

Harvest Trail Round Up 23rd April 2005

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Good morning Simon,

Well after a week that started with almost tropical days of more than 30degrees and then followed by some steady mountain rain mid-week the weather has cleared to make conditions just right for a drive down the Hawkesbury Farm Gate Trail this long weekend.

You know it's because of this warm weather we've been having that figs are *still* in season and are literally bursting off the tree, so we hope to continue providing figs for at least another two weeks. Unfortunately I also have some bad news this week; our chestnuts have now finished and won't be available for sale this weekend. So that's it for another year unfortunately.

Of course we still have new season's Bilpin apples including Fuji, Pink Lady and Granny Smith. For those of you interested in "pick your own" it's always a good idea to phone ahead for information on which varieties are available for picking, because it can vary. Other fruit this week includes some Raspberries (Autumn Bliss), Packham Pears, Valencia Oranges and Persimmons including the astringent and non-astringent varieties. Our gardens this week have produced a whole range of vegetables including; Broccoli, Tomatoes, red and green capsicum, eggplants, beetroot and an abundance of corn.

New this week we have fresh picked chokos. The basic cooking rule for chokos is that you can cook them in much the same way as you would a zucchini, for instance you might put them in a stir fry or just chop them up and bake them on their own. Also harvested this week are our rosellas, which of course are very similar to Hibiscus flowers.

Not only do they taste great dropped in the bottom of a glass of champagne, the Harvest website currently includes a recipe for making the most delicious rosella sauce.

Events:

Starting yesterday, we have the **St Alban's Folk Festival** which runs all this long weekend and features folk concerts at night, music lessons and workshops by day and camping facilities are available. St Albans is a beautiful little village hidden in the McDonald Valley and is located just half an hour's drive north of Wiseman's ferry. For those of us who have never been to St Alban's I would highly recommend that this be the weekend that you do.

You can get more information from www.salbans.awarp.com

Also this weekend we have the **Collector's Plant Fair** at Bilpin. The fair is being held in the gardens of the beautiful "Woodgreen Angus Stud" and will run for today and tomorrow only, between 10am and 4pm. Entry is \$5 per adult and supervised children under 18 get in free. So take along a picnic or purchase your lunch there, enjoy the surroundings and search for that plant which has up until now eluded you, as there will be 30 specialist growers from South Australia, Victoria, And All Over NSW selling distinctive not easy to come by plants. There is also a speaker programme, with talks from Peter Nixon, Michael McCoy and David Glenn to be held in the homestead.

Location: 27 Powell's Road, Bilpin NSW (35 km west of Richmond, 48 km east of Lithgow. From Sydney Powell's Road is left off Bell's Line of Road 5km west of Bilpin village.)

For more information look up the Hawkesbury Harvest Website.

As for next weekend's activities, we of course have the **Hawkesbury Highland Harvest**, I understand the highlight of which will be your live broadcast from the Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens Simon. Saturday will feature food stalls, cooking demonstrations and children's activities in the garden followed by dinner and a play by the Arcadian Players. Susan will also be there and I think she plans to take along a friend to help her give the harvest report- sounds intriguing. Then on Sunday, the Turpentine

Tree will host an apple pie bake off whilst Bilpin springs lodge will host an open farm day with lots to see and do.

For more information contact Kate Faithorn on 02 4567 3014

Fruit on the Trail:

Apples – Pinecrest Orchard, Enniskillen Orchard, Orange Spot, Waddell's Orchard

Mandarins and Valencia Oranges – The Orange Spot

Persimmons – Waddell's Orchard, Basha's Orchard, The Orange Spot, Enniskillen Orchard

Raspberries & Figs – Enniskillen Orchard

Chestnuts & Walnuts – Nutwood Farm, Kookootonga Walnut and Chestnut Farm

Veges on the Trail

Roma and round Tomatoes, corn, potatoes, lettuce, rhubarb, eggplant, mushrooms, cabbage, beetroot, shallots, capsicum, eggplant, cauliflower, broccoli, butternut pumpkins, Jap Qld Blue & Baby carrots.

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