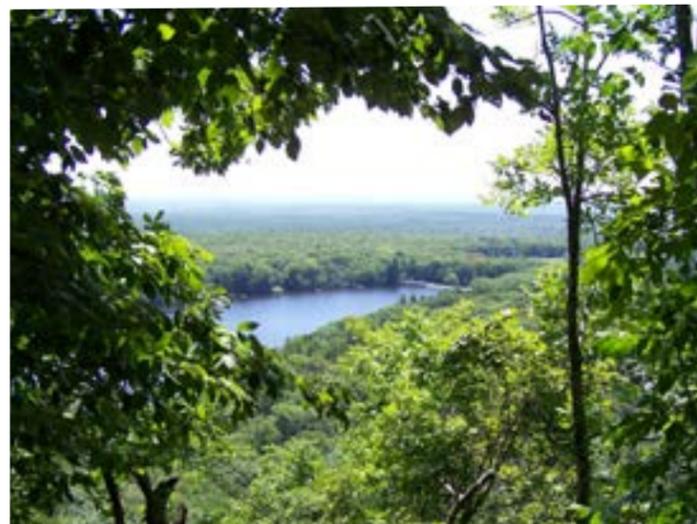


## Day Trip: *Skytop*

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the main lodge. The extraordinary building takes your breath away when you drive onto the property for the first time and see the massive stone lodge on the hill overlooking the lake.

Our family spent several summers having reunions at Skytop, then Susan worked there parttime in activities. So Skytop is a special place for us. We love the lake, the walk around the lake, the walk to the waterfalls. It is all a lovely serene place to spend a few hours, even if you can't stay overnight.





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## Art: Gary Kresge's Windows

