

State Offers Ag, Rural Youth Grants

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — To help fulfill the goals of Pennsylvania's agricultural and rural youth organizations, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) will offer the Agriculture and Rural Youth Grant Program to aid in educational projects and activities for Pennsylvania youth.

Secretary Dennis C. Wolff has initiated an Agriculture Education Task Force to raise the awareness of the importance and foster interest among young people to enter the agriculture field.

The grants may be used by 4-H and FFA organizations and agricultural education programs to fund educational projects, seminars, and field trips to heighten awareness of rural and agricultural issues. A total of \$110,000 will be offered for direct and matching grants to qualifying projects.

Organizations may apply for matching grants up to \$10,000 and direct grants up to \$2,500. Applications must be postmarked by Oct. 10 to be considered for approval. Applications will be reviewed by a 13-member Agriculture and Rural Youth Advisory Committee.

Applications are available from G. Carl Miller at the PDA's Bureau of Market Development at (717) 787-6041. Further information is available at www.agriculture.state.pa.us.

so burdened with clusters of purple Concord grapes that the support structure partially collapsed. So when the peanut butter-and-jelly crew showed up at our door last week, laden with containers of fragrant, juicy grapes, we dug into the family recipe box for the directions for making Grape Ade.

The Grape Ade "receipt" was shared by a dear friend several years ago, a tasty and incredibly easy way to preserve more of those lingering odds and ends of summer's bounty. Grape Ade is made by putting a heaping cupful of stemmed purple grapes into each quart canning jar wanted, adding a half-cup of sugar per quart (more for sweeter juice), and filling the jar with boiling water, leaving about a half-inch expansion space at the top. Fasten lids and process the jars for five minutes in boiling water.

Sugar still visible in the bottom of the jars after processing will dissolve as the juice has a few days to develop to its full flavor. Sometimes I stretch a quart after opening with a little more sweetener and water.

Antiquers, yard-salers, and crafters are legendary for scouring sales and second-hand shops for odds and ends to convert into attractive, useful and sometimes valuable alternative products.

Some of us just focus more on scavenging odds and ends for our stomachs.

salvaged — though far from picture pretty — to cook up a batch of jam. Cosmetic appearance, fortunately, is pretty much irrelevant once the fruit is smashed, mashed, and boiled.

A portion of the jam will head across the meadow to the grandkids, whose favorite lunchtime sandwich fixin's lean heavily toward peanut butter and jelly.

Odds and ends gathering usually result in a basket suggestive of that classic Thanksgiving symbol, the cornucopia, with its assortment of goodies overflowing out. One recent pass through the patch filled my basket with a small watermelon, a couple peppers, a few oversized redbeets, more of those orangish tomatoes and a handful of parsley to dry.

Such odds and ends assortments often stir memories of mom. Right about mid-September, she would corral tail-end produce from her garden — anything from carrots to giant limas beans — add to it a few purchased items, perhaps some cauliflower, process it in a sweet-sour pickling brine and turn it into a batch of "chow-chow."


Anyone have a clue how a mixture of pickled, bite-sized assorted vegetables ever came to acquire the name "chow-chow?" I've always wondered.

Despite their usual dislike of extreme moisture conditions, a grape arbor at Grandma's grew

from a sheltered stalk grown at the calf nursery. Extended periods of rain and cloudiness challenged even the most determined gardeners this year and left our veggie patch with one of its poorest-ever, tomato crops.

So our dwindling number of orangish-tinted ones are snatched off the stalks before dampness, cooling nights, bugs, and slugs do them in. With a little luck, one more batch of canned tomatoes may find its way to the empty space on the jar shelves, only a about half as replenished as last year this time. Good thing there are a few carryovers.

Purple plum trees planted a few years ago in the meadow yielded abundantly this year. But few of them matured, tumbling from the trees from an insect or fungal affliction. Enough odds and ends of scruffy plums were





On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)
Joyce Bupp

Odds and ends. Official fall arrives this week, noted in teeny calendar letters but much more noticeable just by venturing outside. Days are being squeezed by later sunrises and earlier dusk. Summer bright greens and primary colors are giving way to hues of golds and orange and a few early bright red leaves. Plant foliage is fading as seeds mature on everything from fields of yellow corn to fluff-filled pods topping milkweed stalks.

But odds and ends of summer linger on for some last minute attention, to be squirrelled away for mid-winter enjoyment.

Tomatoes parked around here in several places are in final stages of ripening. A marketbasket full sits on the basement porch, a few especially nice ones have made it to the kitchen counter and a dozen or so small ones landed on the deck table enroute

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