



Mel Hauser of Kitchen Kettle Village talks about the upcoming Rhubarb Festival and its pie baking contest.

Rhubarb Festival Offers Pie Baking Contest, Rhubarb Fun

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff INTERCOURSE (Lancaster Co.) — Every third Saturday in May, a special tribute is paid to rhubarb in the little Lancaster County village of Intercourse.

It's called the Kitchen Kettle Village Rhubarb Festival, which became an annual event when it was first held 10 years ago.

"That was in 1984, when Kitchen Kettle Village wanted to do something different for a spring celebration. Everyone did something with strawberries, but rhubarb — that was the forgotten vegetable," said Mel Hauser, publicist for the village. "Many people haven't tasted rhubarb and don't know all the delicious-tasting foods that can be made with it."

Rhubarb definitely will not take second place to any other fruit or vegetable on May 21, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

It's amazing what can be done with that long-stem reddish-green vegetable. Whether it is in food or in fun, the festival has come with a list of innovative events throughout the day-long fest.

Visitors can start with a breakfast of strawberry rhubarb French toast and berry rhubarb parfait.

Other food specialties served throughout the day include chilled strawberry rhubarb soup, spiced rhubarb ham, rhubarb pork chop casserole, rhubarb glazed ham balls, rhubarb glazed chicken kabobs, strawberry rhubarb sauce, strawberry rhubarb pie, strawberry rhubarb streusel cake, strawberry rhubarb topping for funnel cakes, strawberry rhubarb frost, strawberry rhubarb pie, rhubarb pie, strawberry rhubarb streusel cake, rhubarb pecan muffins, strawberry rhubarb filled cookies, and almond rhubarb pastry.

The rhubarb pie contest begins at 10 a.m. The festival attracts people from across the U.S. Anyone is eligible to enter the contest.

First, second, and third-place prizes will be awarded. First-place prize is \$75 in cash. Second-place is a \$25 Kitchen Kettle Village Gift certificate, and third place is a \$10 Kitchen Kettle Village Gift certificate.

A rhubarb race car derby 500 begins at 11 a.m. The body of each dragster is constructed from a stem of rhubarb. Parts of the leaf from the stalk may be connected with toothpicks to create airfoils, fenders, canopies, and other decorative touches.

Events throughout the day include a rhubarb pie throw, free orange rhubarb punch at the hospitality gazebo, a kid's rhubarb arcade that includes rhubarb regatta, rhubarb bulls-eye toss, rhubarb pic up sticks, a rhubarb game, a rhubarb guessing event, the world's one and only rhubarb tree, a rhubarb discovery box, face painting, cookie decorating, costumed characters Yummie the gingerbread Person and Rupert Rhubarb, and Banjo Jimmy performing.

At the festival, visitors can buy rhubarb by the pound, a collection of rhubarb recipes, and lots of rhubarb items.

Rhubarb, a perennial plant that forms a large storage root and a mass of feeder roots underground, produces buds that grow long, thick, reddish stalks with large leaves. Only the stalks are safe to eat.

Although rhubarb is technically a vegetable, people most often prepare it as a dessert. With 211 mg of calcium, rhubarb is one of the best sources of calcium in the vegetable family.

Rhubarb was first grown in Mongolia. It's name is a combination of the Greek name for the Volga River, "Rha" and the Latin "barabrium." It is assumed that rhubarb was first used by the barbarians who lived along the Volga River.

Reportedly the first rhubarb

plants were shipped to America in 1770 by Benjamin Franklin to John Bartram in Philadelphia.

These facts and many more are included in the Rhubarb Recipes cookbook. The 43-page cookbook contains recipes from previous rhubarb festivals, which includes categories for beverages, breads, muffins, cakes, cookies, desserts, jams and relishes, pies, salads, soups and sauces, and entrees. It is sold for \$2 at the village or by mail for \$3, which covers shipping and handling. Money from the sale of cookbooks is donated to The Muscular Dystrophy Foundation.

Kitchen Kettle Village is a community of 32 country shops, where foods are prepared, original crafts created, and a quality selection of handmade country wares.

It began in the kitchen of Bob and Pat Burnley, who welcomed visitors into their kitchen to become acquainted over coffee and freshly baked cookies while watching strawberries and elderberries bubble in pots in preparation for jelly making.

Jelly continues to be made daily at the festival in addition to other cooking and craft demonstrations in the village's 32 shops.

Admission to the festival is free at Kitchen Kettle Village, located on Route 340 east of Lancaster.

For more information, call (800) 732-3538 or (717) 768-8261.

RHUBARB BAKING CONTEST RULES

- All entries must be a pie and include some form of rhubarb.
- The recipe, name, address and phone number must be included with each entry. You need not be present to win.
- Please have all entries in a disposable container.
- Please pre-register by calling Kitchen Kettle Village at (717) 768-8261.
- Entries must be brought to the Bake Shop at Kitchen Kettle Village by Saturday, May 21, before 10 a.m.

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