

IT'S ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Ann Bloom



Using herbs and spices to add fresh flavor to your dishes

Fresh (or dried) herbs and spices are an often-overlooked way to add flavor to your dishes without adding salt (if you are watching your sodium intake) or extra calories (if you're watching those, too).

During the early days of the pandemic, when people were working at home more, cooking became a creative outlet for many. People experimented with recipes using combinations of herbs and spices to liven up tried and true recipes, and to try new and different ones.

Herbs are relatively easy to grow. In Wallowa County, most herbs such as basil, chives and oregano can be grown from seed. Though basil, a Mediterranean herb requiring warm weather, will not winter over, other herbs such as chives, oregano, thyme, parsley and dill will either self-seed and return each year, or simply die back and return in the spring. Many types of mint, such as peppermint, also grow well in our area. However, mint, if not contained, can become invasive and take over wherever it's planted, which is OK if you like mint. Rosemary and tarragon seem to do well as starts from a nursery.

A few herbs lend themselves well to kitchen windowsill gardens or grown from seed on a kitchen countertop. Basil, marjoram, oregano, savory and chives can be successfully started from seed and grown in pots even when it is cold and snowy outside, providing a fresh source for pizza toppings or inclusion in a savory winter stew.

When cooking with herbs, dried herbs are used at a ratio of 1 teaspoon dried to approximately 3 teaspoons (approximately 1 tablespoon) of fresh herbs. If using fresh herbs, depending on the herb, and the flavor you are looking for (subtle vs. robust), determines when you add the herb. With delicate herbs such as basil, herbs should be added a minute or two before serving. This will allow the flavor of the herb to come through without diminishing it due to the heat of prolonged cooking. Stronger herbs, such as rosemary, can be added 20 minutes or so prior to the end of the cooking time. Dried herbs are usually added at the beginning of the recipe. The recipe will also indicate when to add the herbs. An herb sachet called a bouquet garni allows control of the time the herbs are in the dish, since you can remove the sachet whenever you want, and it contains all the herbs in one place, which saves time looking for all those separate herbs to pull them out.

Herbs and spices can be used in savory dishes (i.e., soups, stews, egg dishes) or sweet dishes (i.e., mint in cookies or cakes and lavender in cookies).

Dried herbs can be purchased in bulk. Buying a small amount when you want to try something new is a practical and economical approach. Bulk herbs tend to be stronger in flavor than those in small bottles in the spice section of the grocery store due to the higher turnover in volume. When buying fresh herbs, look for bright green leaves and stems. Avoid wilted, yellow or brown leaves, which indicates the herbs are old and past their prime.

Store dried herbs in a cool, dark location away from direct heat or light, which will diminish the flavor. Dried herbs will retain their flavor for one to three years. Smell dried herbs which have been stored for a length of time to help determine the potency of flavor. Wash fresh herbs just before using. Remove leaves from woody stems, such as rosemary and thyme, discarding the stems. Chop the leaves before adding the herbs to the dish.

Spices range from the common (cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves) to the less common (cardamom, saffron and coriander) to name a few. Spices also include pepper (red, black, white and pink), curry, cumin, paprika and turmeric. Saffron comes from the red stamens of an autumn flowering purple crocus. It is native to Eurasia and because it requires an enormous amount of the red Saffron threads to produce a small amount of the spice, and it is harvested by hand, it is considered the most expensive spice in the world, according to Wikipedia.

Herbs and spices have been used for medicinal and healing purposes for millennia. For example, the spice, ginger, has been used successfully to relieve the nausea that accompanies motion and morning sickness. Sage, an herb common to the Mediterranean and known since the Middle Ages, contains Vitamin K which is important for bone health. Oregano, often called the "pizza" herb, contains vitamins A, C and E and minerals zinc, magnesium, iron, calcium, copper, potassium, manganese and niacin. Some people also find lavender is helpful as a sleep aid and for relaxation.

Each herb and spice combination seems to claim a piece of the world's culinary turf. For example, Asian cooking often uses combinations of basil, lemongrass and cinnamon. Indian dishes rely on curry, paprika, cardamom and cumin. Italian cooking uses herbs such as oregano, basil and rosemary. In Mexican cooking you'll find cooks using cumin, chili peppers, Mexican oregano and cilantro. And in Greece, cooks rely on allspice, cloves, mint, dill and oregano to flavor their food.

Did you know you can make your own recipes of some common seasoning blends? For example, if you are out of pumpkin pie spice blend you can combine 2 tablespoons of cinnamon, one tablespoon of ginger, 1½ teaspoons of nutmeg and 1½ teaspoons of cloves. Mix all the ingredients together and store in an airtight container. Use the amount called for in a pumpkin pie recipe. This recipe makes four tablespoons of spice blend. This recipe and others can be found on the food hero website.

