

# Taste

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Heatstroke can strike quickly.

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## Get the blues

Blueberry season is in full swing, and New Jersey's farms have a lot to offer

By **JUDITH W. WINNE**  
Courier-Post Staff

In a sunny field off a rural road outside Hammon- ton, Dennis Doyle palms a fistful of blueberries.

"Aren't they beautiful?" he asks. It isn't so much a question as a state- ment.

These berries, the Duke variety, are plumply juicy.

"They're big," says Doyle, product specialist for Atlantic Blueberry Co., one of the world's largest blueberry farms at more than 1,300 acres. "They ship well, and they have a nice taste."

This is prime time for the Garden State's blue- berry crop, a season that began in early June — ear- lier than usual because of the warm weather. Its sea- son lasts until the begin- ning of September.

The blues are big in New Jersey. The state is second (behind Michigan) in blueberry production, with a yield of 40 million pounds annually. The state boasts more than 120 growers, virtually all in Atlantic and Burlington counties.

Perhaps no place has greater blueberry brag- ging rights than South Jer- sey. It was here, in Whites- bog, Burlington County, where Elizabeth White de- veloped the first commer- cial blueberry crop a cen- tury ago. She did it to supplement her family's cranberry business.

White would be pleased with the harvest of her groundbreaking botanical work. In the land of the red, white and blue, blue- berries became an up-and- coming fruit.

"Per capita consump- tion has gone up," says Doyle, a spokesman for the New Jersey blueberry industry. In the last four to



He can't resist: Dennis Doyle, product specialist for Atlantic Blueberry Co. near Hammon- ton, samples blueber- ries straight off the bush.

Photos by AL SCHELL/Courier-Post



Doyle holds the fruit of the farm's efforts.

five years, he notes, Amer- icans have gone from eat- ing 2 to 4 pounds per year.

So what makes blue- berries popular?

Taste, for starters. Sweet, but not too sweet, the berry is a key ingredi- ent in cobblers, pies and muffins. It makes a tasty topping on cold or hot ce- reals. Scooped into a dish with a crown of fresh, whipped cream, blueber-

ries become a simple, but elegant, dessert.

Health may also be a key factor. Recent news re- ports have cited blueber- ries for their role in fight- ing cancer, heart disease, age-related brain decline and urinary tract prob- lems.

Dr. Gary Pavlis, an At- lantic County agricultural extension agent and blue- berry expert, says conve-

nience figures in the ber- ry's popularity, too, partic- ularly with youngsters.

"They don't have to slice it," says Pavlis. "They don't have to skin it."

At about \$1.50 a pint, seasonal blueberries are a reasonably priced treat. You can store them in the refrigerator for days, and they freeze well, too. Readily accessible, blue- berries are available at the supermarket, roadside stand or pick-your-own

farm.

At Tom Haines' place in Pemberton Township you can scoop up your own berries through the month of July. The pick- your-own price is 90 cents per pound. Haines Berry Farm also sells pre-pack- aged, ship-to-you berries — \$4 for a 2-quart tub; \$12 for a 10-pound box.

Haines says the pick- your-own experience is a positive one for many con-

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**FAST LANE**

### Beef brings muscle to a weak salad

By **SARAH FRITSCHNER**  
Gannett News Service

Combining deep, rich fla- vors with fresh bright ones makes perfect sense for sum- mer meals. A salad of raw vegetables and dressing doesn't hold any surprises, but add something luscious and it's fit for dinner.

Southeast Asians are masters of this concept, and — perhaps because the weather is sultry there — we can learn from them.

Chewy beef marinated in Asian flavors and served atop crisp lettuce is a meal that satisfies the senses — especially that sense of get- ting dinner on the table without a lot of effort.

Thai beef salad would be more exotic with authentic ingredients like roasted rice powder and fish sauce. But a little soy sauce stands in ad- mirably. And supermarket shallots, cilantro, chilies and limes couldn't be more true to the cuisine. The contrast- ing temperatures, textures and flavors also lend an au- thentic feel.

Spicy Thai beef salad, which really isn't all that hot, makes a refreshing choice for a hot summer meal, especially if you can enlist help at the grill. If you choose flank steak for this meal, score it with shallow parallel cuts on the diagonal to help tenderize the meat. And after it's cooked, cut it against the grain, which shortens the meat's fibers and serves to make them more tender.

