

Betty Kaiser

Cook's Corner: Oregon strawberries — Sweeter. Redder. Better

It's strawberry time in Oregon! This is your official reminder that the season is short — so you'd better get them while you can. Oregon strawberries are known for their deep red color, intense sweetness and short storage life. The fresh berries stay on the vine and ripen slowly to allow the sugars to increase until ready for harvest.

According to the Oregon strawberries website, not many are sold fresh. Some are picked and sold at produce stands but mostly they are processed into sliced or whole frozen berries. That way they retain their summer freshness for us to enjoy all year long.

So, if you want fresh berries,

you'd better hurry and get them at a stand near you soon.

Chuck's garden produces strawberries a handful at a time. Just enough for a bowl of cereal or maybe a couple of strawberry shortcakes. Sadly, Eden Valley Farm out Mosby Creek has no strawberries this year. They are taking orders for other berries but no strawberries. So now I'm on the hunt for another berry farm.

Darn.

I love to make strawberry shortcake the old-fashioned way served on biscuits. It's easy to whip up a batch of biscuits to serve buttered and warm, under spoonfuls of berries and whipped cream.

Hint: Sometimes I cheat and use Bisquick.

Several batches of frozen strawberry freezer jam are also a must at our house. It's quick and easy and stores in your freezer for months. We eat ours on ice cream, pancakes and anything else that needs a bit of summer

sunshine. I also like a nice luncheon dish with berries. A chicken salad with berries is a nice Sunday supper dish for company.

Serve with hot biscuits or fresh sour dough bread. Try it. You'll like it!

Strawberry Freezer Jam

- 2 cups crushed strawberries (about 1 qt. whole berries)
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 package powdered pectin
- 1 cup water

Prepare fruit: Sort and wash fully ripe berries. Remove caps and stems; crush berries.

Place prepared berries in a large mixing bowl. Add sugar and mix well. Let stand for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally. Dissolve pectin in water and boil for 1 min. Add pectin solution to berry and sugar mixture. Stir for 2 minutes. Pour jam into freezer containers or canning jars, leaving ½ inch space at the top. Cover containers and let stand at room temperature for 24

hours or until jam has set.

Makes 5 small jam jars.

Store uncooked jams in refrigerator or freezer. They can be held up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or up to a year in the freezer. Do not store at room temperature. They will mold or ferment. Once a container is opened, jam should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a few days.

Note: If jam is too firm, stir to soften. If it tends to separate, stir to blend. If it is too soft, bring it to a boil. It will thicken on cooking.

Strawberry Chicken Salad

- 1/2 cup reduced-calorie mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons chopped chutney (or bottled)
- 1 teaspoon grated lime zest
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 cups diced cooked chicken
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion

• 1 1/2 pints hulled fresh Oregon strawberries, divided

• Iceberg or Butter lettuce leaves or chopped Romaine lettuce

In large bowl, combine mayonnaise, chutney, lime zest, salt, curry powder and lime juice. Add chicken, celery and onion; toss, cover and chill.

Just before serving, slice enough strawberries to make 2 cups; gently toss with chicken mixture. Line platter or individual serving plates with lettuce.

Mound chicken salad in center. Garnish with remaining 1 cup whole strawberries.

Serves 4.

Old-Fashioned Strawberry Shortcake Buttermilk Biscuits

- 2 cups flour
 - 2 tsp. baking powder
 - 1/4 tsp baking soda
 - 1 tsp. salt
 - 1/4 cup+2 tablespoons shortening
 - 3/4 cup buttermilk
- Preheat oven to 450 F.

Sift together dry ingredients. Cut in shortening to fine pieces. Stir in buttermilk to soft dough. Round up the dough on a floured, cloth-covered board. Knead lightly. Roll or pat out about 1/2 inch thick. Cut. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Bake until golden brown 12-15 min. Cool slightly.

Serves 6.

Strawberry Topping

- 4 cups strawberries (or more).
- 1 cup sugar (or to taste)
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- A few spoonful of cold water

Wash and drain berries. Pick them over. Remove stems and hulls. Slice and put them in a bowl. Add sugar, cinnamon and water. Refrigerate. To serve, split and butter biscuits. Top with strawberries and garnish with whipped cream.

(Contact Betty Kaiser's Cook's Corner at 942-1317 or email bchatty@bettykaiser.com.)

Preparations underway for annual Bohemia Mining Days

With Bohemia Mining Days just weeks away, festival coordinators are putting out a call to members of the community who want to participate in this year's event.

Here are a few ways to either get involved or plan ahead for this year's festival:

Casting call for returning BMD play

After receiving a grant from Dari-Mart, Bohemia Mining Days will see the return of Bohemia City's live theatre in Coiner Park at the 59th annual festival.

The play, "Gold, Grit and Guns: Locals Who Left a

Mark," was written and will be directed by Jennifer Mandeville Schulz.

There will be two daily performances on Thursday, July 19 through Saturday, July 21.

