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MARKET MUSINGS

By Jan Freedman

It's July and summertime at the Farmers' Market. That means that the farmers' tables will now be laden with raspberries in their variety of colours, cherries and members of the currant family, along with Saskatoon berries and, later, gooseberries.
These will be followed later by the luscious stone fruits for pies, cobblers and eating out of hand. Of course, they all make delicious preserves too.
There is also a wide assortment of vegetables available now and the variety increases each week.
I saw some fresh garlic last week and garlic scapes, too. They are wonderful in a stir fry and try them in soups or stews. A couple of our farmers have several types of mushrooms, which will add both flavour and texture to almost any dish.
Why not do what many chefs do? Don't plan your menu ahead of time, but shop at the Market for whatever catches your eye that day, and create a meal from only what you buy from the Market vendors? That's a true test of a fine cook and you may discover that you have a creative streak that you were unaware of previously.
The next vendor I'd like you to meet is Nancy Wood of Heartsease Co.
Nancy has lived in Aurora for 18 years with her husband and two sons, now both grown men.
She has dabbled in many occupations over the years, including crisis counselling, special education and community gardening, but her main occupation has been in Art Therapy for 35 years. She lists her main hobbies as gardening, sewing and painting.
She started her business, Heartsease Co. in 2000 mainly as a way to relax and as her personal occupational therapy. ?Heartsease? is the common name for a spring flower also called viola or johnny jump up. Apparently this name appears in Shakespeare's ?A Midsummer Night's Dream?.
Nancy's products grew out of her personal need for them or simply from the enjoyment of having them in her life. Many of them are based on bringing comfort to her customers and filling a need. For example, her currant line includes a lavender headache pack and a hot/cold therapy pack in several sizes, including a small portable one. Both of these were developed from Nancy's need for relief from headaches and body soreness. The therapy packs can be heated in the microwave or made cold in the ?fridge. She also creates reversible tote bags in an assortment of beautiful fabrics, crocheted cotton water bottle carriers and cell phone or eye glass holders.
Nancy's old family favourite recipe comes from Nancy's mother and is perfect for this time of year.

Strawberry?Rhubarb
Crisp
3 cups coarsely chopped strawberries and rhubarb
(you could substitute other fruit if desired)
1 cup brown sugar
¾ cup all purpose flour
¾ cup quick cooking rolled oats
1 tsp. ginger or cinnamon
1/2cup butter
Place the chopped fruit in a 2 quart greased baking dish. Combine all the dry ingredients, then cut in butter with 2 forks until crumbly. Cover the fruit completely with the topping and bake in 350 degree oven for 45-60 minutes. You can serve this with yoghurt or ice cream. Makes 6-8 servings. ENJOY!

On the Canada Day weekend, the Aurora Farmers' Market and Artisan Fair entered a float in the parade. A great deal of work went into planning, organizing and decorating the float on the part of many volunteers. We were thrilled to be acknowledged by the Town of Aurora with the award for ?Best Original Theme? and we wish to thank the Town for that honour. We also want to thank the many volunteers who made it possible for us to have an entry in this year's parade.
Sincere thanks to the Brooks Farm for lending us the wagon, tractor, straw bales and baskets, to Willowtree Farm, Cooper's Farm and 19th Avenue Farm for providing the produce which decorated the wagon, to Jeff, our neighbour, for picking up the generator, to Rent Source for providing the generator, to Highland Chevrolet Cadillac Limited for allowing us to assemble the float on their property, to Aaron and Paul of the Manatee band for performing on the float, to Barb, Roxanna, Anna, Katie and Cathy for decorating the float and to the amazing students, Aimi, Felicite, Valerie, Bailey and Paniz who created the awesome Canadian flag

design for the tractor's bucket and who walked beside the float with Katie and Anna.
And a big thank you to Frank, my husband, who drove the tractor without knocking us off! We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to John Abraham who ferried the participants to their cars and who followed Frank back to the Brook's Farm to return the tractor, and then drove him home. Without the help of all these wonderful volunteers, we wouldn't be able to have an entry in the Canada Day parade. Thank you so much.

See you at the Market!