

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 1993

# TASTE

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

## Chef answers reader requests for recipes

**M**ost of us tend to lay low in the kitchen during the dog days of summer. But if reader requests are any indication, you can stand the heat!

Before I get down to answering questions, a few words on some summer vacation finds up north. Put Pete & Mickey's Restaurant in Charlevoix, and Sleder's Tavern in Old Town Traverse City on your list of stops. You won't be disappointed.

Toni Mattler of West Bloomfield requested a recipe for chowchow, a tasty pickle relish that's a favorite "Down South." Fresh from the pages of the hot-selling new cookbook "Salads, Sambals, Chutneys & Chowchows," by Chris Schlesinger and John Willoughby (William Morrow Publishers) is this tasty repeat.

**GREEN CABBAGE-CORN CHOWCHOW**

- 1 cup diced green cabbage
- Kernels from 3 ears of corn, uncooked
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 5 whole cloves
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Prepare all the vegetables as described and place them in a large mixing bowl. Set aside. Combine the cloves, vinegar, sugar, salt and pepper in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour this mixture over the vegetables and mix well.

Allow to stand until mixture is at room temperature, then cover and refrigerate. This will keep covered and refrigerated for about 3 weeks. Makes 4 cups.

**Chef's note:** I made this and substituted pickling cucumbers for the cabbage with great results.

Nancy Borhels of Wayne left a message that she saw me on a recent "Company" segment on Channel 7 and was hoping I could locate a recipe similar to Chili's honey lime salad dressing.

Well, Nancy, this might not be Chili's original, but I think it comes mighty close!

**HONEY LIME SALAD DRESSING**

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- Pinch of ground ginger
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and mix well. This recipe is great over a cool summer fruit salad or simply tossed lightly with a few greens and sprouts.

Mark Budington of Farmington said he wanted to try momma's method of soaking ribs in vinegar before grilling, but was curious as to how long you should soak the ribs before cooking. Momma reports that a minimum soak of four hours is best, but adds they can be soaked overnight for a more tangy flavor.

Cathy Law of Farmington was searching for a recipe for dilla made in a clay pot, also called brine cured dilla.

Investing a week or two in curing cucumbers before packing them results in superior eating. However, be sure to make a chart and do the daily care religiously, because even one mislaid day will spoil the whole batch. Good luck Cathy!

**BRINE-CURED WHOLE SWEET PICKLES**

- 1 gallon small pickling cucumbers
- Boiling water
- 1/2 cup canning/pickling salt
- 1 1/2 gallons water
- 4 cups 5-percent acid strength vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 8 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup mixed pickling spices

Wash cucumbers. Set aside. Wash and scald a 2 gallon crock and a heavy plate to cover crock. Place cucumbers in crock, cover them with boiling water, top with the plate and cover with a towel. Count this as day 1.

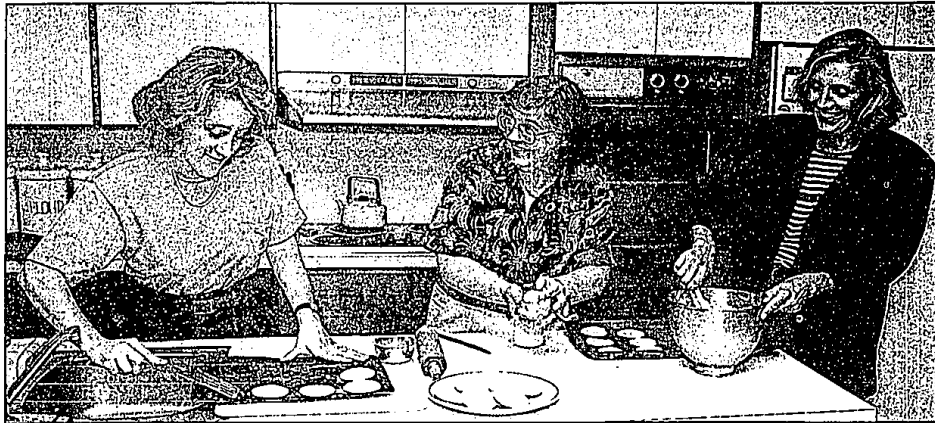
On the next 5 days, drain the water, remove cucumbers, wash and scald crock and plate, rinse cucumbers, cover with boiling water, add plate and cover with a towel.

On the 7th day, make a brine by dissolving salt and 1 1/2 gallons water. Drain cucumbers, wash and scald crock and plate, rinse cucumbers, return to crock and cover with brine and plate. Cover with a towel.

On the 8th day, drain cucumbers. Pierce each in several places with a fork to prevent shriveling. Combine vinegar, 1 cup water, sugar and spices filed in a cheesecloth bag in a 4-quart kettle. Boil 20 minutes.

Remove bag of spices. Pack cucumbers into 8 sterilized hot pint jars. Cover with syrup, wipe rim and adjust lids. Process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes. Remove jars and completely seals. Makes 8 pints.

See Larry James' family-tested recipes inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1888.



JIM RIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Everyone's favorite: Denise Lance (left) and Julie Holtgreive (right) help Jan Everson (center) with her popular sugar cookies for the Wendouwer Woods neighborhood picnic.

