

The gift of the arctic grayling



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Some 40-plus years ago, I had a wonderful experience with arctic grayling. I had a friend who owned several fly-in fish camps in Canada. One particular camp, a tent camp, was located in the very northern portion of Saskatchewan on the Fond du Lac River.

My buddy owned a de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver. This single engine water plane was capable of very short takeoffs and landings, making it a perfect bush plane for the Canadian back country.

He flew us to the tent camp in the Beaver and the plan was three full days of lake trout fishing.

We wound up spending time in the narrow tributaries of the river because the graylings were making their annual spawning run. Later, they would return back to the deeper and much larger Fond du Lac river. In other words, we hit it just right by accident. We spent three days



Mark Rackay holds an arctic grayling. (Submitted photo/Mark Rackay, Montrose)

for CPW.

The scientific name for the arctic grayling is *Thymallus arcticus* and they are a species of freshwater fish in the salmon family Salmonidae.

Normally, they are found in the Arctic and Pacific drainages of Canada, Alaska and Siberia. They have been successfully introduced in Montana, Wyoming, Arizona and Colorado.

Arctic grayling can reach 30 inches on rare occasion and top

grayling also, so we loaded up and headed to the waters," Dwane said.

"Most of the fish were fairly small, near a pound or so. They were all over the dry flies we threw at them. We caught so many, I lost count, but we did release all of them back to the waters," he bragged.

He would not tell me where he caught those fish and laughed at me when I pressed him.

Fisherman and their secret

Troubleshooting tomato problems



Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

I hope you're one of the three million people who planted a vegetable garden this year! I've been told 9 out of 10 of those gardeners are growing tomatoes, and why not?

I'm sure there are a lot of reasons that gardeners like to grow tomatoes, but I'd bet the unbeatable taste of a home grown tomato has to be at the top of the list! The convenience of stepping out of the back door to snatch up a tasty morsel is probably another.

If you preserve your produce, tomatoes are a must. Having the satisfaction of knowing that your produce is organically grown, if you prefer that choice, may also be cause for home grown tomatoes. And maybe we grow them just for the pure enjoyment.

What ever your reason is, sometimes it doesn't always go exactly as planned. So if you're experiencing a few growing pains with your tasty treats, I hope this will help you out.

If you've noticed the leaves of

patch appears on the bottom.

This black leathery appearance is caused by a calcium deficiency. However, adding calcium to your soil isn't going to fix this problem! Our soils have all the calcium that tomatoes require.

The problem is actually uneven watering. This will cause the plant to shut down, or quit growing, a bit. This in turn restricts the calcium uptake in the plant.

Mulching and trying not to allow extreme fluctuation in the soil moisture will help your plant recover. You can cut off the ugly black bottom of the tomato and go right ahead and enjoy eating them. You may see the same problem occurring with your peppers and zucchini.

Fusarium wilt is another common disease. It begins with the older leaves turning yellow.

Eventually they will turn brown and crispy. Over watering or under watering can contribute to this disease.

Upward curling leaves or drooping leaves could be caused by Curly Top Virus. I'm sure you're so sick of hearing about "the virus" that the mere thought of a virus in your tomatoes could send you over the edge, but sometimes a virus will happen.

A purple cast to the plant, or dark purple veins may accompany this disease.

making their annual spawning run. Later, they would return back to the deeper and much larger Fond du Lac river. In other words, we hit it just right by accident. We spent three days catching these beautiful graylings, some reaching close to 4 pounds.

I had resolved my thinking that I would not see another grayling unless I ventured to the Arctic Circle again. That thought process changed when a buddy of mine called and bragged about how many graylings he caught here in Colorado. Now I just have to convince him to take me to his secret spot.

The grayling I knew about in our state were the ones in Joe Wright Reservoir, located off Highway 14, the Poudre Canyon Road.

Grayling were first stocked there in the late 1890s, but never really caught on. That changed in the mid 1960s when the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) finally had success with a self-sustaining population.