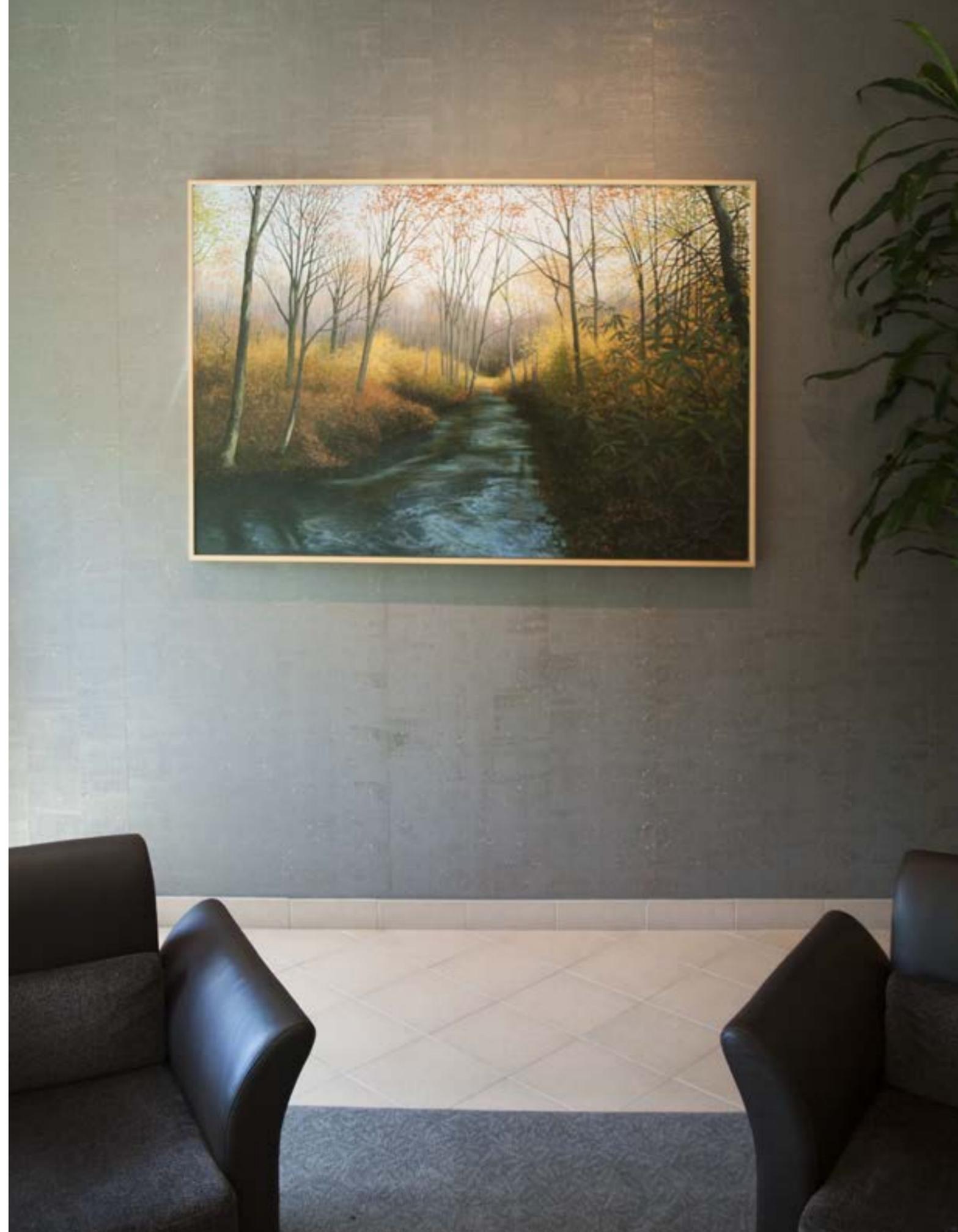


**G**ary Kresge was an extraordinary landscape painter, born in 1942 and raised in Monroe County. His last name is well known in the region. He attended Stroudsburg High School, graduated in 1960 and enlisted in the Marine Corps. After serving four years, Kresge went on to Pratt Institute where he graduated with honors.

Kresge and his wife returned home to the Poconos in the 1970s. He worked as a welfare caseworker for many years while

painting in his free time. Kresge enjoyed the outdoors and, according to his family, he had a “deep reverence for the land.” His beautiful work was also critically acclaimed locally, becoming the first artist to be inducted into the Pocono Arts Council Hall of Fame in 2012.

Gary Kresge's paintings can be found in corporate and private collections, at U. S. Embassies as well as locally. Skytop Lodge *Above, Field at the end of 27th Street*, Chestnut Hill Gallery, Philadelphia. *Right*, ESSA Bank and Trust, Stroudsburg.





has three Kresge paintings in their new wing. The Hughes Library, Main Branch of the Eastern Monroe Public Library, has a large painting on the first floor and a smaller lithograph on the second floor. The ESSA Corporate headquarters has a lovely Kresge landscape hanging in their lobby. The Lehigh Valley Hospital Cancer Center in East Stroudsburg reportedly has several paintings by Gary Kresge. Unfortunately we could not locate them. Keep an eye out if you are visiting the hospital to see if you can find Kresge's work. We would love to visit them.

Kresge is quoted on the Chestnut Hill Gallery website, "Many of the places I have painted have succumbed to development

and what had been a rural and small town area is experiencing unbridled growth with negative impact on watersheds and quality of life in general. Perhaps in my own way I can help educate my audience to value the green world around them and preserve it as much as possible. " He gave us these windows to preserve our beautiful past. Diagnosed with Frontotemporal Degeneration (FTD) in 2014, Kresge required around-the-clock care by his family and then hospice. Gary Kresge died on January 6, 2019.

*Above, Upper Field, Chestnut Hill Gallery, Philadelphia. Right, Lake Lenape, Hughes Library, Stroudsburg.*



