

## Farm Gate Trail Round Up – 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2004

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### **IN SEASON ON THE TRAIL**

Good Morning!

There are plenty of apples and pears & in the way of veges there are fantastic pumpkins and **grammas**, which are great for grandma pie. There are **persimmons**, both on the mountain and the river drive and they are the non astringent variety which you can eat whilst they are firm. I thought I'd give a little bit of information on this interesting fruit.

There are two types of persimmons - the Fuyu which is small and somewhat squat & the Hachiya variety which is longer and shaped like an acorn. Both begin a deep orange. The Fuyu should be eaten while firm, like an apple. The Hachiya, on the other hand, are to be eaten when very soft & mushy. The botanical name for persimmon is "diospyros" which in Greek means "food of the gods. Algonquin Indians called the fruit "putchamin, pasiminan, or pessamin," depending on the dialect of the tribe. Persimmons provide a substantial amount of Vitamin C, with the Hachiya rating slightly higher. Both varieties can boast a high beta carotene & Potassium content.

(for further information) <http://www.vegparadise.com/highestperch210.html>

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

### **An interview.... This week I spoke with Ted Basha of Basha Produce at South Maroota**

#### **How did he get into farming?**

Ted's Dad, Halim, immigrated to Australia in 1950 from Lebanon. He arrived with not a cent in his pocket. He worked for eight years, was able to buy two houses in Redfern. He then sold them in 1958 and brought the farm at Arcadia, because he wanted to be his own boss. On the farm they grew stone fruits and had livestock for example, pigs, ducks, chickens. He had nine children, six girls and three boys.

Joe and Ted the younger two boys grew up to be an accountant and an electrician. Not happy with their chosen careers they decided to buy a farm of their own as it was in their blood.

They looked around and finally found the perfect place, located in South Maroota on Wisemans Ferry Rd in the Hawkesbury. It was a lemon farm and they were picking ninety tonnes of lemons for the juice factories. However, the prices started to drop dramatically & it wasn't worth doing anymore. So they re-established it as a stone fruit farm and also got a contract to grow broiler chickens (meat birds).

#### **What do you grow now?**

The orchard consists of peaches (5 varieties), nectarines (4 varieties), plums (2 varieties) and Fuyu Persimmons - the non astringent strain.

Due to the returns of stone fruit prices dropping in the markets they looked for another avenue to compensate for this loss. So in the last three years they have established an advanced plant nursery. Growing mainly hedges such as Buxus, lily pily's, and photinia's just to name a few.

They have recently become members of the Hawkesbury Harvest Farm Gate Trail, & enjoy meeting, and selling to people, their fresh produce.

### **Mt Tomah Plant of the Week:**

Scientific Name: *Castanea sativa* Mill.  
Author: Philip Miller (1691-1771)  
Common Names: Spanish Chestnut, Sweet Chestnut, Marron

The Brunet Meadow, the household orchard area of Alfred and Effie Brunet from 1931 to 1968, is once again in the spotlight. Three large Spanish Chestnut trees, *Castanea sativa*, stand uphill of the Brunet Pavilion that marks the house-site.

A chestnut stall will be part of our **Autumn Harvest Festival on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> of May**, so if you have never tried them, or you missed out from Kookootonga Chestnut & Walnut farm then come up and give them a try.

There will be plenty of local produce & Hawkesbury Harvest farmgaters: apples and alpaca goods, berries and biscuits, coffee and che tea, designer fortune cookies and dried flowers, egg and bacon rolls and egg and bacon pies, flannel flowers and fruit, goats cheese and gourmet salads, homemade jams and handcrafted garments...the list goes on. All will be available at stalls in the garden. There will be children's activities too and lots of information.

**Autumn Harvest Food Festival 24 April to 16 May 2004** If you cannot be with us and the 702 ABC crew on 1 May then some of our other activities might appeal:

- The Felix Fungus Food Finding Frenzy Adventure Trail daily April and May;
- Daily Guided Garden Walks 11.30am Sat 24 April to Sunday 9 May;
- Eco Tours to our Conservation Area 5 and 7 May bookings 4567 2154;
- Autumn Dessert Cooking Classes 5 and 12 May bookings 4567 2060;
- 'Care of Fruit Trees' talk at Shields Orchard 8 May bookings 9231 8182;

Details on our website:

[http://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/mount\\_tomah\\_botanic\\_garden/visitor\\_information/events\\_&\\_activities](http://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/mount_tomah_botanic_garden/visitor_information/events_&_activities)

**The River Drive:** Strawberry Farm at Vineyard, Hawkesbury Vegetable Farm, Tizzana Winery and The Orange Spot, & 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 Fruitti (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](http://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, zucchini, cabbage, silverbeet, artichokes, lettuce – cos, butter, green oak, 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

Apples - Golden delicious, royal galas, jonathans, jonagold

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

Strawberries – fresh and frozen

Pears – Williams red and green

Nashi Pears

Plums – Santa Rosa, blood plums

### 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.