

October 2013

garden time

A Digital Monthly Magazine for Your Garden & Home

The Best Holiday-Related Pumpkins

What to Look for When
You're Out of Your Gourd

Carnivorous Plants

Yacon

Kirk & Sons Hazelnuts'
The Kirk Family

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The Many Sides of October...

When I was little I knew that an octagon and October had something in common. I was right. Octagon is an 8 sided object and October was the 8th month in the old Roman calendar (before they added January and February, which makes me wonder what they had to keep track of winter months, but I digress). This whole thought came back to mind when I thought about all the cool things, the 8 sides of October as I call them, that people can enjoy.

1. The great bounty that is still in the garden. We are still pulling in cucumbers, tomatoes, grapes and other goodies. It also means that these items are available fresh from your local farmers markets as well.

2. Speaking of farmers markets you can get out and enjoy some of the great harvest festivals that are out there. Bauman's, Fir Point Farms, French Prairie Gardens, Wooden Shoe and EZ Orchards all come to mind right now.

3. Apple festivals are also on the radar for October. The 2 that quickly come to mind are the huge apple tasting event at Portland Nursery on Stark the second and third weekends of the month, but Smith Berry Barn is also celebrating by featuring their own home-grown apples.

4. Garden time, and I don't mean the show... this time of year is the best time to get out and enjoy your garden one last time (between showers) and to look at adding some perennials. Fall is a great time to plant!

5. Color changes are another big trademark of the season. As I wrote in last month's magazine, fall creates quick changes in nature. The show is constantly changing, get out there and enjoy it.

6. Halloween! How can you not mention the month of October without including this great holiday. I also consider Halloween to be the first in the big sequence of holidays that are just down the road. Don't think about Turkey day or Christmas yet. Enjoy Halloween as its own great event! Unless you are Canadian and then you will celebrate Thanksgiving in the middle of October.

7. Football on the weekends. Whether you like football or not, it is one of the big weekly happenings during the month of October. Football in October is fun, warm sunny days turning into cool brisk nights, and this early in the season everyone is still hoping for a great season! Get out and support your local high school or college team. I'm sure you will have a good time.

8. Finally, family! Those cooler and rainy days are pushing people indoors. Take advantage of that by starting a family activity. Play cards, put together a puzzle or play a board game. Better yet. Take a trip to the farmers market and everyone pick out something for dinner and then go home and make it together as a family!

We mark this wonderful month with some great seasonal stories. Including ones on the holiday related pumpkins, touring the 'Fruit Loop', and making 'nut butters'. We also get to meet the Kirk family and visit their hazelnut farm.

Enjoy this wonderful time of year!

Happy Gardening!

Jeff Gustin, Publisher

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new. Here are just a few to keep your eyes out for as you make your trip out to the local pumpkin patch or farmer's market.

Best White Pumpkin

There is just something enchanting about a white pumpkin! Perhaps it is because of their surreal look, or perhaps they just stand out amongst the sea of orange, white pumpkins are always a popular option for fall decorating. My personal favorite is the full moon variety. These smooth beauties can weigh up to 90 pounds and can become over 45 inches in diameter. Their smooth skin is ideal for carving, or just admiring in a fun pumpkin display.

Best Carving Pumpkin

The best pumpkins for carving have smooth, even skin. They will be heavy for their size and freshly harvested. Of course, the best pumpkin is the one you pick yourself! The jack-o-lantern varieties that you will start seeing in stores are bred to be the ideal carving pumpkin, but any pumpkin that

**Out of your gourd?
Don't get spooked!
Whether it's for
carving, cooking
or creating, here's
how to find...**

The Best Holiday- Related Pumpkins

by Sarah Gustin



There is a little part of every Oregonian that just can't wait for fall. The changing leaves, the warm drinks, morning fog hanging over fields and the annual trip out to the local pumpkin patch. Just because the weather has changed doesn't mean your enthusiasm for fresh, fun, and local produce has to change! Unusual gourds are gaining popularity in recent years, and now is the time of year to explore something



speaks to you can be made to work! It's all about feeling that excitement and connection with your pumpkin.

Best Seeds for Eating

The Kakai variety of pumpkin grows hullless and very good-for-you seeds! Not only are they healthy, they are also very tasty! The Kakai seeds have even been shown to promote prostate health in men. These are very cute, medium-sized pumpkins, with some green vertical striping on orange flesh.

Best Warty Pumpkin

You'll find these fun little guys just about everywhere! Many of these keep very well at room temperature, which makes them ideal as a component in a festive autumn centerpiece! These creepy warty pumpkins are not great for carving, so keep them whole in your decorations and admire them in their natural state. Keep an eye out for these spooky options: Red Warty Thing, One Too Many, Knucklehead, and Peanut.

Best Cooking Pumpkin

One of the best pie pumpkins

available is the Baby Pam Sugar Pie pumpkin. This four pound pumpkin has very thin skin and fine grained sweet flesh. It is also ideal for growing, as the vines tend to have a higher yield than other pie pumpkins. The runner up for pie pumpkins in the Winter Luxury Pie Pumpkin. This heirloom six pound pumpkin grows with very pretty white netting on its skin, giving it a frosted look. It also has a sweet and fine grained flesh ideal for pies. The honorary mention cooking pumpkin is Marina Di Chioggia. This 6-12 pound Italian heirloom has been hailed by chefs as an exceptional pumpkin for savory dishes like gnocchi.

Best Honorary Pumpkin

My personal favorite decorating pumpkin is the Fairy Tale pumpkin. The skin color varies from a dusty orange to a deep ma-



hogany, and it is an excellent eye catching pumpkin for decoration. A similar and more common pumpkin would be Cinderella. Cinderella pumpkins are a French heirloom pumpkin, and are said to be the variety that that was cultivated by the pilgrims and served at the second thanksgiving.

Create an autumn tradition and head out to your local pumpkin patch, Fir Point Farms (www.FirPointfarms.com) Bauman Farms (www.Baumanfarms.com) and EZ Orchards (www.ezorchards.com) are some of our favorites. The best pumpkin is the one you like. All pumpkins will grow a little bit different; make sure to pick the one that has the personality that speaks to you!



