

# Chilies from page 1B

"The chilies perk up the flavor of almost every type of food," he said. "I add them to almost everything."

Mary Lore, owner of McFarland's Greenhouse and Nursery in Farmington Hills, not only makes and cans her own spaghetti sauce, but she even grows the herbs and chilies that she uses to flavor it.

"I love hot foods," said Lore, "and our customers' taste for chilies is developing. I can tell because they've requested that we get transplants for hotter varieties next spring."

Lore says that peppers, sweet or hot, are among the easiest plants to grow, but that, like tomatoes, they need steadily warm temperatures.

"Fruit sets in a limited range of night temperatures. The blossoms drop when night temperatures fall much below 60 degrees, so it's best to be patient and not put them in much before Memorial Day."

If you don't have a lot of room to grow things, consider planting peppers in containers.

"I especially recommend that hot peppers be grown in containers where they can be kept out of the reach of small children," said Lore. "Peppers are attractive, and a child could easily grab one and take a bite before anyone could intervene. It would be an extremely painful experience for the child,

and very stressful for everyone else."

Lore says that sweet peppers can be picked at any state of their development, but if you leave fully ripe peppers on the plant their presence will reduce subsequent yield.

Hot peppers, however, should be allowed to achieve full growth and flavor before harvesting. They will keep well if you string a thread through them and hang them indoors.

You can dry both sweet and hot peppers for winter use. In Mexico, the dried peppers are ground daily in a mortar to make chili powder.

"A pinch of this powder will add flavor, if not fire, to any dish," said Lore.

You must take precautions when working with hot peppers, then wash your hands thoroughly when through. Never rub your eyes or touch your face. Wash the cutting board thoroughly with salt and cold water, and clean knives and dishes or pans thoroughly.

If you're wearing rubber gloves, it's easy to forget the danger and answer the telephone or do anything else while wearing them.

If you do, you're laying a booby trap for yourself or someone else by leaving oil from the chiles on the phone or on your glasses. You (or someone) could be very, very uncomfortable! See recipes inside.

# Great cookies require patience, love

See related Taste Buds column on Taste front.

## CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

- ¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
- ½ cup shortening
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla
- 1 egg
- 1½ cups all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, combine brown sugar, butter, margarine and shortening; beat until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and egg; blend well. Stir in flour, baking soda and salt; mix well. Stir in chocolate chips and

nuts, if desired. Drop dough by teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart, onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool 1 minute; remove from cookie sheets. Makes 4 dozen cookies.

Source: "The Pillsbury Complete Book of Baking," Viking Publishers, 1993, \$25.

## LOW-FAT OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIES

- ¾ cup pitted prunes
- ¾ cup flour
- ½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 egg whites
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 ¼ cups rolled oats

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a food processor or blender, puree prunes until smooth. In a large bowl, stir together flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. Add prune puree, egg whites and honey.

Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until well blended, scraping down the sides of the bowl frequently with a rubber spatula. Fold in oatmeal and raisins. Drop by heaping teaspoonfuls 2 inches apart onto lightly greased cookie sheets.

Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Allow to cool 2 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely. Makes about 42.

Source: "366 Great Cookies and Brownies" by Joanne Hayes and Bonnie LeBlang, 1993, Harper and Collins Publishers, \$16.95.

## PECAN PUFFS

- ½ cup butter
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pecan meats, ground
- 1 cup cake flour
- Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. In a large bowl, beat butter until soft. Add sugar and cream to mix well. Stir in vanilla and mix well. Stir in nuts and flour into the butter mixture and mix until blended. Roll the dough into small balls. Place balls on a greased cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven and while hot, roll in powdered sugar. Cool and serve. Makes 40 cookies 1½ inch balls.

Source: "The Joy of Cooking" by Irma Rombauer and Marion Becker, 1975, published by Bobbs-Merrill, \$25.

# Chilies put heat back into autumn

See related story on Taste front.

## GINGER-SPICED PICKLED PEPPERS

- 1 each red, green, and yellow bell pepper, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 jalapeno, halved, seeded, and thinly sliced lengthwise

(Fire-eaters can change the proportion of bells to jalapenos, or even use a hotter pepper, such as Poblano.)

