

Harvest Trail Round Up 16th July 2005

Adrian Maguire 45721124

Good morning Simon,

Well all this week we've seen parents bringing their children out on the trail- *partly* just to get them out of the house these holidays but also to show them just where a lot of their fresh produce comes from... Which is part of the charm of the trail's "**taste, buy and learn**" approach.

This week we have some of the last of our fresh mountain apples such as lady Williams, Pink Lady and Granny Smith. Our citrus season however is now in full swing with lemons, limes, grapefruit, mandarins and navel oranges for sale just about everywhere on the trail. Some places also have "**pick your own oranges**" which can again be a special "**hands on**" learning experience for the kids.

As always, the Hawkesbury Farm Gate Trail also has local Wines, Goat cheese & yoghurt; baked crisp lavosh, honey, apple juice, free range eggs, home made ice cream with real fruit, jams, pickles and sauces.

Our fresh picked vegetables this week include: leeks, potatoes, rhubarb, mushrooms, silver beet, radish and white turnips as well as many others.

We also have local pecan nuts and kiwifruit for sale at many outlets and new this week are our **Jonquils**, which are a very potent smelling white flower which grow similarly to Daffodils. Daffodils of course are not in season yet, but we hope to begin selling them within the coming weeks.

Speaking of flowers, as Susan recently mentioned, Sydney's Hellebores are now in flower and are certainly a sight worth seeing. Once used as a way of poisoning water supplies in Athens almost 2 and a half thousand years ago by invaders, this one time herbal harmer, was more recently used throughout much of Europe as a way of helping sick animals and even used ward off evil spirits.

In Australia however, we have some native relatives of the plant, but mainly propagate strains of the black Hellebore which is now grown for its beautiful flowers which can appear in different shades of pink, purple and white, sometimes even combinations of all three.

On the weekend of the 30th and 31st of this month, **“The Helleborous Nursery”** at Bilpin will be hosting its annual winter festival to allow people to witness these flowers in full bloom. Ingrid, the nursery’s owner will be there to tell you more about the history of the plant, provide expert advice on propagating the Hellebore and whether or not is able to grow in amongst your own garden.

Free refreshments will be available on the day and I can guarantee that you won’t be disappointed when you see these magnificent flowers set amongst the beautiful mountain scenery, just over an hour’s drive from Sydney, so make sure to mark this event on your calendar.

“The Helleborous Nursery” is at Mountain Lagoon Rd Bilpin. For more information please visit our website.

www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au

Whilst there, Hawkesbury Harvest and the University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury have just launched a new map which allows visitors to tour the old Hawkesbury Agricultural College which first opened in the late 19th Century.

Just as the Hawkesbury was an important part of providing early colonial Australia with all its agricultural needs, the old Ag College was an important part of training farmers to adapt to Australia’s harsh rural conditions which were of course completely different to those they new back in England.

The tour, which is clearly mapped out on the campus is also available for free from the Hawkesbury Harvest website.