

## Consuming Thoughts

by

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Autumn brings a colorful harvest of wonderful winter squash with rich flavor inside its hard shell! Winter, or hard-shelled squashes are in good supply through the winter months, and some varieties are in the produce department year-round. It's a good idea to introduce winter squash to your menus and enjoy hearty, healthful eating.

There are several types of delicious hard-shelled squash to schedule into your meals. Interesting shell shapes, vibrant shell and flesh colors and nutty-sweet flavors bring a bounty of meal appeal to your table. While the exterior appearance of different winter squashes varies, all have bright yellow-orange flesh inside, and can usually be interchanged in recipes. Here are a few of the most common varieties.

•**Acorn** squashes have a dark green shell color showing areas of orange which increase during storage. Shaped somewhat like an acorn with wide ribs and pointed at one end, acorn squash is small to medium in size. This variety has a sweet nut-like flavor.

•**Butternut** squash is large and cylindrically shaped, with a round base and thick neck. It has tan shell color, rich orange flesh color and hearty sweet flavor.

•**Hubbard** squashes are large and rounded in the middle with tapering ends. They may have a dark blue, gray, green or orange shell color which is ridged with a pebbly texture. The squash has a rich, sweet flavor.

•**Turban** squash, with its colorful appearance, is an attractive table decoration as well as a rich and flavorful food. Turban-shaped, with a bright orange shell striped with white or green, turban squashes have hearty flavor.

Winter squashes are rich sources of vitamin A and dietary fiber. Most hard-shelled squashes contribute vitamin C, potassium and other nutrients. One cup of baked winter squash cubes has less than 80 calories and is sodium-free.

When shopping for squash look for quality in appearance. The shell should be intact with no soft spots or cracks. Squashes

should feel heavy for their size. If stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, they can keep up to several months. Do not refrigerate hard shells squashes.

There are three basic methods of preparing squash:

•**Steamed-Peel** squash, cut into 1 1/2 inch chunks and place in steam basket and cover. Steam 15 to 20 minutes or until tender.

•**Baked whole squash**—Slice off the stem end, scrape out the seeds and the stringy pulp. Brush with melted butter and season with sugar or salt, if desired. Most large squashes will require at least one hour or more of baking time. Prick with a fork to check for tenderness.

•**Baked squash halves**—This method works particularly well for smaller varieties such as the Acorn squash. Cut the squash lengthwise and scrape out the seeds and stringy portions. You can slice off a small piece on the bottom of each half to sit securely. Brush the flesh with melted butter. Place upside down in a baking pan; add water to a depth of about 3/4 inch and bake for about 30 minutes in a 400°F oven. While squash is baking, prepare a butter-sugar mixture, combining 1/3 cup melted butter with 1/4 cup honey, brown sugar

or maple syrup for every 2-2 1/2 pounds squash. At the end of the baking time, turn squash cut sides up, and baste with the prepared mixture. Continue baking about 15 to 30 minutes or until tender.

Squash can be used in a variety of ways. You can mash cooked squash with a dash of

hot-pepper sauce and minced onion for a spicy taste or you can add pureed cooked winter squash in soups.

Another wonderful suggestion is to stuff winter squashes with fruit, vegetable or meat fillings. Then bake and enjoy a hearty, natural casserole.

## Chain Saw Safety

**TOWANDA (Bradford Co.)**—Have you wanted to use a chainsaw to cut your own firewood or remove some "problem" small trees but you were just a little intimidated by the machine? Have you been using a chainsaw but your are not quite sure what you were doing? If that is the case then consider Chainsaw Use for The Novice. This workshop will be held on Saturday, October 17 at the Da-Mar Farm in Rushville. Instructors Dave and June Sienko and Eleanor Maas have received training in safety and use of the chainsaw from some of the best instructors in the world. Dave Sienko has been in the logging business for years and is well known as a safe operator. Topics that these instructors will cover include:

- Correct Felling and Bucking Techniques
- Proper Clothing and Safety Tips
- Care and Maintenance of the Saw.

