



October 2005

BARC is part of the USDA's Agricultural Research Service and encompasses programs at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center; the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.; and worksites in Chatsworth, New Jersey; Presque Isle, Maine; and McMinnville, Tennessee. BARC is the largest and most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. BARC's record of accomplishments and its ongoing programs have made it a world leader in agricultural research.

Blowing Our Own Horn!

AWARD WINNING PEPPER CULTIVAR

ALL AMERICA SELECTIONS WINNER BARC scientists have developed a new award winning pepper cultivar, Black Pearl. Black Pearl was designated an All-American



Selections (AAS) 2006 Flower and Vegetable Award Winner after completion of national trials in 2004. It was developed for ornamental use and bears distinctive black foliage and bright red upright clusters of small round fruit. The vibrant fruit and foliage colors of this new cultivar add interest to the summer and fall garden. Black Pearl was co-developed by **Dr. John Stommel** of the Vegetable Laboratory and **Dr. Robert Griesbach** of the Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit. It is a product of a Collaborative Research and Development Agreement between ARS and Pan America Seed Company to tap genetic diversity in *Capsicum* species for development of new ornamental and dual-purpose ornamental/culinary pepper cultivars with novel fruit, foliage, and plant growth habit. Ornamental peppers have the highest per unit value of any pepper product and have become a profitable crop for greenhouse pot plant and transplant production and an innovative way for small farmers to produce a high-value alternative crop. Ornamental plants are one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture with an annual wholesale value of \$5 billion. AAS Trials were initiated

in 1932 "to promote new garden seed varieties with superior performance judged in impartial trials in North America." AAS is recognized as the oldest, most established international testing organization in North America. Visit All-America Selections at www.all-americaelections.org.



BARC SCIENTIST RECOGNIZED FOR INNOVATIVE RESEARCH IN U.S. DATE PALM INDUSTRY

Dr. Aref Abdul-Baki of the Sustainable Agricultural Systems Laboratory is the recent recipient of two awards in recognition of his research with California date palm trees. The California Date Commission presented an award to Dr. Abdul-Baki in recognition of his introduction of a no-tillage slip plowing, cover cropping system which reversed the decline in date palm tree growth, yield, and fruit quality. The Coachella Valley Natural Resources Conservation District Board of Directors also recognized him for his work resulting in the improvement of soil fertility and the reduction of soil compaction and stratification in the date orchards and grape vineyards of the Valley. The date orchards cover over 7,000 acres, and the grape vineyards cover 14,500 acres.



Community Interest

VOLUNTEERING AT THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

The National Arboretum currently has over 150 volunteers who play an integral role in Arboretum programs and assist in almost every area and endeavor. Our volunteers perform jobs ranging from gardening to administrative and research support. Many volunteers contribute their time and talent on weekdays, although there are a few weekend positions available. We ask most of our volunteers to contribute a minimum of 4 hours weekly. Volunteers receive orientation and training, and most positions entail a one-year commitment. For current openings, please visit www.usna.usda.gov/Support/volunteer.html.

SOWING SEEDS OF SERVICE

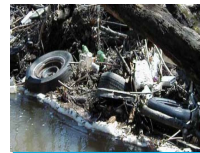
On Saturday, October 1st, 610 volunteers (including 419 registered Girl Scouts of all ages) from 54 Girl Scout troops, representing 17 Service Units council-wide, participated in a harvesting at BARC in coordination with the non-profit organization, *Food for Others*. They picked 14,315 lbs. of potatoes and tomatoes which sets a new record for a single-day harvest at BARC (previously 11,000 lbs.) and brought 755 lbs. of canned food for donation! Visit www.foodforothers.org to learn how you can make a difference!





STREAM & ROADSIDE CLEAN-UP AT BEAVERDAM CREEK

The Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group will host a **Beaverdam Creek Stream & Roadside Clean-up** on Saturday, November 5, from 9 AM to 12 noon. Join this new subwatershed group in improving the health and beauty of Beaverdam Creek by removing trash from both the stream and the Edmonston Road right-of-way. Meet at the entrance to the softball fields immediately north of where Beaverdam Creek crosses Edmonston Road, and follow the posted signs. Gloves, trashbags and warm drinks will be provided. For more information, contact Kate Levendosky (202.962.3374) or Susan Barnett (301.474.7465).



BARC TO PARTICIPATE IN BELTSVILLE COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR

On Thursday, November 10, a Community Health Fair will be held at the Beltsville Community Center from 9 AM to 1 PM. BARC's **Randy Lacombe**, Nutritionist, Food Surveys Research Group, BHNRC, will be demonstrating the new *What's in the Food We Eat Search Tool*. The Health Fair will offer flu shots (\$25), cholesterol testing, bone density tests, oral cancer screening, blood pressure checks, sight/hearing tests, lung capacity checks, and lots of valuable information from area health care professionals. For more information, call 301.937.6613.



On the Research Side...

PEOPLE EAT FOOD, A Symposium on the Applications and Future Directions for the USDA FoodLink Database System

November 14th

will be held on November 14, at the Jefferson Auditorium, USDA headquarters in Washington, DC. The symposium is sponsored by the Community Nutrition Research Group, BHNRC. It will highlight the research, applications, policy implications and future directions of the FoodLink database system, a research tool which links USDA survey food codes to information on the ingredients and commodities of those foods, resulting in databases such as pyramid servings, dietary sources of nutrients, portion sizes of foods commonly eaten, and EPA commodities. Following the symposium will be two identical all-day Food Surveys Research Group workshops which will include hands-on training about what you need to know to analyze dietary data from *What We Eat in America*. The deadline for registration for both the symposium and the workshop is November 4. Registration information may be found on www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/cnrg under the News & Events tab.

BARC'S CHESAPEAKE BAY DAY A GREAT SUCCESS!

On October 5, 2005, presentations, demonstrations, and tours showcased BARC's unique research contributions promoting agricultural production systems that protect soil, water, and air quality. In addition, there was a signing of a landmark Agreement between BARC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and a consortium of nine Land Grant universities participating in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Water Quality Program. This Agreement will formally unite the land-based



Pictured Left to Right:
Cheng-i Wei, Univ. of MD;
Rebecca Hamner, USEPA;
Phyllis Johnson, USDA/BARC

research community within the watershed as we move collaboratively forward toward meeting the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement's Keystone Commitments to restore the Bay by 2010. This leadership agreement will provide a working infrastructure to improve the efficiencies of management practices and to seek innovative solutions for reducing pollution to the Bay.

U.S.-RUSSIAN BOTANICAL CONFERENCE

On September 20-23, a U.S.-Russian Botanical Conference, jointly sponsored by the U.S. National Arboretum and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was held at Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. This conference brought 36 Russian botanical specialists from throughout Russia together with 40 botanists from throughout the United States to plan cooperative research efforts, exchanges, and educational activities to pursue in the coming years. This conference is a result of a long-standing botanical exchange program between the two countries under a bilateral agreement on environmental protection.

Mark Your Calendar!



DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES November 16th

~ Lecture Series is Open to the Public ~

Speaker: Dr. Daniel Hillel, Columbia University

Topic: The Use and Abuses of Soil and Water Resources Around the World: An Historical Review and Future Prospect

Time/Location: Nov. 16, 10:30 AM, Building 003 Auditorium

For more information, please call 301.504.6078.

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