

# Savor

quick fix



**Fruit pleasers** No one ever said that bruschettas — those little slices of bread topped with goodies — always have to be savory, like with cheese and beans. Try something new, like sweet summer fruit bruschettas, at the recommendation of the California Tree Fruit Association. Gently dice your favorite fruit, mix with a little sugar and perhaps a flavored liqueur, and top thin slices of baguette for a sweet something either before or after the main meal. Peaches, nectarines and plums come to mind, but the choice is up to you. A squeeze of bright fresh lemon juice before serving is a good idea, also.

## MARKET WATCH

New Jersey's farmers' markets are up and running, ready to get you the freshest produce around. Check our new 2005 listing for a market near you, or in a town just around the corner. Each market has a number to call for information and the complete location and hours. Start your engines.

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The Star-Ledger

inseason

# BLUE ON BLUE





NOAH ADDIS/THE STAR-LEDGER

The scene at Atlantic Blueberry in Hammonton is as blue as it gets. Hammonton is sometimes called the blueberry capital of the world.

## Home-grown blueberries are ripe and ready for the picking

BY MARY ANN CASTRONOVO FUSCO  
FOR THE STAR-LEDGER

**P**olitics aside, at this time of year New Jersey truly is a blue state — blue being the color of the Garden State's official fruit, the blueberry. Now making its annual appearance in supermarkets and produce stands all over the country and beyond, the blueberry has deep local roots.

Its origins are firmly set in the sandy soils of the Pine Barrens, where the first commercial crop of cultivated

blueberries was produced in 1916 by Elizabeth C. White of Whitesbog, a cranberry grower working in tandem with Frederick Coville, a U.S. Department of Agriculture researcher. Their efforts gave birth to an industry that makes New Jersey the leading producer of fresh-market blueberries in the nation. (Michigan leads in the number of acres harvested, but most of that crop goes to processing.)

Dating to the 18th century, the Weymouth Furnace Ironworks in Hamilton Township lent its name

to the earliest blueberry variety to ripen in the state, the Weymouth. The Duke variety, an early-season berry that makes up a hefty percentage of the state's volume, is named not after royalty but, rather, after Arthur "Duke" Galletta, who co-founded the Atlantic Blueberry Company in 1935 and managed the blueberry plots that Department of Agriculture breeders used to develop the variety that was named after him in the 1980s. The name of the Bluetta variety, also developed with Duke's help, combines

the words blueberry and Galletta.

With more than 1,300 acres planted in highbush blueberries, Atlantic is the largest producer of cultivated blueberries in the world. And its Hammonton address makes this quiet Atlantic County town, which lies a mere half-hour car ride from the hustle of Atlantic City and the bustle of Philadelphia, the blueberry capital of the world.

"There are more blueberries grown in this one town of Hammonton than

[ See **SEASON**, Page 58 ]

### Herbed Tuna Salad with Berries

— From "Very Blueberry" by Jennifer Trainer Thompson  
(Celestial Arts, \$5.95)  
6 servings

2 (16-ounce) cans white or light **tuna**, packed in water

1 **celery stalk**, thinly sliced

¼ cup peeled and minced **red onion**

2½ tablespoons finely chopped fresh **dill**

½ cup chopped **cucumber**

⅓ cup finely chopped **red bell pepper**

½ cup fresh **blueberries**

8 large leaves **lettuce**, for serving

Dressing:

3 tablespoons **mayonaisse**

1½ tablespoons **red wine vinegar**

½ tablespoon freshly squeezed **lemon juice**

½ teaspoon **Dijon mustard**

¼ teaspoon **salt**

¼ teaspoon freshly

ground **black pepper**

1. Place the tuna, celery, onion, dill, cucumber and bell pepper in a bowl and toss well to combine.

2. In a small bowl, combine the dressing ingredients with a whisk. Pour the dressing over the tuna mixture and toss to coat.

3. Cover and place in the refrigerator until chilled. Just before serving, add the blueberries and toss gently. Serve on a bed of lettuce.

