

Blueberries and Roast Pig

It is charged that the fires which burned over thousands of acres on the Cape were set by blueberry pickers who desired to improve the crop.

It is customary on the great blueberry plains of eastern Maine to burn over the ground in the fall, but never in the spring or summer.

Blueberries have not yet appeared in the market, the crop has not been gathered, and the only effect of the fires must have been to destroy this season's crop.

So we doubt the truth of the charge.

It doesn't even coincide with Charles Lamb's account of the discovery of roast pig in China.

According to Lamb's delightfully whimsical account, which is too long for reproduction here, a swineherd, Ho-ti, had gone to the woods, leaving his lubberly son, Bo-bo, at the house in which were nine recently born pigs.

The boy liked to play with fire, a common failing with youth, and set the cottage on fire. The pigs were burned with the dwelling.

Feeling of one of the scorched pigs to see if there were any signs of life, Bo-bo burned his fingers and naturally thrust them in his mouth to cool them. Some crumbs of the "crackling" clung to his fingers, bearing a most delightful flavor, and he soon was tearing apart the carcass to feast on the delicious meat.

(Rowland Robinson has told a similar story of the discovery of maple sugar by the Indians.)

When Ho-ti returned and chastised the boy, Bo-bo thrust another burned pig into the father's hand, with the same result of burned fingers and aroused appetite.

Soon it began to be observed that Ho-ti's bamboo built huts burned with great frequency. Neighbors watched, discovered them eating the food which they held in abhorrence, and had them haled into court.

Some of the obnoxious food was brought into court. The foreman of the jury asked to examine it, burned his fingers and became converted. The jury found Ho-ti and Bo-bo not guilty.

The judge was curious and made inquiries. Soon his house took fire. Then houses began to burn all over the district and fuel and pigs became distressingly dear.

At length a sage arose who discovered that a pig might be roasted without burning down a whole house, and the conflagrations ceased.

It isn't necessary to burn over a thousand acres to raise good blueberries; but whatever burning is done should be and usually is after the crop is gathered, not before.

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