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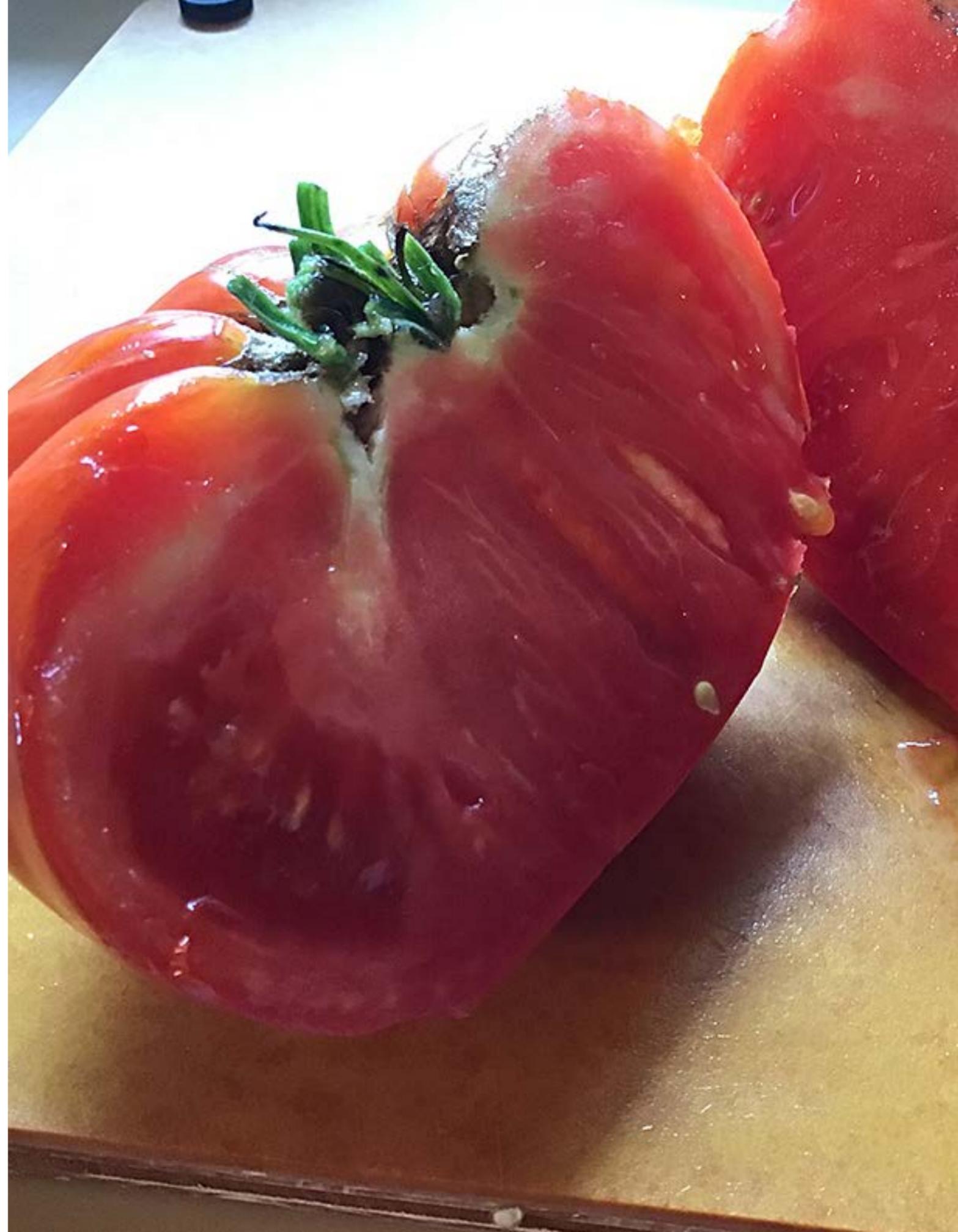
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## Harvest: *Tomatoes*

**G**rowing tomatoes has become a thing with us. For a few years we had trouble getting started. We were plagued with blossom end rot. Then it became a race to find and remove the horn worms before they destroyed our crop. We started by growing tomatoes in pots and then moved to growing them in soil. We recently experimented with heirloom varieties. The Cherokee Purple tomatoes were just a delight. We are cautiously confident now that when we put out tomatoes, we will get good results. We plant by putting bone meal in the hole or pot and then the plants. We look daily for varmints and insects.

The moment we wait for is the making of the first tomato sandwich. Our preference is toasted homemade sourdough bread, fresh lettuce, mayonnaise with a little salt and pepper. We joke that we stand over the kitchen sink to eat it, looking out the window—the way generations before us have. It's a little less messy that way. The crumbs fall into the sink, but the tomato juice and mayo still run down your chin. It is a sure sign of summer and reminiscent of many summers past.