If you have Thai basil growing in your garden, chop a few leaves and add them to the lettuce.

**Fast lane list:** Beef steak such as flank or rib-eye, soy sauce, shallots, cilantro, chili, limes, romaine lettuce, tomatoes, French bread.

# Blueberries/The easy-to-pick fruit can last for days

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sumers. "It is hard work," he says. "But it is not like strawberries. Blueberries are upright."

There's another obvious plus for consumers, says Haines.

"They get better fruit because it's less than a day old when they get home."

Consumers will pick Bluecrop, which has a good yield.

"They have an excellent flavor, good size and nice blue color," says Haines.

Luis Rodriguez, packing house manager at Atlantic Blueberry, favors Bluecrop and Sierra. With both varieties, he says, "the taste is pretty good from the first pick to the last one."

Art Galletta, director of Atlantic Blueberry and a member of the family that owns and operates Atlantic, predicts an average to better-than-average blueberry season. That's good news for lovers of the fruit.

How does he like his berries? "I like 'em in cheesecake," he says. "It seems to me, they go great with any dairy product."

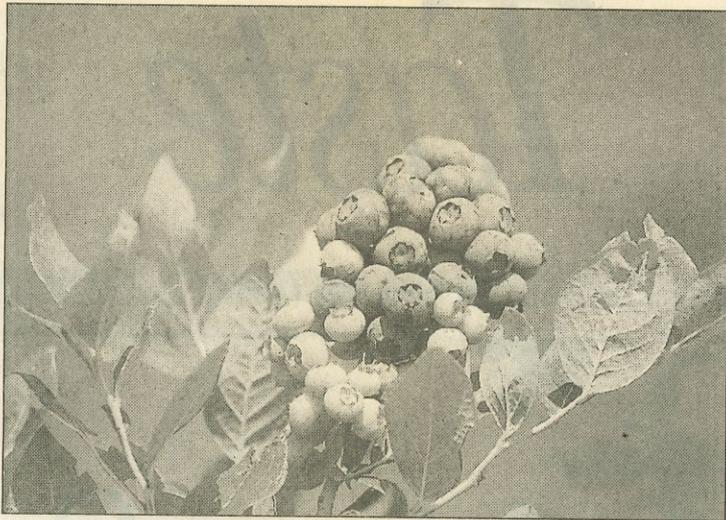
These recipes present blueberries in unusual ways.

## Creamy Blueberry Soup

1 tablespoon cornstarch  
2 cups cold water, divided  
2 1/2 cups fresh or thawed frozen blueberries  
3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste  
1 1/2 cups Marsala or rose wine  
Pinch salt  
Pinch nutmeg  
1/2 cup regular or low-fat sour cream or plain yogurt  
Mix cornstarch with 1/4 cup water. In a saucepan, combine blueberries, cornstarch, remaining water, sugar and wine. Bring to a simmer, stirring constantly, and cook over low heat until berries are soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in salt and nutmeg. Puree in batches, in blender or food pro-

## On the Web

- www.atlanticblueberry.com — Atlantic Blueberry Co. Web site
- www.k2nesoft.com/~haines/ — Haines Berry Farm
- www.blueberry.org — North American Blueberry Council. Click on u-pick for area farms where you can pick your own blueberries
- www.jerseyfruit.com/consumers — Jersey Fruit Cooperative Association Inc. Health information about blueberries and recipes



AL SCHELL/Courier-Post

Atlantic Farms in Hammonton is one of the largest blueberry farms in the world with more than 1,300 acres.

cessor until smooth. Chill. Before serving, mix in sour cream or yogurt with a wire whisk. Serve in chilled bowls, with a sprig of mint, if desired.

## Blueberry Cornmeal Cake

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons self-rising flour  
3/4 cup white cornmeal  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened  
2/3 cup plus 3 tablespoons granulated sugar  
1 large egg  
2 cups blueberries  
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting  
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease an 8-inch to 9-inch springform pan. Sift flour, cornmeal and salt together. Beat butter and 2/3 cup granulated sugar with electric mixer at medium speed until fluffy. Add egg and beat well. Add flour mixture at low speed and beat just until blended. Press 3/4 of the dough evenly over the bottom and 1 inch up sides of springform pan. Toss blueberries with remaining granulated sugar. Top blueberries with remaining dough by pinching off pieces and arranging them over the surface. Bake 40 to 50 min-

utes, until bubbly and browned. (Cover with aluminum foil if cake browns too quickly). Cool pan on rack. Run knife around pan edges before loosening spring. Dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

