

# Showcase Autumn's Harvest Indoors

(Continued from Page B2)

of the flowers and vegetables, it is not too late collect weeds, pods, and vines that have dried naturally in fields, gardens, and backyards. Many roadside stands also offer natural materials at a nominal cost.

Debbie Hartman and Sarah Vakili, both Master Gardeners, presented a workshop on pumpkins, corn, and beans, which they dubbed "The Three Sisters."

"These 'Three Sisters' were not brought to this country from another country but are native plants that sustained Native Americans and the colonists," Hartman said.

Corn was of such value that it is reported to have been sold in Williamsburg for today's equivalent of \$30 a bushel.

The presentation included a history of the "Three Sisters" and ideas for using them in recipes and crafts.

Native Americans preserved green beans for winter use by stringing them on heavy thread to dry for several weeks.

## Leather Britches

Today, a popular craft, which the Master Gardeners referred to as leather britches, is stringing the green beans with red chili peppers and miniature ears of ornamental corn."

To string beans, chili peppers, and ornamental corn, thread a craft needle with a double string of quilting thread, fishing line or floss. Tie a knot at one end.

Pierce a green bean in the center and pull it to the end of the string until it rests on the knot. Wrap the string around the bean once to secure it; since this is the bottom of the string of vegetables, you don't want it to fall out.

String 10 beans.

String 10 red chili peppers.

Put a 2-inch piece ear of min-

ature corn on top of peppers. String 10 whole bay leaves on top of corn.

Repeat these layers three more times, finally adding an extra 10 beans on top.

Tie a knot at the top of vegetables. Make a loop for hanging.

Hartman and Vakili also showed how to decorate a pumpkin with pressed leaves, a looped cornhusk wreath and a miniature Indian corn starburst wreath. For those who are interested in recreating these crafts, the following books are recommended: "Gifts and Crafts from the Garden," by Maggie Oster, and "Handmade Gifts from a Country Garden."

Watch upcoming issues for more ideas on holiday celebrations shared during the Lebanon Holiday program.

Here is one of Hartman's favorite recipes for gift giving and enjoying at home.

## Spiced Pumpkin And Pecan Butter

Zest (outer peel only, no white pith) of one orange

29-ounce can solid pack pumpkin with ½ cup water OR 3½-4 cups pumpkin puree prepared from scratch

3 tablespoons strained fresh orange juice

3 tablespoons strained fresh lemon juice

1½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Pinch ground cloves

½ cup pecans or walnuts, lightly toasted (optional)

Combine a heavy-bottomed stainless-steel or other nonreactive saucepan the pumpkin (and water if using canned pumpkin) orange zest, sugar, orange juice, lemon juice, cinnamon, salt, allspice, ginger, and cloves. Bring to

a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly; lower heat and simmer the mixture, stirring constantly with a wooden spatula, until it has become very thick, about 15 minutes. Sample the butter and add a little more of any or all the spices, (remember the flavors will blossom in storage). Add more sweetening if you desire.

Stir in nuts and continue to cook another 2-3 minutes. Cool and fill attractive jars. Store up to four weeks in refrigerator. Yield approximately four cups.

Note: To toast pecans or walnuts: Spread the shelled nuts in a baking pan and bake about 5 minutes in 350 degree oven, stirring several times (they scorch easily). Bake just until they are slightly toasted and fragrant, not actually browned. Cool nuts to regain crispness before using them.

Serve with cream cheese on bagels or bread.

## Dehydrating Apples Step-By-Step

Many people like to dry apples to eat or to use in holiday decorating. Here are step-by-step instructions from Alltrista Corporation.

• Read recipe instructions through before beginning pro-

cess. Assemble equipment and ingredients before starting. Follow guidelines for recipe preparation, drying, and storage. Do not make changes in recommended guidelines.

• A commercial or homemade

electric dehydrator is the best method for drying food. An electric dehydrator yields the most reliable and consistent results.

• Select fresh, high-quality, fully-ripe apples for drying.

Wash, peel, and core apples. Cut into uniform, ¼-½-inch rings or slices.

• To prevent darkening, pre-treat apple rings or slices by dipping into an antioxidant solution. Use 1 cup lemon or lime juice to 1 quart water. Or, use a commercial antioxidant following manufacturer's instructions. Do not

allow apples to remain in dipping solution more than 10 minutes. Drain before drying.

• Arrange apple rings or slices evenly on dehydrator trays, allowing space between pieces for air circulation. Dry at 130-135-degrees until pliable. Drying time will vary depending on the moisture content of the

apples, quality of the apples, volume being dried at one time, method of drying and the climate.

• Store dehydrated apples in an airtight, moisture-proof container. Home canning jars make excellent storage containers. Store in a cool, dry, dark place. Cooler temperatures, 50-70-degrees will help prolong shelf life.



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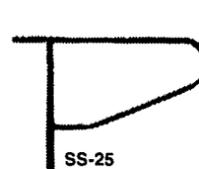
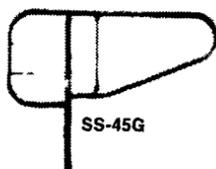
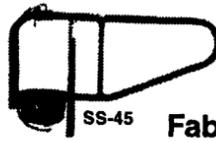
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