

# Tom's Garden

## Blog June 2021



### Powdery Mildew

There are many different species of the fungal disease powdery mildew, and each species attacks a different range of plants. Unlike many other fungal diseases, powdery mildew thrives in warm, dry weather, though it does require high humidity to spread. In cooler, rainy areas, it does not spread as well. It can, however, infect plants under a wide variety of conditions.

When the fungus begins to take over one of your plants, the mildew that forms is made up of many spores. These spores carry the infection to other plants via the wind. Spore production gives fungi the ability to travel great distances. The spores are easily picked up by water, wind, animals and gardeners. Prevention is the key to success. Powdery mildew can slow down the growth of a plant or even kill the plant.

### How to identify powdery mildew

- Plants infected with powdery mildew look as if they have been dusted with flour
- Powdery mildew usually starts off as circular, powdery white spots, which can appear on leaves, stems and sometimes fruit.
- Powdery mildew usually covers the upper part of the leaves, but may grow on the underside as well.
- Young foliage is most susceptible to damage. Leaves turn yellow and dry out.
- The fungus may cause some leaves to twist, break, or become disfigured.
- The white spots of powdery mildew will spread to cover most of the leaves or affected areas.

### Prevention

One of the best ways to prevent fungal disease is to choose disease resistant varieties of plants for your area. Avoid watering plants from above. Prune crowded areas to increase air circulation. Spray plants with fungicide; sulfur, copper, lime-sulfur, neem oil, or potassium bicarbonate. You can also mix 1 tsp baking soda in one quart of water for a spray.

## Three things that butterflies need besides flowers and host plants

**1** A mud puddle. You can fill a shallow saucer with sand and pebbles. Butterflies use a shallow puddle to get a drink, they can't swim and don't like to get wet. The sand and stones supply minerals that they need.

**2** Use up those over-ripe bananas and other fruit. Butterflies are attracted to rotten fruit and also like salt.

**3** When it is cold butterflies can't fly. Place flat rocks in a sunny part of the garden and you will find butterflies resting there to warm up.

## Tomato: Fruit or Vegetable?

Technically-botanically- a tomato is a fruit. In fact, so are many of the so-called "veggies" that we gardeners enjoy growing.

Politically however, it's a different story. In 1893, the Supreme Court ruled the tomato a vegetable in order to be able to levy duties on imported tomatoes as "foreign vegetables."

In subsequent years, other produce which are technically fruit were also "ruled" vegetables. Oddly, rhubarb-a vegetable- was ruled to be a fruit.

Vegetables are generally grouped into leaf, fruiting, flowering, podded, stem, bulb and root types.

Examples of vegetables include: Cabbage, cauliflower, spinach, peas, potato and carrot.

A fruit is a part of a plant that holds the seeds and aids in their dispersal. Examples of fruits include: Grapes, melon, lemon, tomato, peach, mango and gooseberry.

## Top 10 Most Common Bird Blogs

You can get your bird fix 24/7 on any of these sites.

### **10,000 Birds**

[10000birds.com](http://10000birds.com)

### **America Birding Association Blog**

[blog.aba.org](http://blog.aba.org)

### **Lee's Bird Watching Adventures**

[leesbird.com](http://leesbird.com)

### **BirdingBlogs.com**

[birdingblogs.com](http://birdingblogs.com)

### **Nemesis Bird**

[nemesisbird.com](http://nemesisbird.com)

### **Birdchick Blog**

[birdchick.com/blog.htm](http://birdchick.com/blog.htm)

### **Bill of the Birds**

[billofthebirds.blogspot.com](http://billofthebirds.blogspot.com)

### **Birding is Fun**

[birdingisfun.com](http://birdingisfun.com)

### **Urban Hawks**

[urbanhawks.blogs.com](http://urbanhawks.blogs.com)

### **Bird Ecology Study Group**

[besgroup.org](http://besgroup.org)

# JUNE

Named for the Roman goddess Juno, patroness of marriage and the well-being of women. Also from the Latin word juvenis, “young people.”

Birthflower for June is the rose.

Symbolizes love, gratitude and appreciation.

## Johnny Jump Up

Johnny jump up is one of many names for the three-colored wild violet. The name refers to the habit of the seeds exploding from the flower, resulting in plants “jumping up” everywhere. Many species of violets do this (which is why many are considered weeds) but only this one particular violet earned this name.

This plant is mentioned often in poetry and literature from long ago.

Heartsease is another name used for Johnny jump up. Two reasons for the name are provided. The first from its use as an herbal supplement to ease pain and anxiety. Using it put ones heart at ease. The second is that it was used in love potions and charms. I think this reason is much more romantic.

These plants need no labor or maintenance. Violas include garden pansies and many other violets. Plant a few between stones in a sunny spot where they can have free rein and they will be a joy for years to come.

## Giant Silkworms

The giant silkworms (Saturniidae family) include the largest caterpillars that can be found, with some more than 5 inches long.



All feed on leaves of trees and shrubs, and individual caterpillars consume impressive amounts toward the end of their life cycle, usually in mid to late summer. Rarely are they abundant enough to cause significant damage. Their presence is mostly a curiosity or even a source of wonder because of their large size and appearance.

Adults, often known as **royal moths**, are large moths that may have a wingspan exceeding 6 inches. Adults do not feed and thus die a few days after emergence from the cocoon. Moths are usually present in late spring or early summer.



Source: “Garden Insects of North America”  
Whitney Cranshaw and David Shetlar