For more recipes and information on using herbs and spices go to www.foodhero.org.

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Wallowa High School burns in subzero temps

OUT OF THE PAST

Compiled by Cheryl Jenkins

100 YEARS AGO

Jan. 19, 2022

The seven banks of Wallowa county did an unprecedented thing at their annual meetings — the former directors and officers were reelected with not a single change, giving an air of stability and permanence to the financial structure of the county. The banks are: Wallowa National Bank, Enterprise State Bank, First Bank of Joseph, Stockgrowers and Farmers National Bank of Wallowa, Lostine State Bank, First National Bank of Joseph, and Flora State Bank.

With the thermometer 24 below zero, the brick high school building at Wallowa was discovered in flames at about 1 o'clock this morning. At daylight nothing but the bare brick walls were left standing. The interior and all contents were a total loss. School will be resumed in a few days. Classes will meet in churches and halls.

75 YEARS AGO

Jan. 23, 1947

The Auto Body and Paint



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Floodwaters in 1978 ravaged the Imnaha area.

shop located on the east side of the court house was gutted by fire and three cars were burned. The fire apparently started when some paint thinner caught fire. Cars belonging to I. S. Surber and Mrs. Isel Knodell were burned and a new 1946 Dodge pickup, owned by Ray Harris, was charred.

A large crowd attended the annual pot luck dinner of the Joseph chamber of commerce. The financial report showed that the Chief Joseph days celebration was a huge success. Plans for this year's celebration call for a rodeo theme.

Max Wilson bears the honor of being Joseph's outstanding citizen of 1946.

The state highway com-

mission has notified the Enterprise chamber of commerce that guard rails will be put up on Minam hill.

50 YEARS AGO

Jan. 20, 1972

Following the six-day storm which hit last week, the county and state road crews continue to clear the rural road situation. County road supervisor Vern Russell said that they've encountered drifts up to 10 feet in depth for several miles. Of the 1300 miles of county roads in Wallowa County, 630 miles are normally maintained during the winter.

A semi truck loaded with hay and heading for the 4-0 Cattle Company feed lots upset on Buford grade, caus-

ing heavy damage to the vehicle, slight damage to the trailer, and spilling 400 bales of hay across the highway, causing the roadway to be blocked from 7 pm to midnight.

25 YEARS AGO

Jan. 16, 1997

The front door of Shell Mercantile in Wallowa was smashed in and the store was burglarized for the second time in six weeks. A large assortment of merchandise, including cigarettes, wine, gum, candy and liquor was taken.

Roger Decker, who served as Wallowa County Sheriff for the past 12-plus years, officially retired at a stroke before midnight, just missing Imnaha's worst-ever flood on New Year's Day. The sheriff's badge was passed on to Ron Jett, who was officially appointed to start as sheriff on midnight New Year's Day.

The calculated damages to USFS roads from the Imnaha floods has been set at \$7 million. The biggest expense on the system will be to the Wallowa Mountain Loop Road, where a 10-mile stretch of roadway near Pine Creek was lost.

Weed Board solicits new members

County residents urged to help fight noxious weeds

Chieftain staff

WALLOWA COUNTY — The Wallowa County Weed Board is currently seeking new members to help provide insight, identify priority species and management direction to deal with noxious weeds in the county, according to board Chairwoman Teresa Smergut.

The board consists of seven to 11 volunteers who come from a variety of backgrounds and geographic areas within the county. Currently the board has seven members and is looking for several more folks. Mem-

bers include ranchers, small landowners, business owners, agencies and other folks interested in preventing and managing invasive species.

The board's mission is to develop program priorities and serve as a technical adviser to the Wallowa County Vegetation Department headed by Andy Marcum, of which all county residents help support through their county taxes.

Some of the funds obtained by the county assists landowners in weed treatment and is through grants that are applied for through Marcum as weed supervisor, the U.S. Forest Service, Wallowa Resources, the Tri-County Weed District, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Oregon Department of Agriculture

and other entities. It is considered a partnership effort. The weed board supports these efforts by helping to prioritize and provide input to the importance of these activities, although the board doesn't directly deal with the funds, Smergut said.

One of the main goals is to provide outreach and education in support of managing noxious weeds. Pamphlets on the various noxious and invasive weeds are available through Marcum, the Forest Service and the Weed Board.

The board meets once a month for nine months each year with our partners and other interested members of the public. The board does not meet in July, September and December. July and September are heavy with

field work and too many people are away for the holidays in December, Smergut said. The board meets the third Tuesdays of the scheduled months.

