



THE DAWNSONG



LEFT, THE GEMINI AND THE HYBRID WITH SAFE HAVENS IN USE 2010 SEASON, ABOVE SY LEAVING NESTING COMPARTMENT

A great year for our martins!

2010 is stacking up to be another great year for the martins. If you remember the 2009 season was a wet one here. We had losses of 41% with our babies so we were not expecting a large increase this year.

Once again the martins surprised us, we hosted 123 nesting pair of martins

which laid 611 eggs! The martins have just finished, its so quiet out there! Time to go check out our local roost at Presque Isle.

The Super System 24 led the way with 21 out of 24 gourds occupied, followed closely by the Gemini:20 out of 24 gourds taken.

I plan to make a few changes this year, I am going to move the round rack into a more open spot, and try to add more home-made tunnel entrances onto my SuperGourds. I am also considering venting more gourds as this summer sure was a hot one!



GATHERING CRICKETS



EVENING SOCIAL



WAITING ON ME!

Martifest 2010

By Mike Toole

Since 2005, when I put up my first purple martin housing, I always had good intentions each year to attend Martifest at the Stoll's farm in Finger Tennessee, but for one reason or the other, never made the trip .

Three weeks prior to Martifest 2010, I called Diane at Creative Universe to inquire if they were going to be there. Upon finding out they could not attend, I offered to stand in as a customer/vendor representative. Being an owner of two of their gourd rack systems and knowing how pleased I've been with their quality and workmanship, they accepted.



I'll have to admit I was a little nervous at first, but as the first attendees started to pour in, that quickly passed and I found myself interacting with everyone not as a sales representative to customers, but rather as one martin enthusiast to another, sharing everything I've learned about the caring and well being of this wonderful species of birds.



Throughout the course of the two days I would look out over the crowd in awe of all the enthusiasm and interest. It was during this time that I could see the members of the Stoll family busily going about their tasks to ensure we all were enjoying this experience. And then I would look up at this massive gathering of martins, also providing us with yet another form of enjoyment. Looking at all of this, perhaps Victor Stoll was a bit of a visionary in being able to bring two distinct species of life so close together or to the benefit and enjoyment of each.



All in all this was one of my most enjoyable experiences. I encourage everyone who has not attended a Martifest of some sort to do so.

Many thanks to Diane and Robert Oberlander for providing me the opportunity to share with others their great products

My warmest thanks and best wishes go out to the Stoll family for providing us with the venue for Martifest. I look forward to the day it returns.

Mike Toole
Cohutta, GA

PS The food was great, but the desserts were just fabulous!

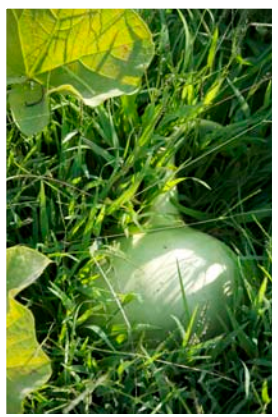
All photos on this page: Mike Toole



My Gourd Patch



Robert and I planted a variety of gourd seeds this Spring and we are beginning to see the “fruits” of our labor. Growing gourds can be lots of fun, There are 2 main things to remember, lots of water and lots of fertilizer. I use miracle grow and fertilize



every 3 days, other landlords will grow their gourds in specially prepared beds with all the right ingredients. Me I am doing it for fun and what I get and can use, makes our

little gourd patch all that much more enjoyable.



PLUGGING CONLEY II ENTRANCES

DO YOU HAVE THE EXTRA PLUG HOLES FROM YOUR S&K GOURDS STILL LYING AROUND? WELL ANGIE LEUBBEN DID, AND SHE SHARED THIS IDEA TO CLOSE OFF THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE ON HER TROYER HORIZONTAL GOURDS. THANKS ANGIE!



SNAKE NETTING

BY HARLEY HAMM

HARLEY HAS SHARED THIS IDEA OF USING WIRE TO FORM A FRAME ONTO THE POLE, THE ATTACH YOUR BIRD NETTING.



