

Rhubarb-- Harbinger Of Spring

By ELLY

The conversation had turned to crocus and hyacinths in bloom, budding tulips and forsythia ready to burst. All this was in spite of the late, heavy snowfall, the remnants of which still remain in blackening drifts.

"And my rhubarb is up that high," said one of the women, measuring a good six to eight inches with her hands.

Now there was the true harbinger of spring. That first batch of rhubarb from the earth, barely frost free, is a promise of all that is to come.

Rhubarb is a native of northern Asia. Of the 25 species, some are grown as ornamentals, some for their medicinal properties.

Garden rhubarb, or "pie plant," should be pulled when young, not cut. It should be used as soon as possible, for it loses its sugar when it stands. Much of the flavor and color is in the skin so it should not be peeled unless very tough.

For sauce, wash and cut in two-inch lengths, sprinkle generously with sugar and let stand two hours. Boil only five minutes in its own juice. Never add water.

A small amount of rhubarb sauce can be "stretched" by making a fruit salad. Just add crushed pineapple and sliced bananas.

For the true rhubarb lover, there is nothing like a good rhubarb pie.

Most cook books have one or two recipes for rhubarb pie; but there is one that contains 17 prize-winning recipes.

This is the Blue Ribbon Cookbook of pies and pastries which contains the favorite recipes of home economics teachers.

There's a "Rhubarb-Cherry Pie" from Wisconsin, a "Sour Cream-Rhubarb Pie" from Oregon and a "Tangy Rhubarb Pie" from Arizona. Michigan's contribution is "Quality Rhubarb Pie" from West Branch.

This must be one of the best pie and pastry cook books ever published. Proceeds from the sale of the book aid home economics departments "to add needed, up-to-date equipment and to support worthwhile projects within their schools and communities."

Two area teachers have recipes in the book. They are: Alice M. Crosse, O.E. Dunckel Junior High in Farmington, "Fluffy Perimeter Chiffon Pie," and Darlene Marheonich of Churchill High in Livonia, "Orange Layered Pie."

FRESH RHUBARB PIE
1 recipe 2-crust pie pastry
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 T. flour
3 eggs, well beaten
4 c. rhubarb, cut in 1/2-inch pieces

1 1/2 T. butter
Roll out half the pastry; line nine-inch pan. Combine sugar and flour; mix well. Add eggs; blend thoroughly. Stir in rhubarb. Pour into pastry-lined pan; dot with butter. Roll out remaining pastry; cut into half-inch strips. Arrange over filling in lattice fashion. Flute edge. Bake at 400 degrees for 30 minutes or until crust is golden and rhubarb is tender.

Mrs. Joan Jacobson,
Hayti High School,
Hayti, South Dakota

FARM FRESH RHUBARB PIE
1 recipe 2-crust pastry
3 c. diced rhubarb
1 c. sugar
2 T. cornstarch
1/4 t. salt
1/2 t. grated orange rind
2 T. butter

Roll out half the pastry; line nine-inch pie pan. Combine rhubarb with sugar, cornstarch, salt and orange rind; mix well. Pour into pastry-lined pan; dot with butter. Roll out remaining pastry; place over filling. Seal and flute edges; cut vents in top. Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Bake 30 minutes longer or until crust is golden.

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