Yacón's Rebellion



Hardy and happy in Northwest soil, you might just fall in love with this unusual South American tuber.

by William McClenathan

The Yacón, also spelled Yacon, (*Smilanthus sonchifolius*, Syn.: *Polymnia edulis*, *Polymnia sonchifolia*) is a perennial plant traditionally grown in the Northern and Central Andes from Colombia to Northern Argentina for its crisp, sweet-tasting tuberous roots. A relative of the sunflower and Jerusalem artichoke, it is not only a unique and beautiful plant but has some great health benefits as well. Because of that, and because it is relatively new to our market, we thought we should bring it to your attention.



As with countless other plants, just because we may not have heard of it does not mean it is not utilized already elsewhere in the world.

- In Japan they make a tea from it.
- Throughout history it has had religious and spiritual significance in many different religions.
- In medical fields it is important because it has half the calories of sugar. More importantly, what makes it sweet (I won't bore you with all the proper terminology) has little to no effect on the human body when it comes to turning the Yacon sugar into fat. Conversely it assists with digestion, cleaning out the colon by attracting the bad fats that make us sick, rather than adding to them.

Because it yet has little popularity in America, finding information and recipes was a task indeed. I did find some which I will share at the end of this article.

When I was first introduced to this plant, I was hesitant to consider it hardy. It just did not look like something that would thrive in the NW.

That was 3 years ago and even though our last winter was mild, the two previous ones were not. I have discovered it generally does not sprout until late in the year. This tells me it must need warmer weather to trigger its growth. As it is grown in the Columbian and Northern Argentine regions of the Andes, that would make sense. But once it starts, it can quickly grow to 4'-5' in height. It loves good watering during the growth season and would prefer sun. As with most root edibles, I have found that it also enjoys a great draining, loose soil.

The root, their sweet crisp fla-



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The advertisement features a central logo for Gartner's Meats, which is a shield-shaped emblem with a crown on top, containing the text "GARTNER'S" and "German Style". Surrounding the logo are several circular and rectangular images of various meat products, including sausages, salami, and other cured meats. The background of the advertisement is a warm, golden-yellow color with a subtle sunburst pattern.

vor leaning toward cucumber, is what is used in most of the recipes. There is also a Yacon syrup that works better in cooking for some recipes. I am looking forward to seeing what else comes from this great plant.

This is not a small perennial and it requires ample room. Beautiful and unique, Yacon does double duty in the garden, feeding both the mind, with its beautiful leaves and flowers, and the body with its tasty tuberous roots.

The tubers are pretty easy to harvest. You can begin harvest as soon as the plant has bloomed. But, as with many root vegetables, you can also wait until a frost has knocked back the growth. Dig carefully around the base of the plant and you will quickly find the large tubers. You can dig the whole plant if you like or just hand dig and remove each tuber, leaving the crown of the plant for next year's production. Yacon also are easy to separate from the crown as well, giving you greater production each year or even sharing them with a friend. The tubers will last about two weeks in your refrigerator once harvested. They will also keep better and for longer if you just leave them in the ground and use them as you need them. But do harvest them before the hard freezes begin. I have heard that even after they go soft, you can still use them to cook with but I did not have any luck finding specific information on how to do that.

I know of a couple of places in our area that consistently carries this plant and would certainly be able to give you even more information.

One is Fry Road Nursery <http://fryroadnursery.com>.



They sell it in their retail store as well as wholesale it. Taking a trip to Fry Road could bring you a lot more wonderful plants than just a Yacon.

Alice Doyle from Log House Plants <http://loghouseplants.com> also grows it for wholesale, so you could check with your favorite local independent garden center to see if they carry it from there.

I have also seen it at Garden-Palooza in the Nichols Garden Nursery booth in 4" pots in the spring and they have it available at their retail location as well. <http://www.nicholsgardennursery.com>.



Chicken Vegetable Curry with Yacon

This Indian style curry includes Yacon. These Andean tubers cook to a tender/crisp translucence and absorb the curry flavors. For a vegetarian dish simply omit the chicken. Serve with rice and a side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumber seasoned with cumin, salt and pepper.

Serves 4-6.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1 chopped jalapeno pepper, deseeded
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, peeled and coarsely cut
- 1 medium Yacon (about 12 oz.) peeled and diced into large 1¼ inch pieces
- 3 small red potatoes, peeled and diced into large cubes
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves cut into cubes
- 1 large (28 oz) can diced tomatoes
- 1 medium head cauliflower (about 1 pound) cut into large florets
- 2 cups frozen petit pois (peas)
- ½ cup chopped cilantro

In a large lidded skillet heat the oil over medium heat. Add coriander, cumin, curry, jalapeno pepper, garlic and stir for thirty seconds. Add onion, Yacon, and potatoes, stirring frequently until vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes.

Add tomatoes, chicken and cauliflower. Bring to a simmer, turn heat to low and cook covered until vegetables are tender about 15 minutes. Stir in peas and cook, uncovered until the peas are tender about 3 minutes. Stir in cilantro and serve.



Yacon Carrot Salad with Wasabi

Posted on December 10, 2006 by Rose Marie

I found this one on our own Rose Marie Nichols' Blog of Nichols Garden Nursery. <http://nichols-gardennursery.wordpress.com/category/yacon-recipes>. Check it out for even more recipes!

Peeled and cut yacon discolors when exposed to the air. Acidity from citrus or vinegar maintains the white color. When making this salad, prepare the dressing first so you can quickly add the julienned yacon to it and preserve the color. Note my suggestion for using the food processor to speed preparation. As I keep working with the yacon in recipes I find I'm mostly trying to adapt dishes that might use jicama, Asian pears, potatoes or daikon. Some have worked well enough to publish on this blog.

Serves 4-6

Dressing ingredients

- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp *wasabi paste or ½ teaspoon powder
- 3 tbsp rice wine vinegar or cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp sugar
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- ½ tsp grated ginger
- ½ teaspoon dark sesame oil

Combine ingredients in a bowl and stir until mixed. Set aside.

