

Hogtown HomeGrown

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kuplank,
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“Kuplink, kuplank, kuplunk”

There is no harvest quite as satisfying, or easy, as picking blueberries. Forget the strawberry stoop and the blackberry bramble, for although I have a taste for both berries, I would much rather pay the farmer to pick them and avoid a breaking back and a game of thorns. Blueberry bushes are reasonable—human-sized and generally prolific enough that you don’t have to walk all over the berry patch to harvest.

My introduction to blueberry picking came from Robert McCloskey’s *Blueberries for Sal*, a children’s book about a youngster picking wild blueberries with her mother in the woods of Maine. While I did not pick berries as a child, when our boys were young we would pick a year’s worth in one afternoon at Montechoa Gardens. It doesn’t take long—two people can easily pick 10 pounds in an hour. Ten pounds is about 26 cups—enough to put a few in the freezer, bake muffins, a pie or cobbler and cook up some jam.

Making a small batch of jam takes a little longer than picking the berries, but what’s better than the taste of summer when January comes around? Blueberry Jam is very easy to make and I can show you how! Florida Organic Growers is sponsoring canning demos. I’ll be making both Blueberry and Tomato Jam one Wednesday at Union Street Farmers Market in Downtown Gainesville and one Saturday at Alachua County Farmers Market, commonly known as the 441 Market! When you turn the page, look for the schedule on page 2. Register through Florida Organic Growers - <http://www.foginfo.org/discoveryoucan>

Blueberry Jam

INGREDIENTS

6 pints (12 cups) blueberries
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
3 cups sugar (raw or turbinado sugar)

DIRECTIONS

Sort through the blueberries and wash thoroughly.
Prepare canning jars, lids and rings in a boiling water bath.
Place berries into a deep stock pot. Over medium heat, crush the berries with a potato masher. Continue until most of the berries are mashed and a pool of juice bubbles.
Add lemon juice to blueberries. Stir well and bring the mixture to a boil.
Add the sugar all at once and stir until liquefied. Return to a boil, stirring constantly and boil hard for two or three minutes. Reduce heat to low and simmer until thickened, stirring occasionally.
When jam is desired consistency (it will thicken as it cools), remove from heat.
Pour into prepared jars, wipe rims, seal and process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.
Allow jars to cool and listen for the “ping” that says they have safely sealed. Refrigerate any unsealed jars and use first.
Store sealed jars in a cool, dark place.

Hogtown HomeGrown Public Demo Schedule

CANNING Wednesday—June 11 5:30pm Union Street Farmers Market Saturdays—June 21 and August 16 930am 441 Farmers Market
COOKING County Libraries June 19 3pm Headquarters, June 24 2pm Cone Park, June 29 3pm Archer, July 17 2pm Library Partnership

What's Fresh Right Now?

Beans—green, wax, roma, purple/
green long, dragon tongue, purple hull

Beets

Blackberries

Blueberries

Cabbage—green/red, napa, cone

Carrots

Cauliflower—cheddar, purple

Citrus—juices

Cucumbers—mini seedless, kirby,
slicers

Eggplant

Fennel

Garlic—chives, elephant

Greens—chard, kale, collard, mustard,
turnip (with root), sorrel

Herbs—stevia, italian/opal basil, thyme,
parsley, cilantro, thai lime, dill, sage,
rosemary, oregano, assorted mint

Honey

Kohlrabi—purple/green

Leeks

Melons—watermelon, cantaloupe,
honeydew

Nectarines

Okra

Onions—green, yellow, red

Peaches

Peas—sugar snaps, snow

Peppers—red/green sweet bell,
cubanelle, poblano, jalapeno, variety hot

Plums

Potatoes—small red, sweet

Radish—globe, daikon, breakfast

Shoots, Sprouts and Microgreens

Squash—summer, green/yellow
zucchini, acorn, butternut, pattypan

Strawberries

Tomatoes—grape, cherry, yellow,
green, red beefsteak, heirloom, cluster

Local and Fresh— Mulberries

I discovered mulberries only because a good friend put a quart bag of these luscious berries from her tree into my hands. We wasted no time eating some fresh and making the rest into a crumble with an almond topping.