B&B TRAY

BY BARB MESSIMER

THIS YEAR BARB TOOK ONE B&B TRAY AND PLACED ONE ON EACH OF HER 12 XL GOURD RACKS. SHE TELLS US THAT THE TRAYS WERE USED THIS YEAR.



THIS CAN ALSO BE DONE USING THE PERSONAL PAN FEEDERS FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T OWN A BED AND BREAKFAST.

Venting Gourds

I received a phone call from Terry Suchma of the Purple Martin Society asking me if I had any calls or complaints of “wet nests” this year. I had not, but it was not long there after that I was reading about this very issue.

It seems that the hot and humid summer that so many of us experienced caused heat to build up inside many plastic gourds and then condensation occurred. If you were one of the landlords who may have experienced this, the easiest solution is to place a few vent holes into your gourd.

Andrew Troyer, the manufacturer of the Troyer Horizontal and Vertical Gourd tells us that the Troyer Gourds have built in vents, simply drill a 1/4” size hole into the vent.

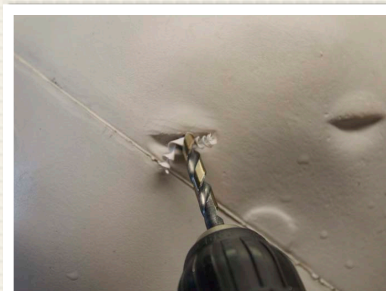
Other gourds like the SuperGourd you can add a pvc elbow. Drill a hole the size of the pvc elbow and caulk into place.

If you add a pvc elbow place some cotton into the elbow to stop wasps from entering. As soon as it gets warm, simply remove the cotton.

Purple Martin babies can tolerate heat better than we can imagine, but a wet nest can cause mites and other creepy crawlies to attack your nestlings. Keep the nesting chamber dry as possible and do nest replacements when your young are 7-9 days old and again around 14 days old. Also after severe down pours or if you are affected by high winds with blowing rain, check your nests to make sure they are dry. Dry nests equal strong healthy young!

One more step you can take is to make sure your gourds and your houses have adequate drain holes and ventilation holes. Wet nests can clog the gourds drain holes keeping the nest moist. A plastic gourd should have at least 5 drain holes up to 5/16” in size. You can easily enlarge and add more drain holes to both plastic and natural gourds.

Inadequate ventilation can cause the interior of an aluminum house to overheat to dangerous levels. Make sure the aluminum house you purchase has ventilation in the nesting compartment area.



Tools need:
1/4” drill bit
Drill

Using a 1/4” size drill bit angle the drill bit under the molded in canopies found on the back side of the Troyer Horizontal Gourd and drill upward at a 45 degree angle



Sunbathing martins



MONTHLY SPECIALS

AUGUST SPECIAL:

12 XL GOURD RACK. \$189.00

DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR!

IF YOU HAD TAKEN
ADVANTAGE OF EVERY
MONTHLY SPECIAL YOU
WOULD HAVE SAVED:

JANUARY THRU AUGUST

\$193.95!

News...

After hosting martins for over 20 years I have a good understanding of what goes on in my own back yard. But I have always wondered what happens to the martins when they head back to Brazil?

Seems like I am not the only one. Erva/ Nature House has embarked on a tour of the Amazon helping the citizens of Brazil learn about our purple martins.

There is a fantastic article in the current issue of the Nature Society News, www.naturesociety.org or call 877-833-2478 and join to receive their monthly publication. You will want to read the article it in its entirety.

Year End Totals: I cant believe how quiet it is now! I took a few minutes and totaled up my nesting report cards. Here is how we did: At the research site we offered 186 gourds, 14 wooden compartments and 2, 6 compartment aluminum houses.

Total number of eggs laid: 611.

Total number of young fledged: 562

Total number of nesting pairs: 123

% of compartments used: 58%

% of laid eggs that fledged: 92%

This year in Erie PA our spring was a bit hard, I supplemental feed during the worse of it. I lost only one ASY male. I continued to feed during cool mornings, mostly scrambled egg, which seemed to help the martins.