Salad ingredients

- 8 oz. julienned or shredded yacon
- 8 oz. julienned or shredded carrot
- ¾ cup cooked edamame beans (shelled edible soybean)

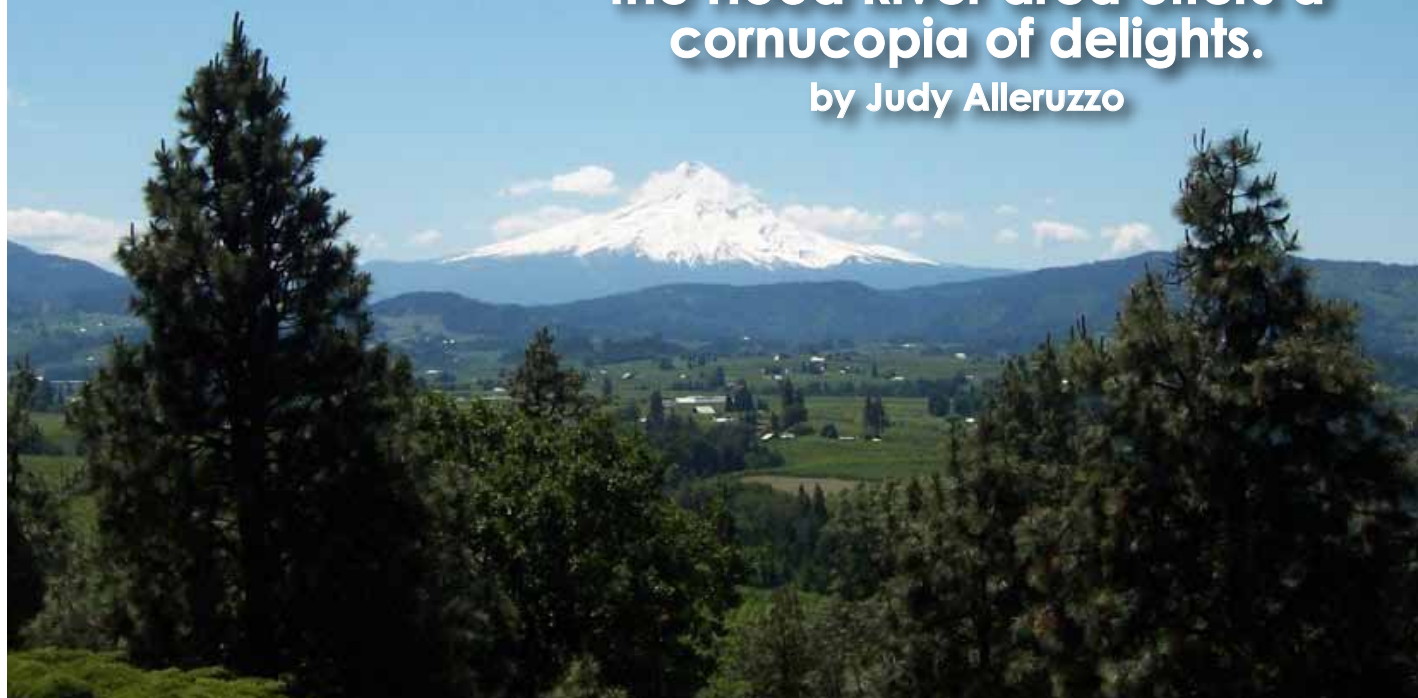
Prepare dressing before making salad. To shred in a food processor peel both yacon and carrots and cut into 2" lengths. Place these in the processor and with a shredding or julienne blade firmly press on the vegetables while the processor is running. A bit of pressure produces a large shred that is almost as attractive as from a mandoline. Mandolines or the Japanese Benreiner version, produce perfect strips but I worry about carelessly cutting off part of my knuckle.

* Wasabi paste or dried wasabi produce similar results in this dressing. This is the green tinged horseradish relative native to Japan.

“The Fruit Loop”

Just a short drive from Portland,
the Hood River area offers a
cornucopia of delights.

by Judy Alleruzzo



“The Fruit Loop” is a 35 mile drive through the beautiful area surrounding Hood River, Oregon. Thirty family run orchards, farms and wineries make up “The Fruit Loop” with diverse products of wool, wine, cider, lavender, vegetables and of course, fruit.

My favorite time to visit is fall as the weather is a bit cooler and the colors have begun to turn in the landscape. Fall ripening fruit and vegetables are my second favorite reason for taking a drive out to Hood River... well that and stopping for Cider tasting. More about that side trip a bit later. The many family run farm stands are chock full of apples, pears, pumpkins and winter squash. The bounty is incredible!

October is a great time to take an excursion out to Hood River and tour “The Fruit Loop”. But before you start collecting fruit and vegetables and tasting Cider, stop in Hood River for lunch. On a sunny, fall day, the view of the Columbia Gorge from 3 Rivers Grill is awesome. Yummy food, a glass of wine and that view from the patio make lunch a great treat. Being “elegantly sufficient” as my British friends say, it’s time to hit the road and check out “The Fruit Loop”. Stop at The Chamber of Commerce to pick up the touring map. It is a comprehensive guide to The Hood River Valley and the many Fruit Loop

businesses that are home there.

For first timers, just close your eyes and pick a farm on the map to visit and check out the produce. A stop at Rasmussen Farms to the south of town is a good choice. It’s a handsome, well kept farm stand flanked by a small green house and an antique farm wagon being pulled by a life size horse made of moss.

Friendly staff help you select an assortment of fruit including seasonal pears, apples and late season vegetables. Pick out a pumpkin and add in gourds for your front porch display.

All this shopping can make you a bit thirsty so stop at the local cider tasting room called Fox-Tail Cider, adjacent to Smiley’s Red Barn farm stand. This tasting room is brand new and features that old fashioned drink, hard cider, made from fermented sweet apple cider. Hard Cider is taken to a new level of flavor at Fox-Tail Cider. If you cannot decide on a flavor to try, order a flight of 8 hard ciders. Just as you taste the nuances of a flight of wine, Fox-Tail Hard Ciders are just as varied.