■ Twenty years ago, a group of people living in a Troy subdivision got together for a picnic. Now it's an annual event that draws 170 families.

By SANDRA DALKA-PRYSBY  
SPECIAL WRITER



Every year, just before Labor Day, families in the Wendouwer Woods Subdivision in Troy host a neighborhood picnic to say farewell to summer and hello to their neighbors.

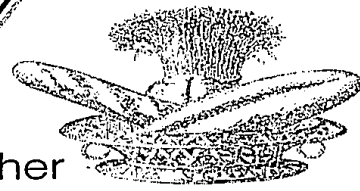
"Like the Sunday church picnics of the past, this event features good food, family games and neighborly camaraderie. It's something everyone looks forward to and something everyone who attends enjoys," said Jan Everson who has lived in the subdivision for 17 years.

The picnic began more than 20 years ago as a street party with a few residents. In 1990, it grew to include a number of streets and more than 170 homes in the Big Beavers-Beach Road area of Troy. "Now, because of the large number of attendees, it's held at Beachwood Swim Club just east of the neighborhood," Everson said.

"This is a wonderful activity for my whole family," said Denise Lance, a 14-year resident. "I grew up in the city, and there weren't any opportunities like this to get to know the neighbors. Also, I have few good memories of the neighborhood where I was raised. These picnics will allow my

# Good Neighbors

Picnic brings families together



kids to have happy childhood memories."

Lance's three children, Jeff, 10; Rachel, 9; and Kevin, 5, agree that the event is "really great." They said they like the kid games and bike parade led by a Troy fire truck (borrowed for the event by a neighborhood volunteer fireman).

"But my most favorite thing about the picnic is the food," said Rachel. "There's an unlimited supply of lots of good food."

Every family attending brings a dish to pass. And, according to Everson, some dishes are so good that they are requested year after year.

Her Grandma Mitchell's Old Fashioned Sugar Cookies are a favorite each year.

"My grandmother taught me how to make them, and I have been baking these cookies since I was a teenager. They've become a tradition at the picnic."

Julie Holtgreive, one of the newer residents of the neighborhood, said that she chose to bring her Picnic Potato Salad, which is popular with her

family. Holtgreive, who has lived in Wendouwer Woods for two years, was in charge of the children's games for the picnic and served on the committee last year.

"One of the best things about our picnic is that it gives the children an opportunity to meet and get to know who the neighbors are," said the mother of two. "This makes me feel that children are safe when I send them out to play."

Another advantage, according to

See GOOD NEIGHBORS, 2B



BILL DRESLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sweet corn: Bicolor corn, a mixture of white and yellow kernels, is sweet and tender when it comes to market.

## Sweet bicolor corn tasty without butter

By JOAN BORAM  
SPECIAL WRITER

Strictly speaking, not only is corn not a vegetable, it isn't even corn. "Corn" is a generic European term for grain, and the grain we call corn is really maize.

Corn (maize) was developed by Native Americans from a wild grass that grew in the southern Mexican highlands. The plant they developed (zea mays) was adaptable to many kinds of soils and conditions.

Different dialects and languages gave the plant different names, but they all had the same meaning: "our life." Michigan produces more than 100 million ears of sweet corn each year, making it the sixth largest producer in the nation.

Corn is a good source of fiber and vitamins A and E. A single ear contains 200 milligrams of potassium and about 70 calories unless you slather butter on it. Just two pats of butter add 90 calories.

In 1992, Nino Salvaggio, owner of Nino Salvaggio's Strawberry Hills in Farmington Hills, was invited to address the Michigan Corn Board to detail the kind of corn consumers prefer.

"Our customers want a full, large ear of sweet corn," Salvaggio said. "Over the past five years or so, Michigan customers have come to prefer bicolor corn, which is so sweet that it doesn't even need butter."

There are 20 or so specialty produce stores in the area, and we've educated our customers to appreciate

bicolor corn. It costs a little more because it's delicate and more difficult to harvest, and the seed costs the farmer more, but it's worth it because of its sweetness."

David Ruhlig grows 250 acres of bicolor corn on his farm in Carleton, which is in Michigan near the Ohio border. He switched from yellow and white corn about five years ago.

"The first bicolor corn was an accident," said Ruhlig. "White and yellow corn growing close by cross-pollinated, producing bicolor. When the hybridists took over, they took the best genes from the white and yellow, producing the ear that consumers enjoy today."

"Not too many years ago, people would buy Michigan corn on the Fourth of July, and if it was tough, they wouldn't buy Michigan corn again that season. But the sugar-enhanced hybrids have much higher sugar contents, as well as a longer shelf life, guaranteeing that yellow as well as bicolor corn is sweet and tender when it comes to market."

"The whole idea is to grow corn and sell it," said Ruhlig. "These hybrids assure that Michigan corn is sweet and tender from the first ear in July to the last ear in October."

Native Americans learned that corn grew best when they planted four kernels in a hill, often "planting" a small fish under the hill as fertilizer. Sunflowers were interplanted among

See SWEAT, 2B