

TOPPINGS

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1. Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat; add the onion, seasoning with salt. Sweat until onion softens, about 2-3 minutes.

2. Add the ginger, cardamom and jalapeno, if using; cook to bring out the flavors, about 2 minutes. Add the cider and orange juice; bring to a simmer. Simmer on low, 5 minutes.

3. Stir apricots and raisins into the pan; simmer until apricots soften a bit, but retain their shape, 2 to 3 minutes. (Add a little water, if needed, so that you have enough liquid to cook the apricots and the chutney reaches your desired consistency.) Transfer to a bowl to cool; serve warm or at room temperature over ice cream. Leftovers keep, covered, in the refrigerator for a week or so. Use at room temperature or slightly warmed.



Zbigniew Bzdak / ChicagoTribune-TNS

Savory-sweet ice cream toppings include, clockwise from left, apricot chutney, blueberry shrub and nectarines with candied bacon.

CHERRIES IN MOLE SAUCE

Prep: 30 minutes
Cook: 5 minutes
Makes: 3 cups

1/3 cup jarred mole paste
1 cup water
1 to 2 tablespoons cherry liqueur, such as maraschino, or brandy, optional
2 cups pitted, halved, dark sweet cherries (about 3/4 pound)
1 tablespoon sugar, optional
1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted

1. Dissolve the mole paste in the water in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring, until you have a smooth sauce. Add a little more water as needed. Once dis-

solved, stir in the liqueur and sugar, if using, until sugar dissolves.

2. Allow the mole sauce to cool a few minutes; pour over the cherries in a bowl. Stir to coat the cherries; stir in the almonds. Serve warm over ice cream. Keeps, covered, in the refrigerator for about a week; warm gently until smooth and flowing before using.

STRAWBERRIES IN BALSAMIC SYRUP

Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Makes: about 2 cups

3/4 cup balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
2 cups hulled, chopped strawberries
Freshly ground black pepper
Fresh basil leaves, slivered

1. Heat the balsamic vinegar in a small saucepan over medium heat until it comes to a boil; lower heat,

so that vinegar gently boils. Cook until reduced to 1/4 cup, about 20 minutes. It should be thickened but not all the way to a syrup. Stir in the orange zest.

2. Allow to cool a few minutes; it should retain some heat but no longer be very hot. Pour over the strawberries in a bowl. Stir to coat the berries. Season generously with pepper. Stir in the basil. Serve over ice cream warm or at room temperature; keeps covered in the refrigerator up to a week.

NECTARINES WITH CANDIED BACON

Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 20 minutes
Makes: 2 cups

4 slices thick-cut bacon, cut in 1-inch pieces
2 tablespoons brown sugar
4 medium nectarines, pitted, chopped (about 2 cups)
Freshly ground black pepper 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

opened the windows at night to cool off the house for sleeping and then closed it up again in the daytime to keep out the summer heat.

“Close the door!” we would call to those constantly going in and out. In the summer it would be for the screen door (wish I had one now for the backdoor) against the flies and in the winter the solid door against the cold.

(I must mention here the recent reactivation of the removable screen/glass window insert in my storm door by my visiting family from the Willamette Valley, one which I had been unable to do myself. I really enjoyed the cool breeze it allowed when my A/C failed to function. Maybe more about that in two weeks — if I can remember it that long.)

Yes, I remember my attitude when we didn't have air-conditioners as the reverse side of automatic furnaces, and I may have to eat some of those words next column Aug. 13.

shrub to top his balsamic ice cream. Store-bought vanilla works great too.

2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries (there is no need to thaw them if you're using frozen)
1 cup sugar
2 cups sherry vinegar
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1. Place the berries and the sugar in a clean quart-sized jar with a tight-fitting lid and use a wooden spoon to crush the berries and release their

juices. Let the closed jar sit for 4 hours at room temperature.

2. In a small nonreactive saucepan over medium heat, heat the vinegar to just below boiling (about 200 degrees F), then pour it over the blueberries and sugar. Add the nutmeg, seal the jar and refrigerate overnight or up to 3 days.

3. Strain out the skins, discard and use the shrub immediately. It will keep tightly sealed in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.



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DORY

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If it isn't that, then perhaps it's the remembrance of rainy days when the wet wash had to be hung from lines strung in the basement or on the porch or hanging from drying racks set up throughout the house.

We can even talk about the types and styles of clothespins — with snap springs or without — wooden or plastic or even what we've been told about the laundry spread over bushes to dry or to bleach.

Even with the amazing automatics with all they can do there still has to be the human touch to cleanliness.

So be it. Having laid that to rest, we can turn our attention to the days when the year was divided into four seasons and each one came with its own degree of heat or cold, wet or dry. We depended on it and planned our households around it.

Wood was cut and stacked in ricks or stored in sheds for burning in our heating stoves. Kindling was split and kept wood-boxes filled for daily cooking. Wool clothing, buckle galoshes, caps and scarves and mittens were made ready for winter and then stored away in favor of bringing cotton wear, silks, and organdies to the front of closets during spring cleaning.

We knew what the season was going to be by what we had to wear.

It was cold and snowy in winter, wet in spring, hot and sunny in summer, and fall was the best of all.

Now I feel confused, for the years seem a constant mixture of hot and cold, wet and dry. I never knew that there would be a time of just deciding how many layers of the same make of clothing to wear against the changing temperatures.

When machinery came to town called air-conditioners (A/C), I laughed. I'd never need one, I boasted as I

HANDLE

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• If pesticide gets in someone's eyes, flush them with a gentle stream of clean water for AT LEAST 15 minutes; then take the person and the pesticide container to the doctor at once. (Secure the container in the trunk, or somewhere outside the passenger compartment area.)

• NEVER eat, drink, or smoke while working around pesticides. If it is time for a break, wash hands thoroughly beforehand.

• After using chemicals, shower thoroughly using plenty of soap and water. Pay attention to cleaning under the fingernails, and carefully washing your hair.

Pesticides and herbicides can be used effectively, if used according to instructions. If something is lethal to you, think: Do you really want it on the land, knowing that the residue will be washed by rain and eventually end up in the ocean? Stores that retail these chemicals won't discourage you from buying them, as they make a profit from them. If there are birds, butterflies, and bees out in great numbers, postpone spraying.

Dawn and dusk are the times when there may be the least wind and spraying can be done at these times when insects are gone to rest for the night or not active yet.

If you have garden questions or comments, please write: greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!



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