The house favorites are “The Mary Ann”, cider infused with ginger and “Fuzzy Haven”, peach style cider. Non-alcoholic sweet apple cider is available too.

Fox-Tail Ciders are now available in restaurants and pubs in Hood River and Portland.

Ask at your favorite pub to stock it for you.

To get another beautiful view of the area, drive up to Panorama Point County Park. This park is a hidden gem in a neighborhood-type setting. Views of Mt. Hood and the orchards of "The Fruit Loop" are breathtaking. It's a nice place to bring out a blanket to relax on and try some of the delicious fruit you've just purchased.

Don't miss a stop at the Columbia River front in Hood River to watch the kite boarders and windsurfers. It is another great place to take a break while on this day of adventure. Make sure you have a fleece jacket on as true to the hype of "The Windsurfing Capital of the World", it's very breezy at the waterfront.

The river is alive with multi-col-





ored sails and kites. It's amazing to watch the skill and acrobatics of these sportspeople. Apart from kite boarders and windsurfers, sailboats can be seen keeping close to the Washington shoreline. They stay well out of the way of everyone else. With all the hustle and bustle going on, there still is a harmony to the river scene.

Besides the delicious fun of "The Fruit Loop", Hood River has many activities to discover as a day trip

or long weekend. If you can stretch out your time there be sure to take in The Mount Hood Railroad. It departs Hood River and travels though the countryside meandering among orchards and farms.

On Mondays, there is also a grand market called the Gorge Grown Farmers' Market.

You can find a multitude of local products including fruits, vegetables, eggs, flowers, bread and

cheese. Freshly prepared meals are offered for those wanting to relax and listen to the evening's musical entertainment. It is located at the Hood River Middle School from 4-7PM, May to the end of November.

It is always amazing what you can find driving just a short distance from home. Be adventurous this fall and take a drive out to Hood River and "The Fruit Loop". You will have a grand time.





**Hood River
Chamber of Commerce**
720 E Port Marina Dr
www.hoodriver.org

3 Rivers Grill
601 Oak Street
Hood River, Or 97031
www.threeriversgrill.com

Fox-Tail Cider
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www.gorgegrown.com

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Love at First Bite



Darlingtonia Californica

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Sundew

DIESEL DEMON VIA FLICKR
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Pitcher Plant

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All my life I've had a fascination with carnivorous plants. I've always been scared to grow them though, feeling intimidated by the prospect of constructing a successful terrarium. What kind of drainage will they need? Can I put several different carnivorous plants in one terrarium? Will they all need different moisture? Different nutrients? Imagine my surprise when I found out that I could grow some of these exotic plants in my own backyard!

Carnivorous plants evolved to survive in harsh, nutrient-poor environments. They supplement their nutrients by trapping and digesting insects. There are many different methods that these plants have developed to trap their prey. Some, like the Venus Flytrap, use an active mechanical trap called a snap trap. The lobes of the mouth-like leaves contain little hairs that respond to stimuli and cause the leaves to snap shut. Others, like pitcher plant varieties, have pitfall traps, where at the bottom of a tubular leaf there is a pool of digestive enzymes. These often have a small section of leaf covering the opening, protecting the enzymes from rain. Many of these pitfall plants also employ other methods to keep their prey from escaping. For example, the Cobra Lily has a semi-transparent and multi-colored pattern, which confuses insects and tires them as they try to escape through the false openings. You will also commonly find carnivorous plants employing flypaper traps. Many sundews use sticky mucilage to trap and digest their prey.

Darlingtonia Californica, or the Cobra Lily is a pitcher plant variety that is native to northern California and



Nepenthes

MACK L VIA FLICKR
CREATIVECOMMONS LICENSE

Meat eaters unite! You can grow carnivorous plants in a NW garden.

by Sarah Gustin

southern Oregon. It grows in moist, sandy, slightly forested environments. If you have a chance head out to Florence, Oregon and check out the Darlingtonia State Park. Just remember, it is illegal to collect Darlingtonia samples in Oregon.

Pitcher plants like the Darlingtonia are your best bet if you want to begin cultivating carnivorous plants outdoors. They naturally protect themselves against Oregon cold and rain. They thrive in sandy, moist soil. If you are just starting out growing these plants, it may be best to try them potted first. Different varieties will react differently to Northwest weather patterns, and potting your plants will give you more control over the soil and weather variables. Venus flytraps will also weather well in Oregon. I've even seen flytraps bounce back after a harsh snow! Once again, you may want to begin with a potted version, before locating the best place to plant one permanently in your backyard.

Though many nurseries carry some commercial flytraps, the carnivorous plants that will do best are the ones that you get from carnivorous plant providers. The main provider in the Northwest is Sarracenia Northwest. You can find them online or at Portland Saturday Market. Al's Garden Center (www.als-gardencenter.com) sells Venus flytraps and will start selling Nepenthes in November. You can also check out the supply at Portland Nursery (www.Portland-Nursery.com) I highly recommend delving into the world of these exotic plants! I think you'll find that once you start, you'll have a hard time stopping at just one.



Darlingtonia Californica

WL CUTLER VIA FLICKR
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Venus Flytrap



Darlingtonia Californica (cobra lily)

DBERRY/2006 VIA FLICKR
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Drosera capillaris Sundew

BOB IN SWAMP VIA FLICKR
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Nuts About Nuts

Linked to the past and looking to the future, The Kirk Family guides a multi-generational hazelnut business into the 21st century.

by Therese Gustin



Darcy and Lance Kirk

I love living in Oregon! I feel lucky to reside in an area that hosts a bounty of delectable edibles! Harvest time in the Northwest reminds me of the amazing diversity of vegetables, fruits and nuts that are grown in this region of the world. Oregon is home to countless farms, vineyards, hop fields, berry farms and hazelnut groves. In fact, outside of Turkey and Italy, the Pacific Northwest is the third largest producer of hazelnuts in the world. Just down the road in Independence, Oregon is a 200 acre family farm called Kirk & Sons Hazelnuts run by Joe Kirk and his son Lance and daughter-in-law Darcy Kirk.