"Wallowa County is an incredible place to live with an amazing landscape," Smergut said. "It is imperative that we participate in the management of invasive species in order to preserve and maintain ecosystem health and resilience within this landscape, which affect economic and esthetic returns from our rangelands, farmlands, forests, waterways, wilderness and urban settings."

For more information on the weed department or to join the board, contact Smergut at 541-263-2283.

\$16,500 offered for info on illegal wolf kill

Chieftain staff

WALLOWA COUNTY — Conservation groups announced Thursday, Jan. 13, that they are offering a \$16,500 reward for information that leads to an arrest and conviction in an illegal wolf killing last week in Wallowa County.

A 2-year-old collared female wolf was found dead southeast of Wallowa and reported just after 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 8. Oregon State Police reported the killing on Jan. 11. The wolf, designated OR-106, was found on Parsnip Creek Road in the Sled Springs game management unit. OSP said the wolf had dispersed from the Chesnimnus Pack in north-

ern Wallowa County.

"Illegally killing Oregon's few wolves out of hatred or spite must stop," Kelly Peterson, Oregon senior state director at the Humane Society of the United States, said in a press release. "The death of OR-106 at the hands of a poacher is heartbreaking and infuriating, especially after eight of Oregon's wolves were illegally poisoned and killed just last year. While this reward cannot bring back these iconic animals, we hope it brings these cruel actors to justice and helps to put an end to the illegal slaughter of our wolves once and for all."

In addition to the Humane Society, the Center for Biological Diversity, Predator Defense, Western Watersheds

Project, Cascadia Wildlands, Oregon Wild, Speak for Wolves and Northeast Oregon Ecosystems are pledging funding to the reward.

The killing is among more than 30 poaching incidents in Oregon since wolves were reintroduced, according to Stephanie Taylor, president of Speak for Wolves.

"When poachers get away with breaking the law, it only leads to more poaching and lawlessness," Danielle Moser, of Oregon Wild, said in the release. "This is a result of wolves losing their endangered species protections coupled with a culture of poaching permissiveness. For far too long, poachers have been emboldened by those who excuse and cele-

brate their criminal acts without fear of consequences."

The shooting comes on the heels of the poisoning of wolves in Northeastern Oregon in 2021, the release noted.

In addition to the amount offered by the conservation groups, The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Turn in Poachers division is offering a potential \$300 reward for information regarding illegal wolf killings.

Those with information may contact Oregon State Police Sgt. Isaac Cyr through ODFW's Turn in Poachers hotline at 800-452-7888, *OSP via mobile, or via email to TIP@state.or.us between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

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"It's kind of good for the dogs, too," he said. "It's good for the dogs to see other dogs and pass other dogs."

As the younger Anderson got more involved, so did Craig. In fact, four of the sled dogs he owns are siblings to Morgan's lead dog and the one she owns, Gale.

"I moved away to col-

lege, so my dad no longer had me to look after, so I think I got replaced by dogs," she quipped.

Running sled dogs has resulted in Morgan and Craig getting several opportunities to run together through the Eagle Cap Wilderness, which for both is a highlight.

"Just a lot of good memories. My dad and I are pretty good at going out and having fun," Morgan said. "The first time I ever got my dad on a sled, I think it was Jan. 1 (a

few years ago) and it was a super moon. It was so light out you didn't have to have a lamp. It's created more fun times with him."

"It's fun to be out there and not have headlamps on," Craig said. "Visibility is high. That's a pretty neat deal. It's fun to run with her."

Given the two are running different races, they actually won't be racing the trails together. Indeed, Morgan said, she likely won't see her dad until she completes the 200-mile race

sometime Jan. 22.

But she is hopeful he'll be there at the finish line to greet her.

And as for Craig, he said getting to watch his daughter compete in the Eagle Cap Extreme is special.

"It's a pretty neat thing. It's fun to watch her. She does quite well with it," he said. "To know the kind of conditions they are going through and the lack of sleep it's a neat thing. ... It's probably one of our favorite events of the whole year."

Warnock:

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Dean Oregon Ranches cattle; the others were owned by neighboring ranches."

Fish said Jan. 14 he still doesn't know the number or rescued or lost cat-

tle involved in the situation. He said the new manager is Katie Romero, but he hadn't yet met her nor did he know anything about her.

In a statement received by email Jan. 17, Warnock said, "We put in our two-week notice on Jan. 12. The gathering crew will be done the end of the month,

as well. We wish the Deans and any future employees the best of luck going forward."

He said he would have no further statements on the issue.

Fish said in his investigation he has spoken with Karen Dean, wife of Bob Dean, who is ailing.

"The cattle are still under Dean Oregon Ranches," Fish said.

Dean attorney Christopher Gramiccioni, of South Carolina, said Joseph Law Firm in La Grande is representing Dean locally. There was no response to email and telephone requests for comment from the firm.