*Right*, Big Boy variety of tomato. Tomato sandwich on toasted homemade sourdough bread. *Far right*, first slice of our homegrown tomatoes. Nice and meaty.



**W**e look forward every summer to making Martha Stewart's *Cherry Tomato, Bocconcini and Zucchini Pie*. It's an old recipe but available online. The flaky crust and fresh garden vegetables make it worth turning on the oven—even on a hot day. If we can't find bocconcini, we substitute mozzarella. Pressed for time, we use a good prepared pie crust.

Another favorite is a tomato tart. Using prepared pastry dough sheets, we layer whatever we have handy including pesto, cheeses, fresh basil and tomatoes topped with grated Parmesan then bake until golden.



Harvest: *Tomatoes*

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Caprese salad is our favorite summer lunch. Tomatoes from the garden, fresh mozzarella, good olive oil, sea salt and pepper. We like to have it with multigrain crackers or toasted fresh-baked French bread.

And, of course, homemade tomato sauce. Our Italian friends called it gravy. In a good growing season, we have more tomatoes than we can manage so we start canning before we lose one bit of the beautiful fruit. While we have made our own pasta, mostly we buy dry pasta.





We put a lot of other vegetables in our tomato sauce—carrots and celery. We can a half dozen quart jars at a time and mark them with labels that easily come off so we can reuse the jars. At the beginning of the season, we may replenish our jars and lids.

We do not season our sauce. Once we open a jar for cooking, we add onion, garlic, salt, pepper and other herbs and spices to suit the recipe. Our canned sauce is just plain vegetables with a little bit of lemon juice.





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## Celebration: *Sorbets & Ice Cream*

**W**e found a 2008 *New York Times* recipe for making an easy sorbet at home. We had an orchard nearby that canned their own peaches without sugar, leaving just the lovely peach flavor. You

can use commercial canned peaches. We freeze the can. Once hard, roughly chop the peaches, then pulse the frozen peaches with yogurt in a processor. Serve it right away or put the sorbet into a covered storage dish and freeze until it's time for dessert. We've used strawberries, mixed berries and lemon



## Celebration: *Sorbets & Ice Cream*

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with delicious results. Which led us to buy a Cuisinart 2-quart ice cream machine. It's a bit noisy, but makes perfect iced treats every time. Away we went experimenting with flavors and ingredients. Our most-made combination is blackberries, blueberries and strawberries frozen yogurt. We tried cream cheese as the dairy instead of yogurt, milk or cream. The only problem we have encountered is that if we didn't use the ice

cream right away, it became a solid block.

To solve this, we started placing the finished ice cream in divided trays. We found large ice cube trays worked well. Silicone molds for making fancy dessert bombs worked really well too, making a round scoop of ice cream. Brought out of the freezer and plated at the start of the meal, the ice cream was a consistency easy to spoon when it was time for dessert.



*Below*, mixed berry frozen yogurt, frozen in silicone bomb molds. *Right*, Cuisinart ice cream maker churning peach ice cream.





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## Garden: *Butterfly Garden*