In addition to helping on the farm and raising their twin boys, Darcy, an instructional assistant with Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation (<http://aitc.oregonstate.edu/index.htm>), is passionate about educating children about agriculture, natural resources and the environment. AITC provides instructional materials for teachers K-12 to develop student's awareness of how important agriculture is in their lives. Darcy has the privilege of teaching the teachers about this subject that is so dear to her heart.

Lance's grandfather started growing hazelnuts in St. Paul, Oregon. His son Joe farmed hops in Independence and then grew hazelnuts to add an additional crop to harvest after the hops were done. The trees were planted in 1980 and they currently have over 21,000 hazelnut trees. Joe's son Lance came back to the

farm about 7 years ago to help his dad and has hopes that eventually at least one of his twin boys will want to carry on the family business. Upon his return, he brought with him a washer and dryer system designed to clean out sticks, rocks, mud and dust and sanitize the hazelnuts. The dryer then dries the nuts to a safe moisture level so that they will store properly.

Although the Kirks grow and process nuts from their own orchard, the bulk of their business comes from receiving and processing hazelnuts from farms in the area... from Independence to Junction City. In a small window of time each fall they clean about 4 million pounds of the tasty nuts.

Lance is continually learning more and more about the business of hazelnut growing and processing every day. Transitioning from the older to the newer generation does have its challenges but one of the benefits of a multigenerational business is sharing and respecting all the knowledge and experience from the older generation. That mixed with gaining knowledge from OSU's active professors, area high school science teachers, as well as 15 different growers coming into his facility has only served to enhance the family business.

Luckily the Kirks haven't had to deal with the Eastern Filbert Blight that has plagued many hazelnut orchards in the Northwest. They keep their trees healthy by foliar fertilization and they regu-





larly take petiole and soil samples to determine the amounts and types of fertilizers that are needed to manage the health of the orchard. By taking these samples, they can more closely monitor what is actually in the soil and regulate their fertilizer use to what the trees actually need. They also monitor for insects with the use of pheromone traps.



So how does the hazelnut processing actually work? The nuts come to the Kirk facility in totes on a truck. They are weighed with all the dirt, sticks, etc. This is called the 'dirt weight'. The nuts are then put through the washer where all the debris is removed. At this point they are weighed again. The weight of the dirty nuts minus the weight of the clean nuts is called the 'disappearance'. All that debris that results from the cleaning gets composted on the property. The Kirks are paid based on the weight of the 'disappearance'. Lance says the dirtier the nuts the more he gets paid but he'd much rather have cleaner nuts come into the facility as it is much easier to put them through the washer. He has actually had totes of nuts so wet and dirty that they come out of the totes as a single solid cube!



After the cleaning process they are put into the dryers. The Kirk's dryers are set up like food dehydrators in two levels. This is an improvement over the majority of dryers that are set up as single floors. At this point, the dried nuts are taken to a packing house where they are sorted by size and

bagged for shipment or cracked for kernels. Some varieties are sold as kernels and some sold 'in shell'. The majority are shipped to China, Asia, Germany and other European countries.

Hazelnuts (also known as filberts) are one of my favorite nuts for use in baking and just plain snacking. If you want to try these delicious hazelnuts yourself, you can order them locally from their Facebook account. They also sell to Chatoe Rogue for use in their Hazelnut Rum and Hazelnut Brown Nectar.

So what are the future plans for the Kirk family? Lance would like to increase the efficiency of his dryers so they capture more heat and reduce the amount of propane use and he would love to grow the farm by acquiring more acreage and planting more trees. Ultimately his dream is to give his two boys the opportunity he had to work and grow up on the farm and he wonders if some day they will want to carry on the family business.



Hazelnut Dryer

Kirk & Sons Hazelnuts
(Facebook page)

[www.facebook.com/
KirkSonsHazelnuts](http://www.facebook.com/KirkSonsHazelnuts)

**Check out the
Hazelnut Harvest
segment from the
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Nutty for Nut Butter

For a new spin on a childhood favorite, try making your own peanut butter.

by Robin Burke



When was the last time you enjoyed a peanut butter and jelly sandwich? That sweet mix of creamy and fruity goodness makes your mouth water just thinking about it, right? On a camping trip recently, a friend brought white bread, Jif Peanut Butter, and strawberry jam. I was so excited I traded away my farmer's market tomato, basil and mozzarella baguette. That first bite of PB&J was sheer bliss. Memories of childhood picnics, my old "Junglebook" lunchbox, and my little brother sharing his sandwich with the dog went through my mind.

But then, by about the fourth bite, I thought I was going to be sick! I mean really, you might as well eat an apple

fritter and glazed donut sandwich! It turned sickeningly sweeter the more I ate. So, I decided to "fix" that PB&J sandwich. Low-sugar fruit spread and almond butter was a good choice, but not really the memory I was after. Then, while perusing Pinterest.com one night, I had an Aha! moment—I would whip up my own nut butter!

If you don't know about "Pinterest", the quick explanation is that it's like a bulletin board where you "pin" up recipes, ideas, cute quotes and pictures that you want to refer to again. These bulletin boards are online and when you "pin" a recipe-- to your "Dinners" bulletin board for instance-- it saves the picture of the dish

and the web address where you can find it in the future. It's fun and handy, but also the biggest time-sucker since Facebook. There are gardening ideas, decorating for every occasion, fashion designs, photography, and the never-ending D-I-Y projects for everything under the sun. This is where I got the notion that I could make my own fabulous nut butters! Which is kind of like saying you are going to throw a party for your kid that will look exactly like the cover of a Martha Stewart magazine.

None of my first-attempt nut butters turned out that great. Only one was pretty good, and it was basically a mistake. I bought a bag of honey-roasted mixed nuts, instead of honey-



roasted peanuts. It was definitely “different” yet, edible. Two of the three 11-year-olds at my house that day ate it.

From there, I got serious and bought three different kinds of nuts. I chose raw almonds; lightly salted peanuts; and honey-roasted peanuts. To the various mixtures I added honey, agave syrup, salt, sea salt, or nothing at all and ran them round and round in my food processor. The instructions on Pinterest said not to give up. Let the machine run for up to 10 minutes and you would soon have smooth, beautiful nut butter. No oil needed, the nuts have enough natural oils to make your concoction nice and spreadable.

