

Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - Plethora Edition

Local News

Posted by:

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My artichoke plants are in the ground soaking up the sun and rain. I'm so excited to have my favorite vegetable growing in the garden. So far, the slugs haven't seemed to be artichoke eaters. Unfortunately, I have many other plants that they adore! The baby slugs are hatching all over right now, and they're almost too tiny to see- but boy, do they have a voracious appetite. They devastated several new plants overnight, so I'm going to have to succumb and buy slug bait. Normally I just scoop them up into an old can and douse them with salt. These babies are impossible to see until they have gorged themselves on your new seedlings and had a growth spurt. My rhubarb is ready for first harvest this week, and we have a great new supply from Frank's fields in Elma. Rhubarb is a tart, old fashioned plant that cooks like a fruit, but is actually a vegetable. You can make a simple sauce and serve it as a side dish or a dessert. It's fun to work with, and it blends exceptionally well with strawberries, raspberries, and peaches. In pies, I mean. It seems as though so many new varieties of fruits are being cultivated to have less and less flavor. Blandness is threatening to rule the food world- do not let this happen to your dinner table! Grab that rhubarb , chop it up(6 cups), toss in the pot with 2 tablespoons of water and 1 cup of sugar, put in a kettle and cook and stir over medium heat for 10 to 15 minutes. Serve alongside a beef brisket or pork chops and bring lip smacking flavor back to the table.

I've been waiting for just the right time to use one of my favorite words; plethora. An abundance. Which is what next weekend brings to all of Grays Harbor, and you need to be making your plans right now. We'll be bouncing from one end of the county to the other, trying to take in everything. Sometimes weekends can be downright exhausting! The 17th annual Grays Harbor Shorebird festival begins on Friday, bringing huge flocks of visitors, or, as we affectionately refer to them, Birdheads. You might be surprised to learn how famous our coastline is with people who love birds. This is the time for the Spring Migration of shorebirds, and Bowerman Basin in Hoquiam is their top pick for a rest stop. We have everything that a weary bird needs. Whereas you may look at our mudflats and see only mud, a hungry shorebird is smacking his lips in anticipation of a gourmet banquet. There are so many guided and self guided tours available that I cannot begin to list them all. I suggest that you visit the website at www.shorebirdfestival.com . There are field trips from Tokeland up to Point Grenville, excursions to Lake Quinault, and more bird experts per square inch than you will ever encounter again. The boardwalk at Bowerman Basin is my favorite place to visit on any given day of the year, and I'm constantly surprised that we're often the only people there. It is a treasure-the only wooden boardwalk in the midst of a wildlife sanctuary for hundreds of miles. If you are very, very lucky a swarm of shorebirds may swoop down close enough that you feel the wind from their wings, enveloping you in their midst, and then evaporating into the sky. It is a spiritual experience, you feel the touch of something beyond this world, and the sensation of being lifted up with their flight leaves you wobbly. It's as close as I will ever come to flying, and I hope that it happens again in my lifetime. Heading east and crossing the border into Thurston County (yes, a real adventure!) Make your way to the tiny hamlet of Matlock for the Old Timer's Historical Fair. From highway 12 take the exit for the Monte Brady road and drive north for 16 miles. The Mary M. Knight School is on the right, the event is free, and it is superb. It has a plethora (see?)

of activities; music, food, cool old tractors and steam engines, fun rides for the kids, great exhibits, classic cars, and an authentic Civil War-era military camp. First stop should be to the gymnasium for a piece of fresh baked pie. The folks in Matlock have perfected the fine art of pie baking, and I am someone who knows a good pie. After all, I am surrounded every day by Nancy Lachel's fabulous pies, and take pride in being able to describe them from plenty of first hand experience. The music on-stage is always a delight and includes many bluegrass and country performances. The fair is a testimonial to a way of life that I admire, to people who lived close to the earth and scheduled their work according to the seasons. They didn't need an iPad to keep track of their appointments and schedules. Children could play together if their chores were completed, playdates didn't need to be made for them. When I get too nostalgic I have to remind myself of the joys of indoor plumbing, hot tap water, and toilet paper. I guess modern life has its rewards. When I was a little girl, May Day was a very special day. The week before was spent creating little baskets and baking tiny cookies. The day before we would take a big basket and go out to pick wildflowers. The English wood hyacinth (bluebells), bleeding heart, ferns, daffodils, and flowering branches were lovingly arranged to go into the little May Day baskets. Early the next morning we scurried around to our neighbors houses and hung a basket on each door. Imagining the surprise of our friends was the best reward, and of course there were all those extra cookies too. Wishing you a magical May Day, even if you have to pick your own wildflowers. You can always stop by the Hoquiam Farmers Market for the cookies. Barbara Bennett Parsons, manager of the Grays Harbor Farmers Market at 1958 Riverside in Hoquiam. Ph. 538-9747 Deidra's Deli is open 7 days a week! Call to have your order ready or delivered-538-5880