#### Nutrition information

Per 8-ounce serving:

340 calories; 130 calories from fat; 45g protein; 6g carbs; 3g sugar; 14g total fat; 2g saturated fat; 30mg cholesterol; 1g dietary fiber; 690mg sodium; 6% Daily Values calcium; 15% Daily Values iron

## SEASON

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### Jersey blueberries are ripe and ready

any other town in the world," said Art Galletta, son of Duke and a co-owner of Atlantic Blueberry. "About 30 million pounds of blueberries are grown in Hammonton each year." The quantity grown by his company, he said, is "confidential."

"New Jersey is one of the best blueberry growing regions in the world," said Mark Greeff, a former blueberry grower in South Africa who now is the East Coast blueberry deal manager for Driscoll Strawberry Associates of Watsonville, Calif. For the third year in a row, Driscoll has contracted with local blueberry growers to supply blueberries, packaged under the Driscoll and Jersey Fresh labels, to help the firm ensure a 52-week supply of berries throughout the United States and into Canada and Europe.

Wegmans Food Markets, one of Driscoll's customers, carries blueberries from various sources all year, including North Carolina,



As far as the eye can see, blueberries are being harvested in Hammonton.

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Chile, Australia and South Africa, according to Pete Diamond, produce manager for the Wegmans in Woodbridge. But in season, his store carries locally grown fruit, which he believes is superior.

Jersey blueberries are "a little bit bigger and a little bit sweeter," he said.

Because of the cold, wet spring weather, the blueberry season got off to a slow start. "We had open blossoms in June, which I can't remember the last time that happened," said Nick Vorsa, director of the Philip E. Marucci Center for Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension in Chatsworth.

Usually the blooming season is wrapped up by the third week of May, he added. But Galletta and others maintain that this year's

crops have been unseasonably early. "The plants just progress slowly when it's cool out," said Galletta, 51, who started out in the family business by nailing crates at age 8.

Proper pollination depends on bees, and bees don't like to buzz amid the blueberry blossoms if the weather is damp. To ensure proper pollination, Galletta said he rents a couple of thousand hives to place in his fields. By growing about a dozen varieties, which ripen in successive waves of blue, Atlantic stretches out the harvesting sea-

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**Blueberries with Maple-Orange Yogurt Sauce**  
 — From "The Simpler the Better: Sensational Home Cooking in 3 Easy Steps" by Leslie Revsin (Wiley, 2004)  
**4 servings**

1 1/2 pints blueberries  
 1 cup plain yogurt  
 4 teaspoons maple syrup  
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
 Grated zest of 1 orange

among bowls. Spoon sauce over berries and serve.

**Nutrition information**  
 Per 5-ounce serving:  
 90 calories; 0 calories from fat; 3g protein; 20g carbs; 16g sugar; 0g total fat; 0g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 2g dietary fiber; 40mg sodium; 8% Daily Values calcium; 2% Daily Values iron

- Pick through berries to remove stems. Rinse and drain well.
- Mix yogurt, maple syrup, vanilla and orange zest in a small bowl.
- Divide blueberries

**Blueberry fest in Princeton**

Terhune Orchards in Princeton is hosting a Blueberry Bash Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Among the attractions is a juried Blueberry Bash Bake-Off, with categories for adults and children. Prizes include a \$100 Terhune gift certificate for the adult winner and a \$50 Terhune gift certificate for the children's winner. Entries are available at the farm store at 330 Cold Soil Road, Princeton, (609) 924-2310, or on the farm's Web site, [www.terhuneorchards.com](http://www.terhuneorchards.com).

When shopping for blueberries:

- Look for plump, deeply colored berries with a gray waxy film on the skin. This is known as "bloom." The bloom is nature's way of preserving the berries, so wash them only when ready to use. Lighter berries will keep longer than very dark blue berries.
- Avoid containers marred with juice stains, a sign of crushed or decaying berries.

**Contacts**

**Food Editor:** Susan Alai (973) 392-1757  
**Deputy Food Editor:** Robert Rastelli (973) 392-5989  
**Fax:** (973) 392-5845  
**E-mail:** [savor@starledger.com](mailto:savor@starledger.com)

Atlantic Blueberry Company in Hammonton, the world's largest cultivated blueberry farm, sells berries at its facility at 7201 Weymouth Rd., Hammonton. Phone for availability and hours: (609) 561-8600. For a list of pick-your-own blueberry farms and markets carrying locally grown blueberries, go to the Jersey Fresh Web site [www.jerseyfresh.com](http://www.jerseyfresh.com)