- 1 two-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and cut into thin matchsticks
- 1 cup rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt

In a wide, shallow, non-aluminum dish, toss the red, green and yellow bell peppers with the jalapeno and ginger. In a bowl, combine the vinegar, sugar, and salt with 1 cup of water, stirring to dissolve. Pour over the peppers, cover and refrigerate overnight.

Pack the peppers into a 1-quart (or two 1-pint) canning jars and pour the liquid over to cover. Store in refrigerator for at least 1 day before using, and up to 1 month.

Allow time to make these pickles ahead so that their flavor fully develops. Serve at room temperature or heated.

## SPAGHETTI SQUASH WITH TOMATO-CHILI SAUCE

- One 2-pound spaghetti squash
- 4 tablespoons full-flavored olive oil

1 teaspoon minced garlic  
1 or 2 jalapeno chili-peppers, seeded and minced (you may use hotter peppers, if your taste desires)

- 1½ pounds very ripe plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and coarsely diced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1-2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

Pepper to taste  
3 tablespoons chopped cilantro

Bake spaghetti squash: Prick the squash through with a sharp knife or fork in 3-4 places. Place in a pan in a 350-degree oven and bake about 45 minutes to an hour, until it's easily depressed by your finger.

Remove from oven and halve at once. Let cool briefly, then scoop out and discard seeds. With fork,

"comb" strands from each half until only the shell remains.

While squash is cooking, heat 3 tablespoons oil; add garlic and jalapeno. Stir for a minute over moderate heat. Add tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. It will thicken slightly. Add salt and balsamic vinegar to taste.

Prepare squash, and toss with the remaining tablespoon oil. Salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the tomato mixture over the squash, then sprinkle with the cilantro. Toss gently at the table.

Recipe from: "Uncommon Fruits and Vegetables," by Elizabeth Schneider, Harper & Row Publishers, 1986, \$16.95.

## Cranberry-Jalapeno Relish

- 1 orange
- 1 cup whole, fresh cranberries
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons seeded and chopped jalapeno pepper
- Maple syrup to taste (about 1½ tablespoons)

Grate the zest from the orange and set aside. Remove the white pith and seeds and cut the orange

into sections.

Place the orange zest, sections, cranberries, ginger, cilantro and jalapeno in a food chopper or blender and process until cranberries are coarse. Stir in maple syrup. Cover and let stand at least 30 minutes before serving.

## MEXICAN VEGETABLE SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ cup chopped onions
- 1 or 2 cloves elephant garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and cut into thin strips
- 1½ cups cooked diced potatoes or sweet potatoes
- 1½ cups diced zucchini or other squash
- ½ cup whole kernel corn (if frozen, thaw)

1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped salt and pepper to taste. Heat oil in a large skillet. Sauté onion, elephant garlic and pepper over medium-low heat for 3 to 5 minutes, or until garlic is tender. (do not allow vegetables to burn.) Add potatoes and squash.

You may vary the squash-type vegetables in this recipe, according to availability.

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This results in a better flavor, and still drastically cuts fat. The original recipe called for separating the eggs. I found Egg Beaters worked just as well. They hold the macaroni together nicely, yet it is not mushy or runny. I recommend using the salsa on top of the sauce. It gives it a little extra moisture and lots of flavor.

The simplest suggestion for reducing fat is to use a non-stick pan. Aside from being an easy way to lower the fat content, it will reduce cleanup time. JoAnn also said she would like to learn how to read and understand labels on packages. She feels part of the problem is that the labels are misleading. By learning what everything means she would be able to make better choices.

I suggested she buy one new product each time she grocery

shops, and read the label. Compare it to its high fat version. This makes it less time consuming and overwhelming.

For a complimentary issue of the "Laura's Fat Free Kitchen" newsletter, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to H.W. Publications, P.O. Box 9284, Livonia 48151-1324. Subscription price is \$12 a year.

## COOKING CALENDAR

To get your classes or events listed in this column, send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, The Observer & Eccentric, 3625 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150. Or fax to 591-7279.

**TASSOS**  
Greek dinner — 6 and 9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 29 at Tassos Epicurean Cuisine, 5887 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Cost \$28.50 per person includes dinner and tax.