Red Mulberry Trees are native to North America and other varieties grow in North Central Florida as well. The trees are prolific, producing fruit with all the sweetness of blackberries, without the seeds! Mulberries are very low in acid, so for mulberry jam to gel it usually needs additions of both lemon juice and pectin.

Mulberry Crumble

INGREDIENTS

3 cups fresh mulberries
2 teaspoons organic corn starch
1 Tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 cup almond butter
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup cane syrup (adjust to taste)
1/2 cup quinoa flakes or rolled oats
1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Toss mulberries with corn starch until completely coated. Place in an 8x8 baking pan and sprinkle with lemon juice. Set aside.

To make topping, use a fork to beat together almond butter and water until light. Mix in cane syrup until completely combined. Taste for sweetness and adjust. Stir remaining ingredients into mixture.

Crumble topping in an even layer over the prepared mulberries.

Bake in preheated oven for 30-40 minutes, until berries are juicy and topping is lightly browned.

Cool for a few minutes before serving.

Cover leftovers and eat within 2 days.

Sautéed Cabbage and Shiitakes

INGREDIENTS

1 Tablespoon olive oil
6-8 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, sliced thinly
2-3 leeks, white only, sliced
1 clove garlic, sliced thinly
1 Tablespoon butter
1 head cabbage, quartered, cored and sliced very thinly
1 Tablespoon sherry vinegar OR 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg, preferably freshly grated
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1/2 cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS

In a large pan, sauté mushrooms, leeks and garlic in olive oil. Stir in butter and cabbage and cook until wilted. Add remaining ingredients and simmer uncovered for 3 minutes.

Serve hot. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Savory Sweet Potato Casserole

INGREDIENTS

2 large sweet potatoes, baked, but still firm
1-2 Tablespoons garam masala
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 sweet or red onion
4 cups chopped red cabbage
1 large or 2 small cloves garlic, sliced thinly
2 Tablespoons toasted almonds, chopped finely
2 Tablespoons each golden raisins and dried apricots, chopped roughly
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped
Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Peel sweet potatoes. Cut into 1/4 inch slices and sprinkle generously with garam masala on one side. Use half the potatoes to cover the bottom of an 8x8 pan or covered casserole.

Heat olive oil in sauté pan. Add onion and cabbage and cook until wilted. Stir in remaining ingredients, except salt and pepper, and sauté until garlic is softened. Taste and season.

Spoon mixture into casserole over the sweet potatoes. Top with remaining sweet potatoes, seasoned side up. Cover and bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.

Serve hot or at room temperature. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Tricks and Tips

Some readers have asked how I create so many recipes—here's an example: Our son's family has a new tradition of Christmas Eve dinner based on the cuisine of a different country each year. The first was an Indian meal, highlighted by palak paneer made with homemade paneer. This past Christmas we took on Poland.

Our hosts made a wonderful sauerkraut (yes, they worked on this for months) that was sautéed with mushrooms to become a hot side dish. Recently I wanted to use cabbage and shiitakes for something similar, but my typical Tuesday night doesn't leave time to make sauerkraut.

I combined the basics of their side dish with common Eastern European ingredients leeks and sour cream for a great result! It was an instant hit, or, as we say around here, good enough to publish!!

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Tricks and Tips

Yes, I love *that* Saturday Night Live skit with Alec Baldwin. You know the one I mean—Schweddy Balls! So when I made a no-bake cookie ball of my own, it had to have a name worthy of all the jokes! They could also be called Three Tree Balls since almonds, coconut and vanilla all grow on trees. If you use maple syrup, you can call them Four Tree!

Two Nut Balls

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup almond butter
- 1/2 cup cane syrup or maple syrup
- 1/2 cup large shredded pieces of unsweetened coconut
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 3 drops coconut flavoring
- 6 drops vanilla extract
- 1/3 - 1/2 cup finely shredded unsweetened coconut

DIRECTIONS

Using a large fork, whip almond butter until light. Mix in syrup and beat until completely combined. Add large shreds of coconut, oatmeal and flavorings and combine completely.

Place finely shredded coconut in a large flat bowl. With damp hands, form mixture into walnut-sized balls and drop into finely shredded coconut. Roll balls in coconut until completely covered.

Store balls in an airtight container in the refrigerator.