Well, mine never left the gooey ball stage. And, I never seemed to get the proportions right. They were too bland, too salty or too sweet. My food processor got so hot I was afraid it would explode!

Not one to give up, I decided it was my blending apparatus that was lacking. I packed up and headed to a friend’s house where I knew I would find the



latest gizmo. And, I did. A spanking new VitaMix! Surely now, I would be able to produce the nut butter of my dreams.

First, we toasted the nuts. You can leave them raw, but I read the taste will be “nuttier” if toasted. So, we started by eviscerating the plain, toasted almonds. It got pretty hot, but came out smooth, though it tasted somewhat bland. I would add sea salt next time. However, I think to get the taste we’re accustomed to, you would have to add quite a bit of salt and I didn’t want to do that.





Next, we pulverized the lightly salted, toasted peanuts. The texture was really good on this one due to the higher oil content of the peanuts. The taste was a bit "off", but did give you a good sense that it was fresh.

Lastly, a new recipe: Chocolate Sunflower Butter. Oh yeah. It was delicious, but of course had lots of added ingredients like vanilla, maple syrup, coconut oil, cocoa powder and milk. Not exactly a "clean" nut butter, and it was quite thick, so I would call it "near" success!



Although this last attempt did return some favorable results, I have come to the conclusion that the finest nut butters I have ever tasted come from the same place my tomato and basil sandwich came from... the farmer's market. Right there among the produce and the cut flowers is a fresh roasted and ground, nut butter tent! They're called Nut-tritious Foods. They like to say it's "The Foodies Nut Butter". It was the "Foodie" fans that begged stores to stock the

product so they could get their hands on it year round. Now, Whole Foods, New Seasons, Market of Choice, and Food Co-ops in Oregon and Washington carry the nut and seed butters in their refrigerated sections.

It turns out that "whipping up" a batch isn't what Nut-tritious does. Amanda Siegler, the company's first employee, says, "It's a slow and tedious process." The company uses slow-churning grinders to get the perfect consistency, not power blenders or food processors. That way they are able to keep from heating the butter. The seeds and nuts are roasted at a low temperature and then cooled, but during the grinding process the butters are never heated. Major peanut butter manufacturers have to add emulsifiers and then heat it so it will pour into jars. But Siegler says, heating to the point of oxidation can cause it to go rancid, separate and lose nutritional value. "We ice cream scoop each batch into the tubs by hand," she says, "and it may take a little longer but cold processing is really beneficial to our customers".



Founder and Chief Nut, Ken Conliff, says, "As far as I know, we're the only nut butter company in the world that does that. You don't want to heat your poly and monounsaturated fats. They're heart healthy and fight cholesterol."

Conliff explains he got interested in blending nut butters when he realized how little they had changed in the past 100 years. "There's some kind of nut, salt, sugar and homogenizers. What a shame! You start with a healthy ingredient and put in a bunch of unhealthy ingredients. I thought why not



start with something healthy and put in even healthier ingredients... get rid of the junk."

The company prides itself in being the most nutritious nut and seed butter out there by using a blend of sunflower seed and organic flax seed meal. "When you get down to nutrition what's important is all the little aspects working together," Siegler says, "instead of just focusing on one nut or seed that has great nutrition. We're really trying to create something that isn't just a nut butter but more like a product that is like a daily vitamin, really." Plus she says, "When I talk to people out at the farmer's market, one of the issues with eating healthy is it's too expensive. We try to keep a low price point and using the sunflower blend allows us to do that along with adding nutritional value."

The butters do need to be refrigerated for peak freshness. "It's like coffee," Conliff says, "fresh roasted and fresh ground coffee is better, when it's refrigerated. Oils stay healthier when refrigerated."

The same goes for the D-I-Y version, keep your new nut butter in the fridge. It should keep for five to seven days. Here are some tips if you try blending your own:



- Buy good quality nuts (dried out nuts won't release the oil you need)
- Toast the nuts and let them cool
- Use a high powered blender or food processor
- Have oil (safflower or coconut) on hand if it won't thin out

Getting your kids or grandkids off the sugary commercial brands of peanut butter is reason enough to try blending your own. Invite (or enlist) them to help, and their childhood memories will be of a much healthier PB&J.



WTDITG

Ah, the shades of Autumn. Just when you think all the color is leaving your garden, Fall arrives and we're presented with a brand new palette of hues. It's also a reminder that time is running out to prepare your plants for winter. Take advantage of the longer daylight hours and make sure your plants are ready for the cold days ahead.

PLANNING

- Start to plan next year's vegetable garden. Take your notes from this year while everything is fresh in your mind and create the plan for next year's garden. Rotate the spaces where crops were this year to help control disease and insect problems.



- Garden Journal catch-up time.

There is no time like the present for getting caught up. This will help with the plan for next year's vegetable garden.

- Check out any conifer sales and plan the live Christmas tree purchase early. Starting a green tradition of planting a live tree after Christmas is something to get the entire family involved in. Plant the 'seed' early this year to get the family excited about the new yearly tradition!

PLANTING

- The best time to plant anything into the landscape is actually all winter long! You can move plants around in the yard now and plant in any new acquisitions to the landscape. With the rain coming on you won't have to worry about watering them until next spring sometime.

- Move the plants that are stuck beneath the house overhang under the eaves where rain doesn't reach.

- There are about two weeks left to plant a new lawn or over-seed an existing one. Lawns started in the fall start quickly but don't wait until the frosts are here or you won't have good results.

- Plant spring bulbs starting this month through December. There is no better time to get your spring bulbs in the ground for next year's bloom. This includes tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and crocus. Choose a sunny loca-

tion with well-draining soil. Add compost to the soil by spading it in with a fertilizer.

- Bulb tip! Keep the squirrels and deer from eating the tulips by placing a tablespoon of Bonide's 'Molemax' into the planting hole before the bulb goes in.



