

Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - Strawberry Edition

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : June 29, 2011 at 4:53 am

Slowly, ever so slowly, we are creeping up on Strawberry season. The anticipation is much like awaiting Christmas. I see the furtive looks as people cast their gaze across our tables of produce, then the slight slump of the shoulders. They try to mask the disappointment, but I can see right through the facade. Soon their faces will be wreathed in smiles as they clutch the precious boxes of strawberries. Honestly, sometimes we feel like drug dealers during Strawberry season! Thank goodness the fix we provide is succulent sun ripened natural fruit. My conscience is just fine with selling strawberries, even when bickering breaks out over the last flat of berries. We always encourage customers to call us to have any coveted food set aside for later pick-up, this year the Strawberry flats on hold may require an armed guard. People are getting restive and dangerous

Take a deep breath. The weather forecast is propitious and Sue Spooner, of Spooner Berry Farms, assures us that we will have a good strawberry season after all. In your desperation for strawberries, you may have been tempted to buy some of those out of state strawberries. Do not waste your money! Sure, they look pretty, but is there any actual strawberry aroma? No aroma, no flavor. All you're left with is empty good looks. We all know where this will end; in bitter name calling. The very first strawberries will be available Wednesday, June 29th!! You already received my gloating email telling you of my successful Asparagus buy- yup we should be able to keep the tables loaded with great asparagus as long as the season lasts! Thanks also for those who responded to my query about your interest in Apricots. I should have a price quote by tomorrow and will keep you posted as to delivery.

The other long awaited fruit event is the arrival of Eastern Washington Cherries. Our Wenatchee connection is expected to arrive by the end of the week. Gary and Norma will pick no cherry before its time. The big suppliers are harvesting now, but that fruit will not have a chance to reach its peak flavor. By picking the unripe fruit, they are able to ship and store the berries, but what's the point of that? What we all want is a cherry so ripe that the skin is almost bursting. A cherry that drips juice down your chin when you bite into it. Keep checking with us, Gary is hoping to deliver the first beauties on Friday!

Be patient, good fruit is well worth waiting for. Meanwhile you can be polishing up your shortcake baking skills and stocking up plenty of whipping cream. Right now we have a great supply of farm fresh Rhubarb, I suggest that you try out my favorite shortcake recipe and top it with warm rhubarb sauce!

Orange Scone Berry Cakes

two cups Flour (less two Tablespoons)

one tablespoon baking powder

one tablespoon Salt

two tablespoons Sugar

one third cup Butter

one extra large Egg

one half cup Cream

Topping;

two tablespoons melted butter

one tablespoon Orange Zest

One half cup Sugar

preheat your oven to 425 degrees. Mix together the dry ingredients, then cut in the butter. Combine the egg and cream and add in just until blended. If you're in a hurry, you can use your food processor and pulse the mixture.

Turn out onto a lightly floured board and knead into a ball. Roll dough into a rectangle eight inches wide and one quarter inch thick.

Brush with the melted butter and sprinkle with the sugar and orange zest. Roll up jelly-roll fashion and cut into one inch slices.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes.

Rhubarb Sauce

two tablespoons butter

four cups thinly sliced rhubarb

one half cup sugar

Melt the butter in a skillet and add the rhubarb and sugar. Stir over medium heat for 5-10 minutes, until the rhubarb is tender.

Of course, once the strawberries arrive, you can add them into your rhubarb sauce, but don't cook them as long. For another spectacular flavor addition, stir in some pineapple chunks too!

Little Wild Blackberry season will be delayed this year, but we actually saw some berries set on the vine last week! Last year was a devastating crop failure, 'the year of no LWBs' -doubtless it will be recorded as such in history books. The bees have had a better chance to pollinate this year, but the epic search for the perfect LWB patch will be hard. Which is part of the reason that us crazy berry pickers persevere. If it were easy, would the fruit taste as sweet?

Barbara Bennett Parsons, manager of the Hoquiam Farmers Market & Deidra's Deli 1958 Riverside, closed Tuesdays only. 538-9747