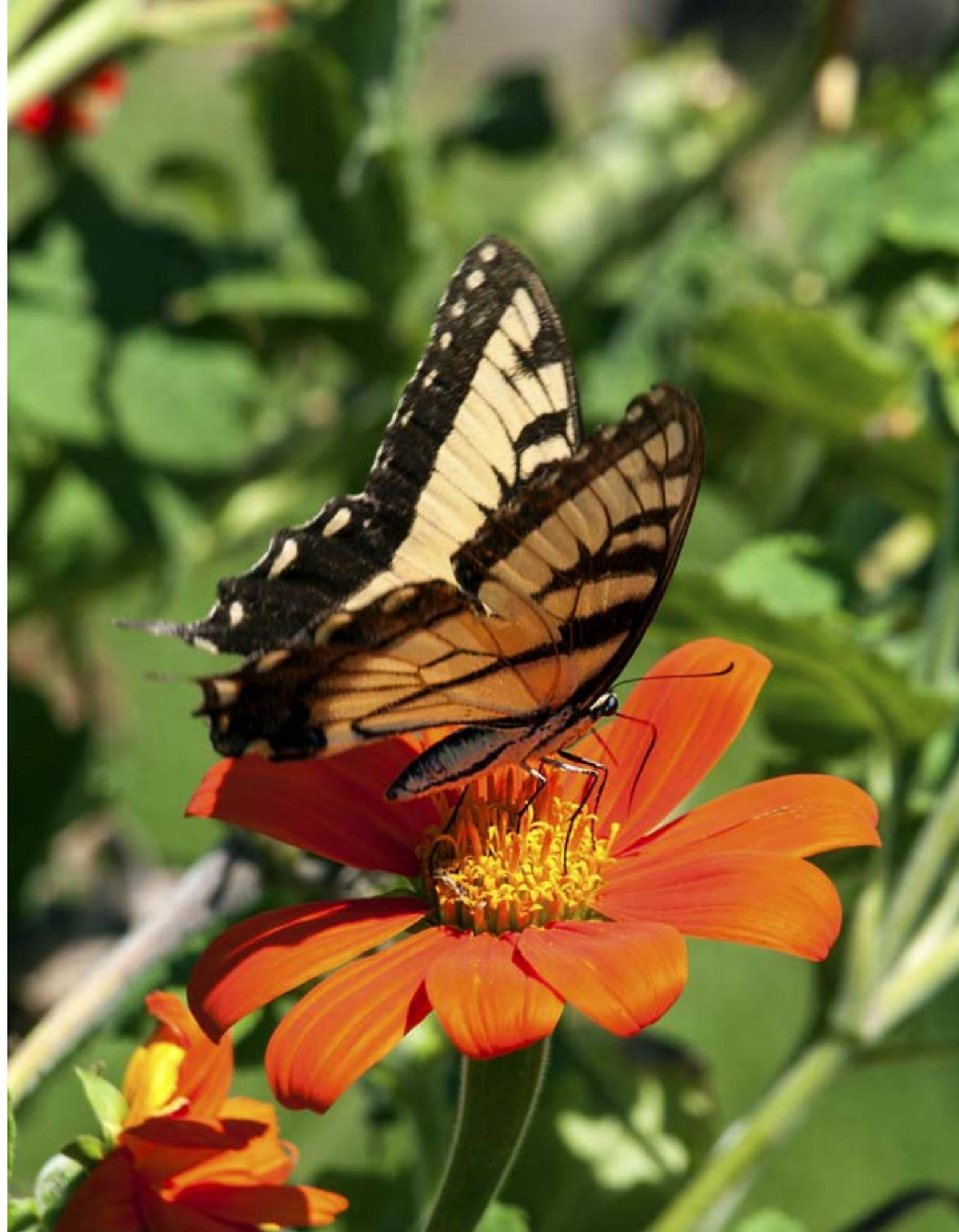
**T**he idea of a butterfly garden evokes images of beautiful butterflies and lush flowers. The reality is even better. The first such garden we visited was in Cape May, Leaming's Run Gardens. It was a lovely stroll through beautifully designed gardens. At the end, you could even buy the seeds of the remarkable plants that you had discovered. The gardens were full of butterflies and hummingbirds.