TASKS, MAINTENANCE & CLEAN-UP

- Time to clean out the Mason Bee condos and clean up the cocoons.

- Watch for Crane Fly infestations in the lawn. Using Beneficial Nematodes in the soil can safely kill these lawn destroyers before they eat it all, however you can actually have 25 grubs per square foot of lawn without seeing a lot of damage if the lawn is healthy and thick. Fertilize the lawn, apply Calpril lime yearly, aerate and dethatch every so often and mow the grass taller to help create

a lush thick grass lawn the Crane Fly grubs can't destroy.



- Compost excess leaves and garden debris. Composting is a great way to recycle all the yard waste back to the Earth. Mow the leaves to chop them up and add to the compost pile with greens like grass clippings to aid the breakdown of the

What To Do In The Garden OCTOBER

leaves. Think layer cake when doing compost; a layer of wet green grass clippings followed by a layer of dry brown leaves.

Saving bags of dry leaves for next summer's compost pile is not too hard to do and helps provide



the 'brown' needed in the compost layer cake. You probably found out when it's all green grass clippings it quickly be-

comes a smelly pile of guck. Good compost smells like good earth, not stinky at all. Turning the pile every other week helps to introduce oxygen into the mix, much needed by the microbes breaking down the material. More oxygen means faster breakdown. Do a little research and start composting!

- Don't compost diseased leaves from fruit trees. Burn them or send to municipal composting

facilities.

- Get garden plants ready for winter, but don't prune back hard. Too often folks are eager to cut back their plants hard in the fall. Not a good idea. Plants get ready for winter weather from the top down, so if you cut off the top then the plant will be more susceptible to cold damage. It is more prudent to leave the plants tall and even with spent flowers on them (birds will thank you) and then pile on the leaves from the yard to cover the soil. Leaves are good insulation against the cold coming in winter. If you have to clean everything up then come back with a thick topdressing of organic compost or bark.



- Slugs patrol for eggs or adults. Use safe slug controls like Slug Magic which is just iron phosphate. As this

product breaks down the plants

get the benefit of the extra iron. Eggs look like little off-white BBs. Gather them up and toss them in the garbage. Look under rocks, boards, garden debris; wherever the mama slug found a protected spot to lay her egg stash.

- Watering, especially under the house eaves, getting ready for colder weather. Plants that go into cold weather with dry roots are extremely susceptible to cold damage. Just like our skin, plants can take the cold better when hydrated. Water plants deeply this fall if the rains are not getting to the roots; like under evergreen trees and eaves of the house.

- Winterize the more tender plants you want to save for next year like the hanging fuchsias, geraniums, dahlias and tuberous begonias. Bring them into a protected environment before the frost gets them. Treating them as a houseplant can give you a head start on next year's flower gardens.

VEGETABLE GARDEN



- Be sure to pick the crops as they mature before they lose their best flavor. Some crops can stay in the ground over winter and pulled up when wanting to prepare them for a meal; like beets, carrots, parsnips & turnips. Mulch them in good with a thick layer of leaves or compost.

- Planting cover crops to help fight weeds in winter and add back nutrients to the soil for next years crops. Give back to the soil the nutrition that your plants took out as they grew. Cover crops are the bee's knees when it comes to adding back some nitrogen plus other nutrients and adds lots of organic

matter back to the soil when you spade it under to rot next spring.



- Plant Garlic cloves You still have time to plant some garlic this fall. Be sure to purchase some heads soon or they'll be gone before you get yours! Garlic gets planted in the fall and sends up a green sprout soon afterward. The cloves need months

to mature so you should get them in soon. After it sprouts you can pop a layer of compost over them to protect them this winter. Then mark your calendar for next July to harvest the best tasting garlic ever-your own crop!



PLAY TIME

Gardening Events Around Town

Bauman Farms Harvest Festival
Through Thursday October 31, 2013
Bauman's Farm and Garden, Gervais, OR

Fall Harvest Festival
Through Thursday October 31, 2013
French Prairie Gardens

Pumpkin Patch, Pig Races, Mazes & More!
The crisp fall air signals it is time for a little Farm Family Fun at French Prairie Gardens and Family Farm's Pumpkin Patch!

Harvest Festival
Every weekend in October • 9:00am-5:00pm
Fir Point Farms, Aurora, OR

Every weekend in October is harvest time. Fall at the farm is all about having a great time with family!! Pick your own pumpkins in our Pumpkin Patch while getting your own corn stalks or hay bales for decorating. Celebrate Autumn with us and our many fun activities. Activities run every weekend starting the last weekend in September thru October 31st. Free admission and parking.

What to Do In the Garden in October
Saturday October 5, 2013 • 11:00am
Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

Our monthly seminar on what should be done in the landscape and garden. The weather has finally turned cooler and wetter; October is a great time of year to plant trees and shrubs. Now is also a good time to take lots of notes on your own garden or landscape. Bring your notes with you, and we'll try to help decipher them. Bring pictures and samples for our experts to look at during the Q& A portion. This is a regular seminar on the first Saturday of every month so remember to put us on your calendar! Free.

Fall Bulb Planting Class
Saturday October 5, 2013 • 12:30pm
Farmington Gardens, Beaverton, OR

Get excited now for a colorific spring! Presentation by Lou and Stephanie of Farmington Gardens. There will be plenty of time for questions! Cost: Free.

Farmington Gardens Walk & Talk
Sunday October 6, 2013 • 10:30am
Farmington Gardens, Beaverton, OR

A fun and informative walk through our display gardens, greenhouses, and plants. Hear from the experts and ask all the questions you want! Cost: Free.

Garlic, Onions, Shallots & Early Spring Crops
Sunday October 6, 2013 • 11:00am-12:30pm
Portland Nursery (Division), Portland, OR

With Tim Lanfri of Community Garden Creators
Always wanted to try your hand at growing overwintering crops? Tim Lanfri, of Community Garden Creators, will discuss what veggies you can still plant, and how to prep your garden space for early spring plantings. Fall is the perfect time to plant overwintering garlic, onion and shallot sets, and Tim will share his years of growing experience to help you maximize your success! He will also walk you through the essential steps of preparing your beds in the fall so you can plant earlier in the spring and avoid digging and destroying your soggy spring soil. Topics will include amending, composting, prepping and protecting your beds.

