

Well Preserved

The Well Preserved news column is prepared by Lancaster County Cooperative Extension. It includes food preservation information and questions.

Cranberries

Cranberries are one of three fruits native to America. Pilgrims named them "cranberries" because the flower looked like the head of the sand crane. Cranberries are a low-growing evergreen plant with flowing, deep green vines that turn burgundy in the fall. Massachusetts is the leading producer of cranberries followed by Wisconsin and New Jersey.

During the 1800's cranberries were put in barrels and put on schooners and whaling ships for the sailors to eat to prevent scurvy. One-half cup provides 10 percent of the U.S.R.D.A. for vitamin C. They are low in sodium and contain fiber and pectin. While one-half cup berries provides only 30 calories, the sugar used to sweeten them increases the caloric content significantly.

Fresh cranberries are harvested mid-September through early December. By the end of December they will likely be hard to find in your local supermarket. Prices are usually lower at the beginning of the season.



Unless you live in a cranberry growing area, you will buy fresh cranberries in the 12-ounce plastic bag. Watch for store specials and buy several bags when they are on sale-use some now and freeze the rest to use later.

Packers indicate that berries can be frozen in the bag in which they are purchased. Double wrapping by putting the commercial bag in a resealable plastic bag will prevent freezer dehydration. When you are ready to use the frozen berries, you simply rinse them in cold water, drain them, and use them without thawing. If the berries are thawed before they are used they will soften and lose their crispness.

According to processors, frozen cranberries may be used for all recipes exactly as fresh cranberries are used. However, many people prefer to use the frozen

berries in cooked dishes where a crisp texture is not expected.

Because most bags of fresh cranberries have a few soft berries, some stems, and an occasional leaf, you may prefer to stem, sort, wash, and drain the berries before freezing them. Lift the cranberries from the water so that soil and stems do not redeposit on the berry. Excess moisture can be removed from the berries by placing them between two layers of towels. Cranberries can be frozen using a dry pack by placing them into containers leaving 1/2" headspace. They can also be frozen first on a tray and then packed into containers as soon as they are frozen.

If desired, a syrup pack can be made using a cold 50 percent syrup (equal amounts of sugar and water). Your favorite cooked cranberry sauce may also be frozen. Cool it at room temperature for not over two hours before freezing. Cranberries can be canned whole in heavy (40 percent) syrup (2 3/4 cup sugar per quart of liquid). Drop the berries into the boiling syrup and continue to boil 3 minutes before packing into hot jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Process pints or quarts in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes.

A soft cranberry sauce may be canned by cooking one quart of cranberries in one cup water until soft.

Then press through a fine sieve. Add two cups sugar and

boil three minutes. Pour boiling hot sauce into hot jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace and process in a boiling water bath 15 minutes. This amount makes about 2 pints. To can a smooth-jellied cranberry sauce, the Ball canning book uses this recipe. Boil 4 1/4 cups cranberries in 1 3/4 cups water until the skins burst. Then press the mixture through a fine sieve or food mill. Add 2 cups sugar to the cranberry pulp and juice and boil almost to the gelling point (220F or liquid sheets off a spoon). Then ladle while hot into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace and process 10 minutes in a boiling-water canner. This makes about 2 pints. To serve jellied sauce as a mold, pack sauce in straight-sided canning jars for easy removal.

Cranberries combine well with apples. Cranberry-apple relish compliments poultry, pork, or seafood nicely. The basic recipe uses four cups berries while the common 12-ounce bag of cranberries only contains three cups. Either use three-fourths of the recipe of buy two bags and use the left-over berries to make cranberry-orange bread or put a handful of cranberries in an apple pie or in stewed apples.

There are several methods of chopping the cranberries for this recipe. If using a blender, chop about half of the berries at a time. A food processor may be used being careful not to process the berries to a mush, or use the

coarse blade of a food grinder. There may be some air bubbles when the relish is poured into the jars that can be released using a plastic bubble freer. Plan to have the water boiling in the water bath container when the relish is cooked so that the jars don't cool before being heated again in the water bath. There will be less shock to the glass from temperature extremes and the vacuum forms properly giving the jar a better seal.

