LIFESTYLES

SHARE YOUR STORY

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who have gotten married, graduated, joined the military, etc.

Call the Journal at 285-7411

All the pretty flowers

Cathy PECK

MASTER GARDENER

Ditches, many hay fields and untended fields are bright with oxeye daisies and bright orange and yellow hawkweed flowers. Indeed, it is a pretty sight but there is more to it.

Both of these are extremely invasive and they will soon be joined by lovely lavender spotted knapweed. All of these European imports displace native plants needed by our native species. Orange Hawkweed, introduced in 1828 as an herbal remedy ad ornamental, has spread across the country in areas of gritty, well-drained and infertile soils, but can also invade moist meadows, hay fields, pastures, tree plantations, forested areas, and urban areas.

This plant spreads in many ways and a single plant can form a 2-3 foot area in a single year. A seed that finds a hospitable spot can germinate immediately. A March seedling can produce flowers by mid-June and viable seeds by August. Those seeds can remain viable for up to seven years. There is also some evidence that the plant is phytotoxic, meaning that it produces chemicals that inhibit seed germination and plant regeneration by other species.

Orange hawkweed and a non-native yellow-flowered hawkweed we are also seeing spreads by barbed seeds (each tall stem can produce 5-35 flower heads that each produce up to 12-30 seeds). They spread by wind, water, or as hitchhikers. It spreads vegetatively by rhizomes, runners, and by adventitious rootbuds. The low rosette that first forms after germination can be easily missed in lawns or other areas and that is the time for control.

Why and how have these aggressive non-native invaders spread so rapidly in our county? There are several. Much of our soil presents ideal growing sites — well-drained, gritty, and of low fertility. Ditches are frequently disturbed by utility work for cable installation or for power line clean-up. This leaves open soil, a welcoming invitation. Four-wheelers disturb the soil and transport seed on those big fat tires. Last, gravel spread on township roads, on road edges, or for slippery roads may have come from infested gravel pits.

Increasing and maintaining fertility in lawns or susceptible areas before this plant gets a foothold helps other plants and grasses grow more thickly so seeds won't readily germinate. Early detection is critical for success in controlling and arresting the spread of this invasive. Control after spread is extremely complicated and fraught with challenges.

Digging the plant at the first year rosette stage is easy but dig deeply enough to remove below-ground root structures; it becomes complicated when there are many plants. This plant very rapidly forms solid mats that are difficult to remove mechanically.

If you mow to keep seed from forming, the plant compensates with aggressive vegetative growth. Chemical control must be done in early spring when plants are in the rosette stage. Non-chemical control is difficult, if not impossible, given the extent of some infestations.

There is no substitute for good land stewardship. Without weed inspectors trained to recognize invasives early and to help landowners address them, invasives will become worse. If we don't deal with this plant early and colonized areas continue to develop, what will we do when it invades our forests and dominates our wild areas? Orange and the meadow hawkweed complex are only two of the invasives that have gained purchase in our county.

Information in this article came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Montana Extension Service. Refer to the revamped and updated University Of Minnesota Extension Service website http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/ for more information on horticultural topics. In addition, local Master Gardeners will again answer your questions on home horticulture. Call 218-444-7916, leave your name, number, and question and you will get a call.

CMT: Common inherited neurological disorder

Fred CICETTI

HEALTH CARE WRITER

Q. My 40-year-old son was just diagnosed with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease. What can he expect from this as he gets older?

A. Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease (CMT) was identified in 1886 by three physicians: Jean-Martin Charcot (sharr-KOE) and Pierre Marie in France, and Howard Henry Tooth in England. CMT is also known as hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy (HMSN). CMT is a group of related conditions all caused by inherited mutations in genes.

While you probably have never heard of it, CMT is one of the most common inherited neurological disorders. It affects about 1 in 2,500 people in the United States.

CMT impacts the peripheral nerves, the ones outside the brain and spinal cord. CMT affects both motor and sensory nerves.

Symptoms usually begin to show up in adolescence or early adulthood, but some people begin to develop symptoms later. The severity of symptoms varies even among family members with the disease.

There is a normal life expectancy for people with CMT.

CMT causes weakness, decreased muscle bulk and sensation in the feet and lower legs. The weakness can lead to deformities such as misshapen legs, high foot arches, curled toes, inverted heels and flat feet.

Muscle weakness can cause difficulty lifting your foot at the ankle (foot drop), a higher-than-normal step, tripping and falling.

The symptoms progress gradually. As the symptoms worsen, there can be weakness in the arms and hands. There is pain associated with CMT. In some cases, people with CMT have to use braces.

There is no cure for CMT. Symptoms are treated with physical therapy, occupational therapy, braces and other orthopedic devices. Sometimes, surgery is necessary.