## Blueberry Bounce Cocktail

2 quarts blueberries  
2 cups sugar  
1 teaspoon whole allspice  
1 teaspoon whole anise seeds  
1 teaspoon whole cloves  
1 whole nutmeg, cut into pieces  
2-inch cinnamon stick  
1 quart vodka  
Mix 1 quart blueberries and 1 cup sugar in a 3-quart to 4-quart container. Wrap the spices (including cinnamon stick) in a cheesecloth and place on top of berries. Mix the remaining 1 quart of berries and 1 cup sugar and put on top of the spice bag. Add vodka and cover. Stir mixture with wooden spoon once a day for 2 to 3 days, until all the sugar is dissolved. Keep covered in a cool place for 6 weeks. Serve the mixture over ice to make a blueberry cocktail. (You can add

additional vodka to taste when serving.)

## Blueberry Pudding Cake

2 cups blueberries  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 cup flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
1 egg  
1/4 cup butter, melted  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1 cup boiling water  
Place blueberries and lemon juice in an 8-inch by 8-inch baking pan. Mix flour, baking powder, salt, nutmeg and 3/4 cup sugar. Beat in milk, egg, melted butter and vanilla. Spread over berries. Mix 1 cup sugar with cornstarch and sprinkle over batter. Pour boiling water over all. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes to 50 minutes.

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# Blue Gill/S chicken breasts summer vegeta

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which features a zesty spice rub, appealing?

"It's refreshing," says Sot, who lives in Southampton Township. "It's a summer thing and healthy."

"It's very easy," says Masters. "It's everything they can buy at the store... It's excellent, because it adds a subtle hint of the grill. Every actual ingredient, you can taste. And it's very light."

Next Wednesday, from Blue Gill: Selecting and storing fresh fish. Until then, try the Adobe chicken recipe.

## Adobe Chicken With Garden Grill

2 12-ounce boneless chicken breast cutlets

**For the chicken rub:**

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 4 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar (optional)

# Grilling outdoors becoming popular year-round

Associated Press

Outdoor grills aren't just for flame-broiled burgers and steaks anymore.

Today's grill is the appliance of choice for varied menus featuring veggies, pancakes, pizza and grilled corn-on-the-cob. These high-tech, multipurpose gotta-have units will even keep your marinade bubbly.

And today's cooks treat high-end grills as a year-round extension of their kitchen, according to the chief griller at Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse.

"Homeowners are definitely headed toward the high-performance summer grill," says dis-

her kitchen appliance, and they want it to look like one."

Gas models account for the majority of all grills sold, although sales of charcoal units remain robust.

While grill prices range from \$124 to nearly \$900, Cornwell says consumers do get more for their propane-powered dollar. Stainless steel and cast aluminum shells with porcelain and powder-coat finishes are rust-resistant. Better parts extend the useful life of grills. Some frames are warranted as long as 99 years. Multiple burners are the norm. Heat output ranges from 22,000 BTUs to a sizzling 55,000 BTUs. Secondary burners to keep sauces hot are commonplace. And forget hard-to-start charcoal. Push-button electronic starters or rota-

ry ignitions are standard. New accessories don't limit grills to dinner-only use.

Home chefs flip morning pancakes and eggs on optional griddles. Chili simmers at noon on special side burners, and evening pizzas bake in custom deep-dish pans. Grills are taller to provide more rotisserie and smoking options. Outdoor cooking even has a holiday flavor: Cooks have learned how tasty Thanksgiving turkeys are when prepared on the grill or in a separate turkey fryer. These turkey techniques free up ovens for other dishes.

Grilling is more than a warm season phenomena. Most homeowners grill all year long. Part of

grilling's 12-month popularity is comfort related: outdoor cooking keeps kitchens cool, thereby reducing utility bills.

Homeowners even create permanent patio-side shrines to grilling. Grills, separate burner units and other kitchen-like components are built directly into masonry or stucco islands where entire meals are prepared.

But the outdoor nature of grilling means some maintenance is necessary. Cornwell suggests grills be covered when not in use to ward off rain and marauding insects.

"We see more and more consumers asking for better and better grills," says Cornwell.

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