WTDITG: What to Do in the Garden in October
Sunday October 6, 2013 • 12:00pm
Garland Nursery, Corvallis, OR

Fall is such a great time of year to plant in the Northwest, with the soil still warm from summer and the moisture from the new rains both adding to strengthen new root systems. At this month's WTDITG, Garland Nursery expert Kate shares how to use this to our advantage. She will review the different garlic types and how to plant them. She will also share her list of the best bulbs to plant this time of year, what to choose for sequential color patterns and make suggestions for accenting companion plants. Fall would not look the same without our mums and asters! Kate will show how to use them in our pots, landscapes and the interior of the home. There are things we can do now to get a jump on spring. Kate will review how to sow cover crops to improve our soil, exclude weeds and prepare for next year's planting.

Apple Tasting
Friday-Sunday October 11-13, 2013 • 10:00am-5:00pm
Friday-Sunday October 18-20, 2013 • 10:00am-5:00pm
Portland Nursery (Stark), Portland, OR

Apple Tasting is held every year on the second and third weekends in October. It's a family event and we'd love to see you back! Read about the 2012 Apple Tasting Event.

Al's 18th Annual Kids Bulb Day
Saturday October 12, 2013 • 9:30am, 11:30am, 1:30pm
Al's Garden Center, Woodburn, Sherwood, Gresham, OR
Get into gardening with your kids and together plant a pot of spring tulip bulbs. Kids have fun getting their hands dirty while also learning basic gardening skills. Don't miss this fun family activity and remember to bring your camera! Registration is required. You can register online at www.als-gardencenter.com.

continued next page



com, or by phone: Woodburn: 503-981-1245, Sherwood: 503-726-1162, Gresham: 503-491-0771. Cost: Free.

Little Sprouts - Pumpkin Painting

Saturday October 12, 2013 • 11:00am

Garland Nursery, Corvallis, OR

Fall is in the air, the pumpkins are ripe and we are ready to bring on the Halloween season for this month's Little Sprouts! Have your young ones dress in their painting clothes because we will be painting the pumpkins with their favorite Halloween theme. Registration required; Call (541) 753-6601 to register.

Fall Potting Party

Saturday October 12, 2013 • 10:00am-4:30pm

Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

Hopefully, you joined us for the first potting party of the 2013 season back in April, but if not, we're giving you another chance! We provide the soil, fertilizer and hands-on assistance to help you create some gorgeous fall containers for your home. All you have to do is show up with containers and creativity – or choose from our selection of colorful containers here at the nursery. This will be an open house-style event so please come at any time from 10 – 4:30. Free** and open to the public. **Soil, fertilizer and hands-on assistance included in event. Fee dependent upon additional materials used.

Halloween Hanging Baskets

Saturday October 13, 2013 • 1:00pm

The Garden Corner, Tualatin, OR

Build a spooky creation and make your front porch look absolutely ghoulish. Bring in your own containers or choose one from the many we have to offer. Soil, fertilizer and our spectacular expertise all at no cost.

Growing Citrus in the PNW

Saturday October 19, 2013 • 10:00am

Al's Garden Center, Woodburn, Sherwood, Gresham, OR

Yes, you can grow certain citrus plants in the Portland area! You only need a little direction to be successful. We will show you how to produce wonderful lemons, limes, and other citrus in this interactive class. Registration not required. Cost: Free. Speakers: Al's Experts at each location.

Overwintering Your Bonsai

Saturday October 19, 2013 • 11:00am

Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

Even though they are small, your Bonsai need to experience a dormant period during the year just as larger trees do. This Bonsai seminar will help you prepare your miniature work-of-art for the cold of winter. Our staff will explain the best way to

prepare and offer a variety of options for keeping your Bonsai cozy when the temperature drops. Be sure to bring your Bonsai along! Free.

Make a Kokedama

Sunday October 20, 2013 • 1:00pm

Al's Garden Center, Woodburn, Sherwood, Gresham, OR

Kokedama is the art of easily transforming plants into hanging sculptures! It's easy and fun - given some basic instructions. Let our experts lead you in this creative process and you will have a kokedama to take home and enjoy after class. This is a hands-on workshop, so bring gloves if you'd like! Speakers: Kokedama Experts. Cost: \$20 per person. Each participant will receive a kit, including one plant, moss, soil, string and plastic gloves. Registration is required and space is limited.

Annual Fall Row Sale

Friday-Sunday October 25-27, 2013

Garland Nursery, Corvallis, OR

Fall Fruit Tree Care

Saturday October 26, 2013 • 3:00pm-4:30pm

Portland Nursery (Division), Portland, OR

With Monica Maggio of Core Home Fruit Services Fall is a wonderful time to enjoy and care for your fruit trees. Learn how to best harvest, prepare for future planting, and winterize your home orchard with Monica Maggio of Core Home Fruit Services. Fall is the perfect time to prepare your mind and your soil (digging in winter-wet soggy soil is no good) for fruit tree planting fun in the spring when we will have our largest selection of fruit trees available for you to choose from!

Pruning Ornamentals with Brian Tsugawa

Sat. October 26, 2013 • 11:00am

Tsugawa Nursery, Woodland, WA

Many of us love Japanese maples and dwarf conifers for the beauty, elegance and strength they bring to the landscape. The Japanese maple radiates elegance in all seasons, with delicate leaves, fine fall color and lovely branch patterns; the dwarf conifers show off their powerful structure and quiet beauty during winter. Simple pruning of both types of ornamentals can help maintain and enhance their natural forms.

LOOKING FOR MORE?

You will find more events and updated information on the Garden Time Events Calendar
www.gardentime.tv/events.htm

continued next column

"Together, We Create the Message"

-Jeff Gustin, President

Cutting back on your advertising budget during a recession may seem like an effective cost-saving strategy, but the reality is far different. Studies show that businesses that reduce their advertising fall behind their competitors who maintain or increase their budgets, and take longer to recover when the economy rebounds.

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