**KITCHEN GLAMOR**  
Pumpkin Pleasures, Kathleen Frantz Schoolcraft grad demonstrates how to prepare creamy pumpkin pie, and other desserts, 1 and 7 p.m. at Kitchen Glamor stores Oct. 26-29, Patricia Wells,

author of "Trattoria" will cook up a few of her simple, robust recipes, 1 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 31 at the West Bloomfield store. Call 537-1300 for information.

**SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE**  
Schoolcraft College in Livonia is accepting registrations for culinary arts classes including A Taste of International Cuisine at the Home Cook starting Oct. 28. Call 462-4448 for information.

**LENORE'S NATURAL CUISINE**  
Sauerkraut and quick meals are some of the classes being offered this fall at Lenore's Natural Cuisine, 22895 Inkster Road, Farmington Hills. Call 478-4456, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays for information.

## NEW PRODUCTS

To get your new products listed in this column, send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, The Observer & Eccentric, 3625 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

**COFFEE BEANERY**  
In celebration of Puerto Rico's 500th anniversary, the Coffee Beanery, Ltd., is introducing two of Puerto Rico's finest Estate coffees. They are now available in limited quantities at the Coffee Beanery. Customers can sample the coffees and enter to win a free

trip for two to Puerto Rico.

**OSCAR MAYER**  
Oscar Mayer Foods Corporation has introduced Lunchables Fun Pack for Kids and Lunchables with Deli-Thin Meat and Spreadable Cheese for adults. Available in three varieties, Lunchables Fun Pack pairs lunchmeats with crackers, cheese, Kool-Aid, Koolers, and candy treats. For adults, Lunchables combines popular varieties of meat and spreadable cheese. Both retail at \$1.89 to \$1.99.

# Enter our Thanksgiving stuffing contest

We want to know what's "The Stuff Good Stuffing Is Made Of" for Thanksgiving. Enter our stuffing contest and you could win one of three prizes — a 20-25 pound fresh turkey from Raparti Turkey Farms in Livonia, a \$25 gift certificate from Kitchie Glamor, or the newly published "365 Ways to Prepare For Christmas" by David E. Munn.

What will you stuff your turkey with on Thanksgiving Day? We're on the lookout for the best stuffing recipe to share with our readers on Nov. 22.

All recipes must be original in nature. All entries must be submitted in typed or hand-written form and be postmarked no later than 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 8, for entry into the contest. Include a day time phone number with your entry, and a brief history of the

stuffing recipe — it was grandma's recipe, it's been a family favorite for years — you get the idea.

Three finalists will be chosen from all the entries selected. Chef Larry James will choose the finalists based on recipe creativity, ingredients, and ease of preparation. The three finalists will be notified no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9.

Finalists will be asked to prepare a single recipe of their stuffing for the judges to Taste.

Send recipes to: Keely Wygonik, Taste/Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150 or fax recipes to 591-7279. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Wygonik, 953-2105 or Chef Larry James, 953-2045, mail box 1886.

# Using the last of garden's green tomatoes

"What can I do with all these green tomatoes still in my garden?" is becoming a common question these days at the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Food Hot-line, said home economist Sylvia Treltman.

Home gardeners are finding themselves knee-deep in a crop of green tomatoes and unsure of what, if anything, to do with them.


"Green tomatoes lend themselves to a variety of tasty relishes and side dishes, and they can be safely canned as long as they are not from dead or frost killed vines," said Treltman. Solid unblemished tomatoes which have not been frost-bitten can be safely

canned, if proper processing procedures are followed.

This is a reliable source, if your tomatoes are hit by a frost they still can ripen satisfactorily if they are wrapped in paper and kept at room temperature or a bit cooler. However, tomatoes hit by a hard frost need to be used up at once. They will deteriorate rapidly and will not ripen and should not be canned.

Green tomatoes can also be served in an interesting way by slicing them and frying them. They can also be frozen for frying later. Call the Food and Nutrition Hotline for food questions, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 658-0904.

**WEIGHT CONTROL**  
If you're overweight and recognize that personal problems and life stresses are contributing to the problem, contact Dr. Ralph P. Keith, an experienced psychotherapist to help you regain control and live life more productively.



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