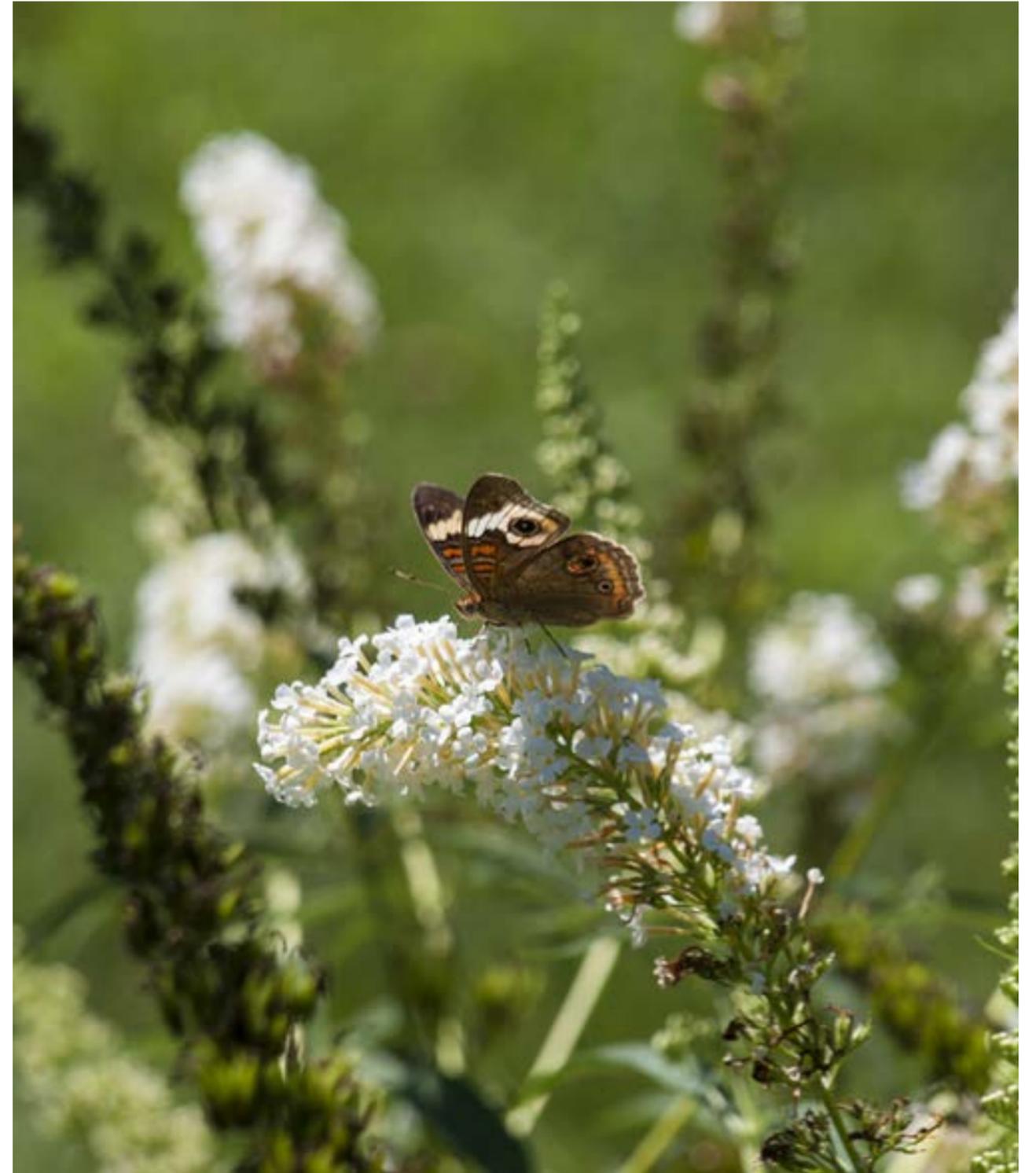
The first butterfly garden we visited in Pennsylvania was at Thomason's Olde Thyme Herb Farm near East Berlin. Where Leming's Run was a park, Thomason's was just one garden on their farm that presented

a variety of programs throughout the year.

The experience of visiting other people's gardens gave us the idea to put in a section of our own garden with plants designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. We found a bundle of seed targeted to that purpose and put them between the tomatoes and lettuce. The instructions warned us not to weed the first year, until we saw a season's growth and came to recognize the flower plants. Needless to say, this first summer is weedy while we wait for the beautiful creatures to arrive.

*Above, Leaming's Run Gardens. Right, Thomason's Olde Thyme Herb Farm.*





*Left and above, views from Thomason's Olde Thyme Herb Farm in East Berlin.*



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## Crafts: *Fairy Gardening*



**H**as the fairy gardening bug bit you yet? If you have children, grandchildren, young neighbors or visitors, it's worth the time it takes to make a fairy garden just to see their smiles.