Actors interested in auditioning for the play are invited to participate in one of the

two planned auditions:

- Wednesday, June 20
- Saturday, June 23

Bot shows are at 7 p.m. at the Cottage Grove Community Center and Library at 700 E. Gibbs Ave.

The casting call is for men, ages 18-85, one woman aged 18-25 and several kids ages 8-13.

For more information, contact Jennifer Mandeville-Schulz at 541-510-8894.

Registration for BMD covered bridge tour opens

Bohemia Mining Days, in partnership with South Lane Wheels and the Cottage Grove Tour Guides, offers a two-hour guided

tour of the six area covered bridges.

Knowledgeable, costumed guides share information on the history of the Cottage Grove community and each bridge. The tour allows time for photo taking at each stop and each participant receives a keepsake at the end.

Two tours are available on Saturday, July 21 at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Seating is limited to 18 per tour on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tickets are \$10 and must be paid in advance by Friday, July 6, at 5 p.m.

Mail check payable to Bohemia Mining Days and put Covered Bridge Tour in

the memo. Mail to P.O. Box 1297, Cottage Grove, Ore., 97424.

For credit/debit card payments by phone call the festival office at 541-942-5064.

BMD's carnival all-day advance ride bracelets now on sale

Bohemia Mining Days All-day Carnival Ride Bracelet coupons are now available at the Cottage Grove Bi-Mart, 100 N. Gateway Blvd. for \$22 (on-site bracelets are \$30).

For additional savings, Thursday, July 19, is "Buddy Day," where you can buy one bracelet and get one free.

For more information, call 541-942-5064.



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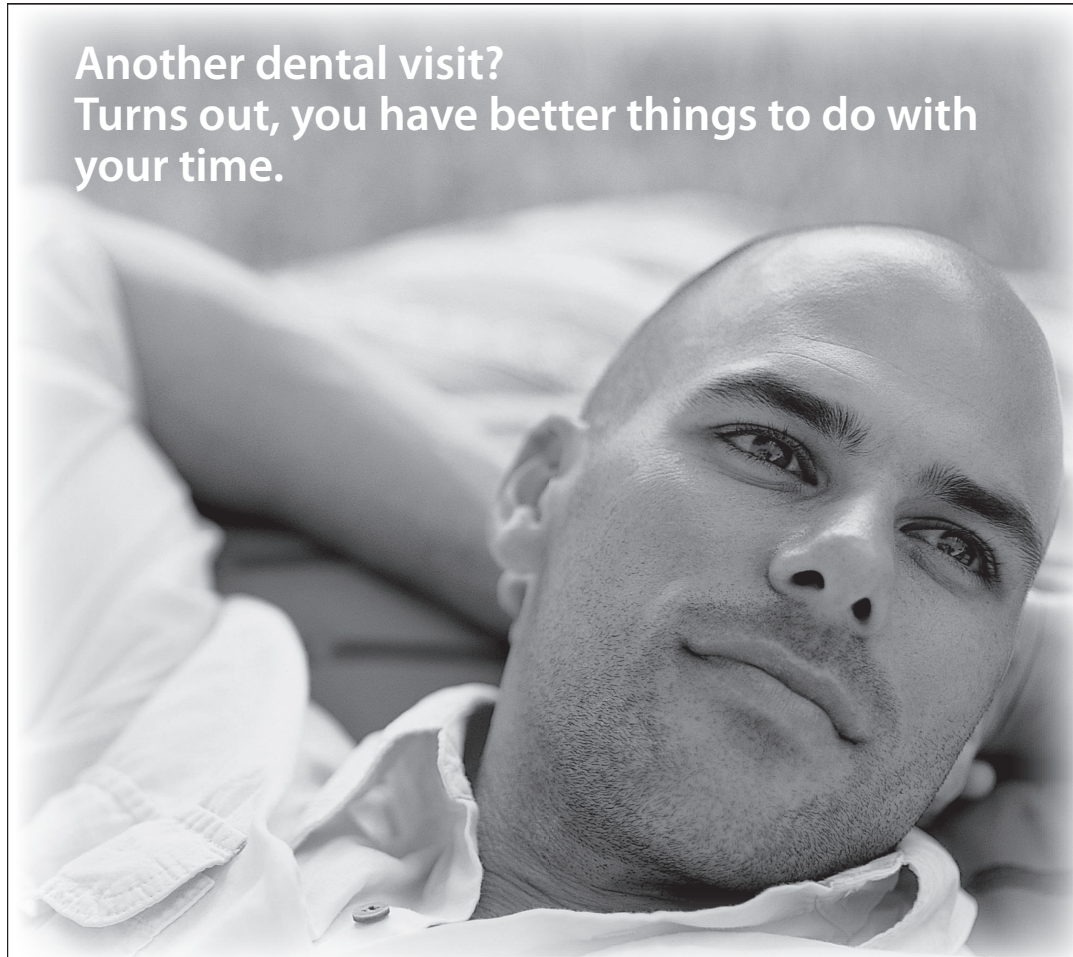
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