## *Hoquiam Farmer's Market News - Apple Edition (tm)*

**Local News**

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More Apples are arriving each week now, and the Peach season is perilously close to the end. Pears? Perfection right now! We have many boxes of apples available right now, with the selection of varieties growing rapidly.Here are the apple types that are recommended for the most flavorful Pies and Crisps;GalaMcIntoshFujiGingerGoldJonathon Not in yetRome Not in yetSeptember is Tree Fruit season! Even the eastern Washington Apple crop is late this year, and many of our Grays Harbor apple trees that normally would be producing in August have waited until this month to ripen. That’s okay with me, no problem- the weather has been sublime and even a cold snap won’t harm the crops now.

The question becomes, what is the best way to preserve these flavors while they are at their peak? Thought you’d never ask. Apples are the easiest and have the most options. Some people prepare an apple pie filling and then can it with the hot water bath method. I find that a quart jar doesn’t hold enough filling to please me, plus it’s easier to prepare mass amounts of filling, put the right amount in a freezer bag, then freeze. Then there is the dehydrator method of preserving apples-good for snacks. And then there is applesauce, undeniably delicious and incredibly easy. I do enjoy canning applesauce, but if time is short and my batch of applesauce immense, some of it goes into the freezer also. And if you are one of the very fortunate few who owns an apple cider press- well, invite me over, please!Unless you have family who is willing and able to sit and peel, core, and slice apples all day long, you should consider investing in the wonderfully efficient old fashioned Apple Peeler/Slicer/Corer. It’s a hand crank device that bores the core while peeling and slicing and will save you countless hours of work and bandaged fingers. Both the Dennis Company and Hoquiam’s Ace Hardware carry these. It’s the kind of mechanical thing that husbands sometimes enjoy becoming master of. Hint, hint. I cover my countertops with layers of newspaper, have several large buckets ready to collect the peelings for the compost pile, and ready myself for a marathon.The apples need to be washed- I put a tablespoon of white vinegar in a sink-full of water, swish the apples around, then rinse them. Then they go through my handy dandy peeler and into a very large bowl. They will start to brown, but don’t worry about it. When the bowl is full, melt a half cube of butter in the frying pan (I use a large oblong electric fry pan with sides), add 3 teaspoons of cinnamon and a cup of sugar. Blend them together and then add the apples. The sugar will need to be adjusted according to your taste. Cook and turn the apples until they are all evenly coated and partially cooked. Then add one fourth cup of flour, or more depending upon the juiciness of the applesAt this point your pie filling is ready for freezing. Use your favorite pie pan to decide upon the amount you put into the freezer bags. The best thing about this partial cooking method is that you end up with a pie that is packed with apples. When raw apples go into a pie, they shrink while baking, leaving you with a large empty space between the apples and the crust. I also have a large collection of Pyrex 9 X 12 dishes that are the result of years of yard sale hunting. I pile the dishes with my apple mixture, make a cobbler topping, press it on top, seal well and freeze the whole dish. This is stupendously handy when you don’t have time to make a dish for a potluck. Snatch the cobbler from the freezer, leave it out to defrost, then pop it into the oven and bake. Be the hero, bask in your success- after all, you have more in the freezer at home.

Fruit Cobbler Topping - use for apple, peach, pear, or plumnote; Quantity is for a 9 X 12 pan, plus enough for a 9 X 9 square pan.two cubes of Butter- meltedtwo cups of Flourtwo cups of Quick Oats two cups of Brown Sugartwo tsps. CinnamonIn a large bowl, blend the dry ingredients, then pour in the melted Butter.Spoon the topping over the fruit, but do not press down too hard or you’ll have a gooey bottom layer.Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes.If using peaches, pears or plums, the precooking method is not needed. These are softer fruits and do not cook down as much. But be sure to add some sugar and flour according to taste and how juicy the fruit is.Remember this; in order to have a Blue Ribbon result, you must start with the best tasting fruit. Use a tart apple when cooking, never substitute an eating apple such as Red Delicious. The sharper the apple flavor the better your pies and cobblers will be!Barbara Bennett Parsons, manager of the Grays Harbor Farmers Market in Hoquiam. Home of great apples. 538-9747--
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