To the Editor:
Fortunately, I read your editorial in the March/April 1975 issue of Ca prior to cracking some mallard duck eggs for use in a German chocolate cake. Since I live on a farm, you will forgive me if I don't dash into the Health Center Library at Ohio State to look up medical criteria for measuring eggs. In fact, I don't even have calipers available—I'm just "eye-balling" it. The width and circumference dimensions are taken at the widest point, which happens to be approximately 5/12 of the height, as measured from the rounded end (or 7/12 from the pointed end). Based on six different mallard eggs, the average measurement is 58.3 mm. high, 39.8 mm. wide and 136.3 mm. in circumference.

To sum up (in an eggshell), a mallard's egg is about the same size as a "large" hen's egg (the "extra large" category). Of course, my mallards are "wild." Tame mallards, being more secure, may lay larger eggs.

Louise O. Warner, M.D.
Ashville, Ohio

To the Editor:
I read with interest your editorial, entitled "Fruits, Vegetables and Cancer Dimensions," which was nicely printed on sheets of paper roughly the size of an 1876 English five-pound note. You requested further amplification regarding the size of mallard duck eggs. I hasten to respond that the average mallard duck egg in this community is 5.8 cm. long by 4.1 cm. wide, or about as large as a Great-horned owl's egg.

Seymour E. Wheelock, M.D.
The Children's Hospital
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor:
It has always been my understanding that the mallard duck egg is exactly as large as the proverbial "large piece of banana" and therefore larger than a marble, but smaller than a washtub.

Ralph D. Cressman, M.D.
Palo Alto Medical Clinic
Palo Alto, California

To the Editor:
I greatly enjoyed reading your editorial chastising clinicians for comparing the size of different tumors to fruits and vegetables, rather than indicating size in centimeters and millimeters.

Since you have never seen a mallard duck egg, I am sending you one from my ranch, which was laid yesterday and
boiled this morning. It is ready to be measured by you and subsequently eaten. The average mallard duck egg is slightly larger than that of a hen and distinguishes itself from the regular chicken egg by its slightly green or blue shell, and a larger and yellower yoke.

Henry Jenny, M.D.  
Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery  
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Editor’s Note:  
As the above sampling attests, the readers of Ca have most generously come to my assistance. Not only have I learned a variety of dimensions of the mallard’s egg, but I’ve also received several specimens in the mail. Due to postal delays, all of us would rather have had the chocolate cake.

To the Editor:  
Dr. Grabstald’s review of germinal tumors of the testis in the March/April 1975 issue of Ca-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians, points out that “the treatment of testicular cancer is often controversial, . . .” but fails to define areas of controversy in his discussion. He leaves readers with the impression that radiation therapy plays no role in the management of carcinomas (except in its accepted use in seminomas). It should be noted that various comparative studies have failed to define the relative roles of surgery and radiation therapy for the treatment of retroperitoneal lymph node disease in this group of patients for a variety of reasons. Certainly, more recent British studies would suggest that modern supervoltage radiation therapy is at least comparable to radical lymph node dissection.

The Walter Reed randomized trial which compares radiation therapy alone against lymph node dissection interposed between two portions of a course of radiation therapy will determine whether surgery, in this specific situation, adds anything to radiation therapy. Obviously, it will not answer the question of whether radiation therapy is superior to retroperitoneal node dissection alone. A review of the treatment of testicular carcinoma should at least recognize the possibility that irradiation may well be an alternative to surgery and that no proof of superiority for one method over the other exists.

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