

Farm Gate Trail Round Up – 1th September, 2004

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IN SEASON ON THE TRAIL

Good Morning Simon,

This week I caught up with someone who produces possibly the world's most favourite fruit.

Tony Jones from Berry Good Farms at Galston -

For 11 years they have been growing delicious strawberries hydroponically.

How did he get into hydroponics – usually it's a favourite for lettuce?

He was looking at something that would provide a base income and had always been interested in hydroponics. Apparently this method goes back to South Africa where they needed fresh produce for the diamond mines, and it is also very popular in Japan where they have built special buildings for growing produce hydroponically.

Sydney was growing mostly lettuce hydroponically but Tony decided to grow strawberries. He started with 6000 plants and this year they planted 95000 with projected production of 90 tonnes this year.

The farm has been on the farm gate trail since its inception...

Yes, they joined very early in the history the trail and are very proud to be associated with Hawkesbury Harvest and visitors enjoy seeing how the system works to say nothing of buying top quality fruit. It is much easier to control the flavour, size and consistency of the fruit through hydroponics.

As well as farm gate sales they also supply the airlines and Sydney's top hotels and are considered to be one of the foremost strawberry farms in NSW and possibly Australia.

How big an area do they have?

Tony says they have 1 ½ acres under cover which is equivalent to 8-9 acres on strawberries in the ground.

We're now coming in to strawberry season

Yes, plants go on to the A frames around April and start producing August and so we're into the season now where they pick around 2 ½ tonnes per week. The season finishes around late January early February.

A bit of trivia ... the University of California supplies 95% of the world market, from their research grants they have produced better varieties which are more disease tolerant and produce consistent fruit. In Australia the seeds are sent to a co op in Victoria which then supplies all Australian growers.

You can visit them from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm 7 days, and guided tours can be pre booked. You'll find them opposite Fagan Park at 53 Arcadia Road, Galston.

Update on fruit and veges in season

Plenty of Citrus - Navel & blood oranges, lemons, Seville oranges, & Hickson, **Ellendale** & **Emperor mandarins** & strawberries. (Galston Strawberries are closed for another week)
Delicious new season crop of Red Master.

This week we have some **Broad beans** (which are great fresh in a salad or if you need a recipe Charlie says to sauté them with olive oil and garlic). There oodles of tomatoes, globe artichokes, carrots, potatoes, pumpkins, silverbeet, brussel sprouts and the rhubarb is wonderful.

You can also pick up some fresh flowers, azaleas in pots, proteas, crepe myrtles and of course all the associated products like honey, jams, pickles and preserves.

For the latest update of the fruit and veges in season from our farms, check out the website.
Congratulations to Monique Maul at Lochiel House – on being awarded a chef's hat!

Mount Tomah Botanic Garden - PLANT OF THE WEEK

Scientific Name: *Tulipa* cultivar Black Diamond
Common Name: Tulip 'Black Diamond'
Plant Family: LILIACEAE

Head for the Formal Garden! This area of our garden performs best in late Spring and early Summer. However it is worth a visit now to see a cluster of tulips abundantly bedecked with glossy, deep-red blooms.

We purchased these bulbs as *Tulipa* cultivar 'Black Diamond' which produces single, late-flowering blooms with the petal exterior dark reddish brown or deep mahogany and a "dahlia purple" shade on the inside of the petals. 'Black Diamond' came on the market in 1962 and belongs to a class of Single Late Tulips established to cover the range of hybrid tulips formerly referred to as 'Darwin', 'Cottage', 'old Breeder' and 'Scheeper'.

Alexander Dumas' 1850 novel "The Black Tulip" is credited with inspiring this horticultural quest that continues to the present.

Within our garden, 'Bob the Bowerbird' and his friends are providing much enjoyment on the Spring Adventure Trail. Waratahs will bloom here soon and the Hawkesbury Waratah Festival will run from 25 September to 10 October. Once again prize-winning blooms will be on display in our Visitor Centre the walls of which glow red with the work of young artists.

Events:

Fruits of the Hawkesbury Festival – runs for two months visit www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

10th – 20th - Orange Blossom Festival – www.baulkhamhills.nsw.gov.au

11th – 26th - Budburst Festival for the Sydney Wine Region – Tizzana Winery 4579 1150

18-19 September Botanical Illustration Workshop. – Mt Tomah Botanic Garden

3 Oct 04 - Bilpin Waratah Farm Open Day

The Bilpin Waratah plantation grows the extremely rare white Waratah as well as the standard red & pinks colours. There will be 6 to 8 varieties on show and plenty of cut blooms for sale.

The \$5.00 entry fee will include a tour of the the Waratah Farm where you can purchase freshly cut flowers. Louise and Harry will answer all your questions at the Open Day.

The Open Day is at 82 Hanlons Road North, Bilpin commencing at 10.30am and finishing at 3pm.

If your listeners haven't been able to download the map from the website they can call into the Visitor Centre at Clarendon (opposite the RAAF Base) and pick up a copy.

All details on the website at www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au

The River Drive: Penrith Valley Oranges – navel oranges, mandarins, vegetables, Strawberry Farm at Vineyard (local strawberries, tomatoes, corn), Tizzana Winery (Wine, Olive oil), Hawkesbury Estate (Seville oranges) and The Orange Spot, (Navels, Mandarins, & Sevilles) & M & N Butchery at Wilberforce, Pepe's Ducks at South Windsor, Tanglin Lodge Alpacas at Tennyson. Then cross the River - Basha's Orchard (advanced trees), Berry Good Farms, and Nati Roses, Geranium Cottage, The Crepe Myrtle Man, Post Office Road, Glenorie, The Bay Road Gallery & Charltons Creek Studio Gallery at Arcadia, Kenthurst Fish Farm, Butterfly Café all at the Hills & Hornsby end of the trail.

Along the **Mountain Drive** - Enniskillen Orchard (Macadamias, pecans, honey, daffodils, mandarins), Blue Mountains Natural Spring Water at Grose Vale, Heavenly Belle Café at Kurrajong Heights, Tutti Fruitti (oranges & mandarins), The Local Harvest, 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

Tomatoes, lettuce, beetroot and rhubarb, sweet potato, leek, green capsicums, cauliflower, broccoli, zucchini, cabbage (savoy & plain), silverbeet, bok choy, Lebanese & gherkin cucumbers; parsnips, butternut, jap & Qld blue pumpkins, both red and white radishes, potatoes, flat and swiss brown mushrooms

Fruit on the Trail

Mandarins – Imperials, Emperor, Hickson – Enniskillen, Penrith Valley Oranges, Orange Spot
Navel Oranges – Penrith Valley Oranges
Seville Oranges – Hawkesbury Estate and The Orange Spot
Winter Pajeros Strawberries – fresh and frozen – Strawberry Farm, Vineyard
Pecan nuts & Macadamias - Enniskillen Orchard

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.