In June of every year, CPW comes to Joe Wright Creek to collect and fertilize grayling eggs to be taken to the Glenwood Springs State Fish Hatchery. Later, the fish will get stocked in lakes around the state. On average, five to 10 lakes a year get stocked with the young fish, each being about 2 inches long.

After their spawning run, the grayling will leave the creek and head back to the reservoir. The grayling originally came here from Montana but have been a self-sustaining population here and providing stock for other lakes around the region for the last 20 years, a real success story.

the Pacific and Atlantic drainages of Canada, Alaska and Siberia. They have been successfully introduced in Montana, Wyoming, Arizona and Colorado.

Arctic grayling can reach 30 inches on rare occasion and top the scale above 8 pounds. Most are much smaller.

They don't get anywhere near that big in Colorado. One that reaches 16 inches would be considered a really big one, as the state record is 17.25-inch fish caught on Lower Big Creek Lake back in 2002. That fish weighed in at 1 pound, 10 ounces.

The most striking feature of a grayling is the large, sail-like dorsal fin, fringed in red and dotted with large iridescent red and purple spots and markings. The fin reminds me of the flying fish of the Atlantic Ocean. The larger the grayling, the more dramatic the markings are.

Not only are arctic grayling a blast to catch, as they readily take dry flies and put up one heck of a fight for their size, they are one of the best eating freshwater fish around. I never had a better shore lunch than the ones we had in Saskatchewan.

The daily limit in Colorado for trout, char, grayling and salmon is four fish, with a total possession limit of eight fish.

Long-time sportsman and personal friend of mine, Dwane Dardis found some grayling here on the Western Slope.

"Catching arctic grayling has always been a bucket list thing for me. We traveled to Alaska twice, and did not catch a grayling on either trip, probably because it was the wrong time of the year. When I found out there were some close to home, I had to give it a try.

My wife wanted to catch a

many, I lost count, but we did release all of them back to the waters," he bragged.

He would not tell me where he caught those fish and laughed at me when I pressed him.

Fisherman and their secret spots really get on my nerves. He did say it was on the Grand Mesa but that was all the hint he would give me.

Later that evening, Dwane called me back, obviously feeling kind of bad about giving his longtime friend the brush off about where to go catch a grayling locally. He promised to take me there, with a few contingencies.

"I am going to blindfold you and keep you locked in the trunk of the car. When we get to the lake, I will remove the blindfold and you can fish. At the end of the day, blindfold back on and into the trunk you go," Dwane offered.

All in all, it sounded like a pretty good deal. After all, what are fishing buddies for. I'm surprised he acted this way, considering I gave him the exact location of where I found those big bull elk last hunting season. He didn't believe bull elk that size were in a National Forest Campground, so close to a major highway.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

For outdoors or survival related questions or comments, feel free to contact him directly at his email elkhunter77@icloud.com

sometimes it doesn't always go exactly as planned. So if you're experiencing a few growing pains with your tasty treats, I hope this will help you out.

If you've noticed the leaves of your tomato plant twisting, or drooping, it could be because of the heat and wind. Keep an eye on your soil moisture and try to avoid swings of extreme wet and dry soil.

An inch or two of organic mulch will help more than you can imagine. You could drape floating row cover above the plants to shade and protect them during the hottest summer months but keep in mind that the flowers need bees to pollinate them.

Blossom end rot might be the most common problem that tomatoes in our area experience. The tomato plant looks healthy, but as the tomatoes ripen, an ugly black

tomatoes could send you over the edge, but sometimes a virus will happen.

A purple cast to the plant, or dark purple veins may accompany this disease.

As the disease progresses, your tomato plant may develop an overall yellow appearance, even though you've watered and fertilized correctly. I'd love to tell you that there's a simple and quick solution to this problem but the truth is, there is no cure.

I recommend you pull up the plant and dispose of it because the virus will spread. This disease was probably transmitted to your plant by a leafhopper that fed on another infected tomato plant or some other host plant that had the disease. The good news is, any tomatoes on the plant are OK to eat.

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More than three million people planted a vegetable garden this year. Nine out of ten of those gardeners are growing tomatoes. (Submitted photo/Linda Corwine McIntosh)