Cranberry-Apple Relish

- 4 cups cranberries, chopped
- 1 pound apples, peeled, cored, chopped
- 2 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Combine cranberries, apples, brown sugar, and water in a large saucepot. Simmer over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in cinnamon and walnuts; cook 5 minutes. Ladle hot relish into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Adjust two-piece caps and process 15 minutes in a boiling-water bath. Yields 5 to 6 half-pints.

Source: Ball Blue Book.

If you have food preservation questions, a home economist is available to answer questions on Wednesdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m.. Call (717) 394-6851 or write Penn State Cooperative Extension, Lancaster County, 1383 Arcadia Rd., Rm.1, Lancaster, PA, 17601.

Fund-Raiser To Benefit Accident Victims

JOYCE BUPP

York Co. Correspondent

DELTA (York Co.) — A wide-spread community effort to help a southern York County Amish family devastated by a buggy accident has been launched by friends and neighbors of the stricken family.

Ben and Annie Ebersole and five of their children were returning from a visit in Lancaster County on the evening of Sunday, Oct. 27, when their buggy was run over from the rear by a van as they crossed the Norman Wood bridge. All seven in the family were seriously injured, and their horse killed, when they were hit from behind while nearing the bridge's York County side. The bridge spans the Susquehanna River between York

and Lancaster counties and is the major path of travel between the southern part of the two counties.

Two of the Ebersole children have died from injuries received in the accident. Ben Ebersole died from injuries Wednesday. A daughter is in serious condition at Hershey Medical Center. Ebersole operated a home welding business serving many farm and rural customers in the southern part of York County.

"When our barn burned a few years ago, our Amish neighbors were right there to help us," said David Gemmill, Delta, one of the area residents helping to spearhead fund-raising efforts toward the Ebersole family's massive and mounting medical bills.

"So many people have been

asking how they can help and what they can do. So a benefit fund has been started at the Bank of Lancaster County in Quarryville and we have a fund raiser planned for Nov. 16," Gemmill said.

The fund raiser will be held concurrently in two locations — the Airville Fire Hall, Airville, in York County and at Holtwood Supply, Holtwood, Lancaster County — from 10 a.m. through 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 16. Car-

ryouts will be available, with a menu including chicken barbecue, a pig roast, pit roasted beef and ham, homemade soups and homemade baked goods. Carry-out soups will be sold by the quart, with customers asked to bring their own containers.

"We have a special kid's event planned at noon," said Gemmill, of a "candy drop" scheduled for midday, weather permitting. The "candy drop" features the fly-over of a helicopter which will

descend to a low altitude and scatter candy for a scramble by the children.

Contributions to the "Ben and Annie Ebersole Family Benefit" fund may be sent in care of the Bank of Lancaster County, 4 Friendly Drive, Quarryville, PA 17566-9787.

For additional information on the benefit fund and planned activities, contact David Gemmill, Delta, (717) 456-7372, or Ron Miller, Airville, (717) 862-3019.

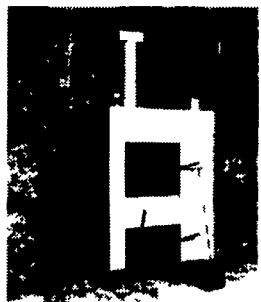
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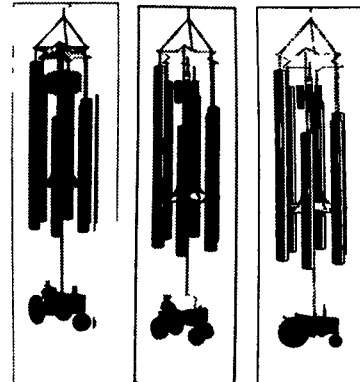
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