April 2, 2008

# The Hortland Observer Special Edition \_

# Rhubarb: **First Fruits** of Spring

Vibrant color and pucker-up flavor make this unusual vegetable a springtime sensation. The sharp flavor of rhubarb inspires strong opinions: most people either love it or hate it.

Rhubarb, a relative of buckwheat, grows wild in China and Tibet, where it's been used to make medicines for centuries. It first appeared in North America in the late 1700s, introduced by a Maine gardener who obtained seed or rootstock from Europe. Within a mere 25 years, it was so popular with customers that it had become a regular offering at produce markets. Supermarkets generally sell only the deep-red stems, but gardeners grow hybrids with green or pink stalks as well.

#### Simple Baked Rhubarb Ingredients

- 4 cups fresh or frozen diced rhubarb
- Directions
- 1. In a bowl, combine rhubarb, bread cubes and sugar; toss to coat.
- 2. Add butter; mix well, turn into a 11"x 7" x2" baking pan.
- 3. Bake at 350F for 40-50 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm.

# • 1-1/2 cups sugar • 1/2 cup butter, melted

· 2-1/2 cups chopped fresh or fro-

· 4 slices day-old bread, crusts re-

3/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

• 1/4 tsp. ground allspice

moved and cubed

· 4 cups cubed bread



"True, it's a little unusual to combine rhubarb with meat in an entree, but my family loves this recipe! It was created by my mother in an effort to use abundant rhubarb from our farm garden. I'm sure you'll enjoy it, too!"

## Rhubarb Pork Chop Bake

#### Ingredients

- 4 bone-in pork loin chops (1/2- zen rhubarb (1/2-inch pieces) inch thick)
- 2 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 1-1/2 tsp. minced fresh rosemary or 1/2 tsp. dried rosemary, crushed • 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- Directions

1. In a large skillet, cook the chops in oil over medium heart for 2-3 minutes on each side or until chops are lightly browned; drain. Sprinkle with rosemary, salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and keep warm. 2. In a large bowl, combine the rhubarb, bread cubes, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and allspice. 3. Place half of the rhubarb mixture in a greased 11"x 7"x 2" baking dish. Top with chops and remaining rhubarb mixture. Cover and bake at 350F for 45-55 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes longer.

from its long winter's nap. Cooks in nickname is "pie plant." northern regions, where rhubarb although it's botanically a veg- treated as a fruit. Like fresh cranber- are all good choices.

RANCHER'S

2 Foster Farms

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Alaskan Sockeye

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eserve

It's a sure sign of spring when etable, rhubarb is used in recipes ries, rhubarb is almost unbearably

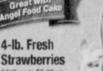
brightly colored rhubarb emerges the way you would a fruit. In fact, its tart on its own and is rarely eaten raw.

Rhubarb pairs up well with other Rhubarb is considered a veg- fruits to create a complex sweet-tart grows best, prize this hardy peren- etable -- only the stalks of the plant flavor: strawberries and other bernial for its tart, tender stalks. And that are edible -- but it's most often ries, apples, oranges, and peaches

FOOD







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### Rhubarb Dressing "This delicious dressing is awesome on a spinach salad."

#### Ingredients

• 2 cups chopped fresh or frozen rhubarb

- 1/2 cup sugar
- · 1/4 cup white vinegar
- · 3 Tbs. grated onion

#### Directions

1. In a saucepan, combine rhubarb, sugar and vinegar; cook over medium heat until the rhubarb is tender, about 6 minutes. Drain, reserving about 6 tablespoons juice; discard pulp.

• 1/2 tsp. salt

2. Pour juice into a jar with tight-fitting lid; add oil, onion, Worcestershire sauce and salt. Shake well. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

# SUNDAY SLOW COOKER COLLECTION

## **Easy Slow** Cooker French Dip

"This makes a delicious French dip sandwich, perfect for the working mom! Nobody, not even teetotalers, have been able to detect the presence of beer in this

recipe, but it adds a wonderful flavor! French fries make a great side dish, and they are good for dipping, too."

#### INGREDIENTS

- · 4 pounds rump roast
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can beef broth
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can condensed
- French onion soup

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Trim excess fat from the rump roast, and place in a slow cooker. Add

beer

• 6 French rolls

• 2 tablespoons butter

- the beef broth, onion soup and beer. Cook on Low setting for 7 hours.
- 2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- 3. Split French rolls, and spread with butter. Bake 10 minutes, or until heated through.

4. Slice the meat on the diagonal, and place on the rolls. Serve the sauce for dipping.



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