Therapy involves strength training, muscle and ligament stretching, stamina training, and moderate aerobic exercise. Most therapists recommend low-impact exercises such as biking or swimming; they recommend against activities such as walking or jogging, which may put stress on muscles and joints.

Here's what you can do regularly at home if you have CMT:

■ Stretch to improve your range of motion and reduce joint deformities.

■ Exercise to keep your bones and muscles strong.

■ Soak and moisturize your feet to reduce discomfort.

■ Inspect your feet to prevent calluses, ulcers, wounds and infections.

■ Cut your nails to avoid ingrown toenails and infections. Professional pedicures are a good idea.

■ Wear shoes that fit and are protective. Consider wearing boots or high-top shoes for ankle support.

More information is available from: Charcot-Marie-Tooth Association (CMTA), P.O. Box 105 Glenolden, PA 19036; info@cmtausa.org; http://www.charcot-marie-tooth.org; telephone 610-499-9264; 800-606-CMTA (2682); fax 610-499-9267.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezer.com.

Cicetti is a health care writer with more than 40 years of journalistic experience.

SENIOR MENU

Hot meals for people 60 or older are served at noon Monday through Friday at Koochiching County Senior Center, 307 Fourth St.

Meals are for anyone, regardless of income. A $4 donation is suggested. Meals are subject to change. Participants under age 60 are welcome at $7.50 each.

For reservations call 283-3460 the day before the meal. Cancellations may be made the day of the meal.

MONDAY
Chef salad or alternate
Lettuce
Ham
Cheese
Green pepper
Onion
Homemade French dressing
Mixed vegetable
Canned fruit
Fresh fruit

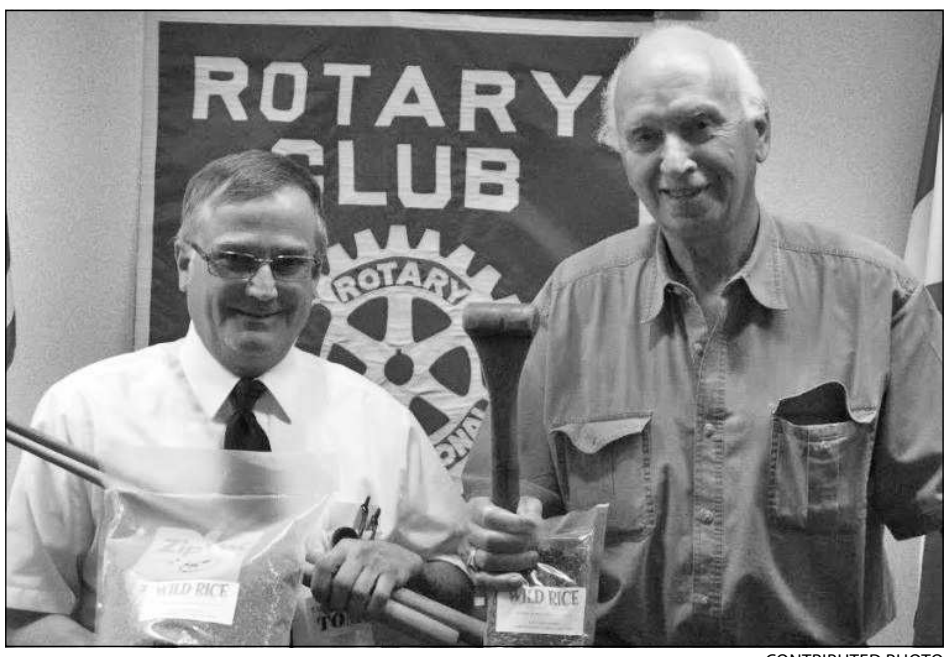
TUESDAY
Beef and rice casserole
Spanish rice
Tossed salad
Homemade French dressing
Mixed vegetable
Canned fruit
Fresh fruit

WEDNESDAY
Roast turkey
Gravy
Mashed potatoes
Squash
Dressing
Canned fruit

THURSDAY
Meatloaf
Baked potatoes
Spinach
Hawaiian cake

FRIDAY
Hawaiian turkey salad
Lettuce leaf
Fresh fruit
Rhubarb sauce

ROTARY GUEST



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tom Lucca, at left, was the guest of Rotarian Jerry Arason at a recent meeting of the International Falls Rotary Club. Lucca and Arason gave a presentation on harvesting wild rice in northern Minnesota.

MEMORIAM

In memory of **Jerry Sumner** — 75th birthday.

It's your special day,
Don't think we forgot;
You are ever present in our thoughts.
May Heaven celebrate
With love and joy,
As we imagine and wish
For just once more
To wrap our arms around you and say "Happy Birthday."

With love - Ruth, Brian, Mike, Sue, Karen and families

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Please join us for cake, coffee and punch.
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