The workshop begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and continues until noon. There is a \$5 per person fee and registration is limited to the first 25 paid registrants. To register, send your name, address and phone number with a check made payable to Bradford County Cooperative Extension and mail to: Chainsaw, Penn State Cooperative Extension, PO Box 69, Towanda, PA 18848-0069. For more information call Bob Hansen the Bradford County Extension Office at (717) 265-2896

## Lebanon County Li'l Miss

(Continued from Page B10) stalls for the cattle. Temperatures range between 60-110 degrees. "When my host family visited us in 1992, they were freezing," Sherry said.

Both Sherry and Bob grew up on dairy farms. They always wanted

to continue dairying, but felt too strapped financially and time-wise when they were on their own.

"Now we get every third weekend off," Bob said. "And we still get to farm."

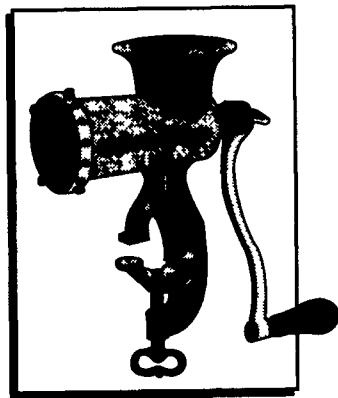
They enjoy helping Royell with her dairy promotions.

And, everyone of them enjoys drinking milk and using lots of dairy products.

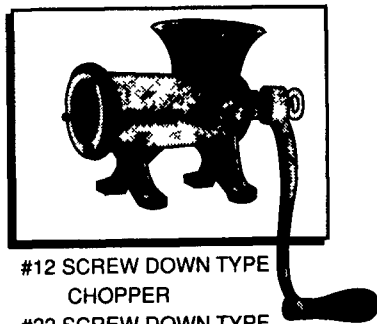
For one of Royell's favorite recipes, look for the featured recipe on the "Home on the Range" page.

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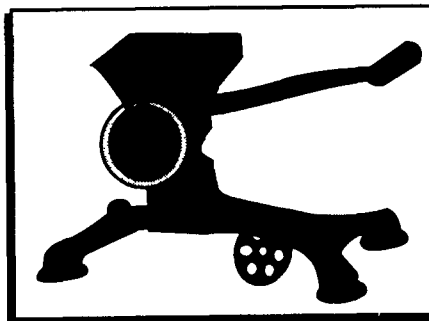
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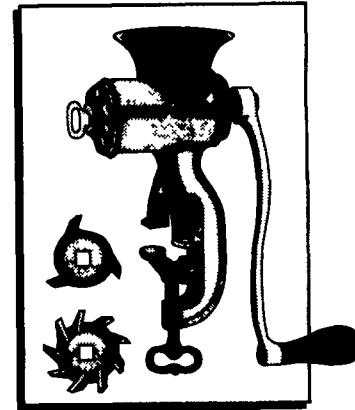
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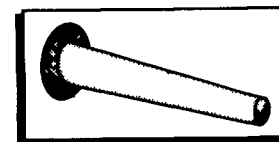
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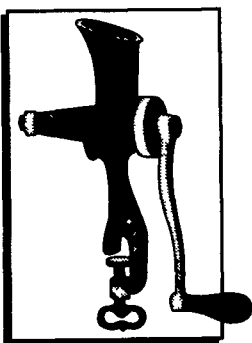
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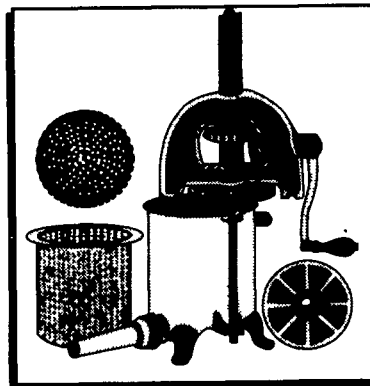
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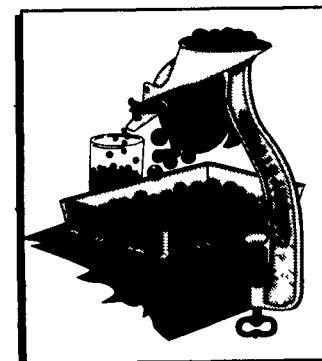
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