

Mayhaw Festival coming up soon...

## Hull-Daisetta's Mayhaw Festival grew out of Big Thicket Monster legend

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Grandma Ju reveals Monster Remedy

### *Preface:*

*Although the following story is a fictional account of the origin of HD's Mayhaw Festival— Old timers will remember that for years sportswriters all over East Texas refereed to the Hull-Daisetta football team as those "Monsters of the Big Thicket". So perhaps it's not as fictional as we think...*

Early settlers in Southeast Texas were petrified by fear – they jumped at ever little sound, talked in hushed voices and made their necks sore by trying to see in all directions at the same time.



The old legend, as first told by the Atakapan Indians many years ago, seemed to be coming true. The legend related that the Big Thicket area of East Texas nourished a deadly monster. The Thicket had created the monster for its own protection – to keep man and all of his associated evil out.

Although all settlers had heard the old legend, they scoffed at it and went right ahead clearing fields by burning out large sections of the Thicket. They clogged up the streams and brought in longhorned cattle and long-nosed hogs. These animals ate all the tender young growth, trampled what they didn't eat and were a general nuisance to the Thicket's environment.

As the number of settlers increased, the depredations increased accordingly. The environment and delicate balance of the Thicket was now sent into literal shock by the influx of lumberjacks. These men with their crosscut saws and braying mules began stripping the Thicket of its very backbone – the ancient and giant hardwoods.

If not for a resiliency that would have astonished most of the world's botanist, the Thicket would have ceased to exist long ago. Of course the longevity of the Thicket had not depended solely upon resiliency for survival. The Monster of legend had always appeared in times of dire need and created havoc with wrongdoers.

Thicket dwelling people had literally been scared to death, herds had been mysteriously stampeded and lumberjacks had fled the area leaving behind their expensive saws and equipment.

It seemed that in times of dire need the legendary monster would come alive, run rampant for awhile, and then return to legend. The Big Thicket was kept isolated and progress was slower in coming than in most parts of the Country – primarily because of the inevitable resurgence of the old legend.

A thing of great importance happened to the region in the early 1900s. Oil was discovered in the Thicket. Black Gold gushing from the swamps brought thousands and thousands of people rushing to the area. Boomtowns sprang up overnight; Sour Lake, Saratoga, Batson, Hull and Daisetta suddenly became thriving centers of activity.

Old Grandma Ju had been born in the Thicket and had lived all of her life within its boundaries. With the discovery of oil and the influx of people, all the old timers who had lived for so long in the shadow of the legend became frightened. They congregated around Grandma's house because she seemed to be the only one who was immune to the monster.

Grandma quickly instructed the people to gather inside the circle of trees around her house – then to stand quietly and, on their lives, not to move – no matter what happened.

Suddenly a screeching scream split the skies, the ground began to shake and a huge form began emerging from the swamp. The people, with their eyes bulging and their hair standing on end, could not have run even if they wanted to – they could only stand with their knees shaking and stare, as if in a trance.

The monster, so close now that they could smell his odor and see the barnacles on his leathery hide - suddenly stopped. He looked about, turned and approached the small trees that Grandma Ju had planted around her house. He opened his mouth and began to eat the small berries that hung from the Mayhaw trees.

As the people watched, the beast consumed all the fruit, then, with a satisfied look on his face, returned to the depths of the swamp.



From that day to this, thicket dwellers have planted the Mayhaw trees in all parts of the Thicket. The old timers swear that the only thing holding back the wrath of the monster, even today, is his appetite for the berries and their calming effect.

Citizens of the Thicket have, for many years, celebrated a festival in honor of the fruit. The festival is celebrated annually in the month of May in the city of Daisetta. It's called THE MAYHAW FESTIVAL...

Postscript:

This year's HD Mayhaw Festival will run from April 28 through May 2<sup>nd</sup>. To find out who to contact for any information or applications – go to their website:

[www.mayhawfestival.org](http://www.mayhawfestival.org)

To name a few of the activities folks can get involved in: Beauty Pageant, volleyball tourney, basketball tourney, dodge ball tourney, washer and horse shoe pitch, BBQ cook off, cake and jelly competition, gospel singing, kiddy trail ride, carnival, parade and lastly a big auction and street dance....