There is a kind of a hesitation, trying to decide if fairies are real and if this is really where they live. It is wonderful to watch their faces. It is also fun to make, to search out the tiny plants and accessories. This year Amazon and Etsy were rich sources, but in





past years we also found our local Ace hardware store, Cashman's in East Berlin, had a lovely display and a large variety of plants and pieces for sale. *Above and right*, fairy gardens designed by Cashman's Ace hardware. *Left*, our first fairy garden attempt.



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## Local Eats: *Corn Fest at the Round Barn*



**Y**ou may find yourself asking, why is this barn round? There are so few of them left to see. The Shakers apparently built the first round barns.

According to this barn's website, the Shakers "believed the circle to be the most perfect shape (the devil couldn't trap you in the corner)." The history of their building of this

round barn began in 1924. The family had seen a round barn in Hershey.

The Round Barn in Biglerville is worth a visit any time of the year, but in July we look forward to the Corn Fest. This is the 18th year of the picnic.

There is music and, inside the barn, a place to sit and cool off. The meal starts with bushels of their own grown sweet corn,





roasted over an applewood fire. It's interesting to watch for a few minutes, but we feel sorry for the people tending the fires — a very hot and steamy job.

We have tasted their delicious pulled pork sandwiches (made with a secret family recipe according to their advertising for the event) and chicken cooked to perfection. This year they also promise grilled peach sundaes. Starting at noon, there are lots of activities going on all day. But we are there to enjoy the food and to spend time exploring a rare round barn.

We always take the time to visit the farm store at the ground level of the barn complex where we find pickles, Whoopee pies, fresh baked goods and lots of local fruits and vegetables. There is an outdoor picnic area and animals to watch.

*Left*, grilled chicken and roast corn. *Right*, a pulled pork sandwich and view inside the barn on Corn Fest day. A lovely way to spend an afternoon in Pennsylvania.





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## Home Sweet Home: *Savoring the Garden*

**O**ur most anticipated activity of the summer is harvesting, cooking and baking with the fruits, herbs and vegetables of the region. Pennsylvania peaches are spectacular. They are the size of softballs and so juicy it runs down your chin. Perfect for eating outdoors on the back steps. Adams County is just one regional area of the state where peaches thrive. We love to drive down the roads that are lined with orchards and often buy from the bins

at Hollabaugh's in Biglerville. They also ship, and we have Hollabaugh's send boxes to family and friends. As to what we do with our peaches other than enjoy them in hand, we make an almond cake smothered in fresh peach slices. We also make peach cobbler in a cast iron pan in the oven.

Strawberries are another favorite of the season. We buy flats of the berries at Heckman Orchards in Effort. We make shortcake, scones and meringue covered with fresh, sliced berries and whipped





cream. In July, we pick up big gorgeous sweet blueberries from the Gettysburg Kiwanis. They sell 10-pound boxes as a fundraiser each year. It's easy and enjoyable to mix berries for fresh fruit salad. Then we freeze them, can jam and toppings to be used later on toast, biscuits or cheesecake.



Our final fruit indulgence is cherries. The season is so short, we crave when they first show up at the market. Our preference is for dark, sweet cherries.

Again, once we have eaten them by the handful, we make cobbler and sauce for our homemade cheesecake. Preserved, the cherries make a special treat for our oatmeal and porridge when the cold weather comes.







The herb we grow in most abundance is basil. This year we grew it in raised beds in the yard and in a hydroponic system on the porch. It is much easier to grow it hydroponically. There are no bugs or pests to battle indoors. Outdoors we buy live ladybugs to take care of the mites rather than using chemical sprays.

Once we have had our fill of linguine, tortellini and pirogies with pesto, we make homemade sourdough bread toasted with a smear of pesto, a fresh tomato slice and shaved Parmesan cheese. Fresh cracked pepper gives it a bite.

When we get more basil than we can manage, we chop it up with a good olive oil and freeze it in ice cube trays. Once frozen, we double bag the cubes and put them in the freezer. Two cubes are enough to make pesto for two servings of linguine in the winter. Long after the garden is gone.





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# Best Views: *Memorable Sunsets*



Sunset in the back yard. Previous pages, Sunset from the Pennsylvania Memorial at Gettysburg.

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## *Penn, journal of everyday life*

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