

Farm Gate Trail Round Up – 1st May, 2004

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IN SEASON ON THE TRAIL

Good Morning Simon,

There are plenty of apples and pears (although no self pick apples are left) & in the way of veges there are fantastic pumpkins and **grammas**, which are great for grandma pie. There are **persimmons & pecans**, both on the mountain and the river drive.

Last week I said I would give a brief rundown on grammas:

Traditionally *Cucurbita maxima* and *Cucurbita moschata* have been placed into two groups - pumpkins and grammas respectively. In recent years in Australia, popular description of these species has grouped both of them as pumpkins. They are members of the cucurbit family which also include cucumber, choko, rockmelons, watermelons, zucchini and gourds. Pumpkins are members of the gourd family, originating in North America and Mexico.

- for the latest update of the fruit and veges in season from our farms, check out the website

An interview.... This week we highlight Hawkesbury Harvest and how it came into being

Hawkesbury Harvest is a non-profit community organisation whose primary aim is to promote sustainable agriculture in the Sydney Basin

To go way back- in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was adopted. I have put a link at the bottom for anyone interested in finding out exactly what the document entails, but basically it looks at a global partnership to address poverty, hunger, ill health and the deterioration of our ecosystems. It states 'the broadest public participation and the active involvement of the non-governmental organizations and other groups should also be encouraged.'

Then -

- In 1996 the Hawkesbury City Council, University of Western Sydney – Hawkesbury Campus and Hawkesbury District Health Service adopted the WHO Healthy Cities Project that aims to place health high on the agenda of decision-makers to promote comprehensive local strategies for health and sustainable development based on the Agenda 21 principles and objectives.

So

- In 1997 the Hawkesbury Food Program was established as a sub-committee of the Hawkesbury Healthy Cities Project.
- 1992 NSW Agriculture began an extensive community consultation process that resulted in the release of the 'Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture – Sydney Region' by the Minister for Agriculture in May 1998.
- At the end of March 2000 a meeting of 12 people representing economic, social and environmental interests was convened by Hawkesbury Cuisine, a sub-committee of the Hawkesbury Food Program to consider ways to advance the role of sustainable agriculture in the Hawkesbury.
- This was the first of two critical community based meetings that lead to the formation of Hawkesbury Harvest. In this meeting it was decided that for agriculture to remain as a viable form of land use in the Hawkesbury it would be ideal to develop linkages with other appropriate economic, social and environmental capital in the local area through the Farm Gate Trail concept. The name of Hawkesbury Harvest was suggested.

- A public meeting was held in a local farmer's packing shed on 11 May 2000. More than 30 people attended. NSW Agriculture facilitated the meeting. At that meeting the community took ownership for the idea of HH. HH was born with its focus essentially on the economic viability of peri-urban agriculture and associated small businesses. This included businesses that were complementary to agriculture and which provided mutual leverage.

Today we have a Board, made up of farmers & producers, with representation from Agriculture, Tourism, The Uni of Western Sydney and economic representatives and have a growing membership from across the local Government areas of Hawkesbury, The Hills and Hornsby Shires.

We have four subsections of Hawkesbury Harvest: Farm Gate Trail, Farmer's & Gourmet Food Markets, Special Events and of course, Industry Development where for example, you'll be seeing labels on your food or produce that identify it as being from the Hawkesbury.

The first farm gate map had 13 places to visit – in the latest release there are 52 farmgaters.

The Hawkesbury has always been known as Sydney's Food Bowl – and today the role of sustainable agriculture is extremely important to the Sydney basin.

UN – Agenda 21

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21chapter1.htm>

Mt Tomah Plant of the Week:

Scientific Name: *Acer saccharum* Marsh.

Common Name: “Bountiful Maples” Sugar Maple, Rock Maple

The feature plant, *Acer saccharum*, the Sugar Maple, produces sap yielding maple syrup and maple sugar. Its timber and ornamental qualities are also valued. This species is from eastern and central North America.

You will find these trees in the Residence Garden and along the new path below the Heath and Heather Garden leading to a recently completed bridge across Bells Line of Road. Here the cultivated garden is linked with our Natural Conservation Area.

Events

8th May – The Butterfly Café – Butterfly Open Day Phone – 9651 2449

Pick your own butterfly to release.

The River Drive: Strawberry Farm at Vineyard, Hawkesbury Vegetable Farm, Tizzana Winery and The Orange Spot, (**Grammas**) & M & N Butchery at Wilberforce, Pepe's Ducks at South Windsor, Tanglin Lodge Alpacas at Tennyson. Then cross the River - Basha's Orchard (**persimmons** & advanced trees), Galston Strawberries, Berry Good Farms, and Nati Roses, Geranium Cottage, The Bay Road Gallery & Charltons Creek Studio Gallery at Arcadia, Kenthurst Fish & Filters, Butterfly Café all at the Hills & Hornsby end of the trail.

Along the **Mountain Drive** - Enniskillen Orchard, Blue Mountains Natural Spring Water at Grose Vale, Heavenly Belle Café at Kurrajong Heights, Tutti Frutti (also sells cut roses) The Local Harvest, and Pine Crest Orchard along Bell's Line of Road, at Bilpin;

All the information on the Farm Gate Trail will be on the website or from Hawkesbury Valley Tourism Office at Clarendon on **4588 5895**, where along with the Farm Gate map, your listeners can pick up the notes of today's roundup. Or **visit our website go to www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au**

Best Days to Drive the Trail

Friday or Saturday are the recommended days for self-drive tours of the Farm Gate Trail or, if you prefer not to drive, take a guided tour, all the details are on the back of the map.

Vegetables on the Trail

Beans, corn, tomatoes (including roma), squash, Hungarian paprika, beetroot and rhubarb, leek, egg plant and mini egg plant, green capsicums, cauliflower, zucchini, cabbage, silverbeet, artichokes, lettuce – cos, butter, greenoak, red oak, iceberg; bok choy, endive, chicory & Lebanese & gherkin, cucumbers; butternut, jap & Qld blue pumpkins as well as both red and white radishes, potatoes & flat and swiss brown mushrooms.

Fruit on the Trail

Persimmons

Figs

Apples - royal galas, red delicious, pink lady

Figs, grapes – black Muscat, red and Thompson seedless green grapes

Strawberries – fresh and frozen

Pears – Packham

Nashi Pears

Plums

Pecan nuts

Other Produce – Food & Wine

Wine, port including white port, aleatico; Verjus; Goat cheese & yoghurt; baked crisp breads including lavosh, honey, apple juice, free range eggs, ice cream with real fruit, fruit rollups with fruit fresh from the orchard. Jams, pickles and sauces and the range from the native bush tucker foods. Peking ducks, also sausages, breast fillet, Maryland & whole ducks; abattoir and butcher – large range of beef, pork and lamb, goat, venison and ostrich. Spring Water and Silver Perch.

Other Produce – Fibre & Flora

Koi and Goldfish, silver perch, field roses, pelargoniums and geraniums, alpacas & alpaca products such as jumpers, scarves etc. Open gardens and galleries with pottery, paintings and bowls and platters.