

Cherries from page B1

the 80-acre Wasem farm, which was founded by their parents in 1942.

U-pick updates
The u-pick sour cherry and current season is nearly over. Call the farm at (734) 482-2342 for u-pick information and driving directions. Wasem's will also offer u-pick apples in the middle of September, and pumpkins later in the fall.

During apple season they operate a farm market stocked with homemade jellies and jams, doughnuts, cider, fruits, squash, corn stalks, honey, straw and other seasonal items.

The u-pick plum crop was messed up this year because of the weird weather. Other area farmers reported problems too. Coon Creek Orchard in Arma-da usually has u-pick sweet and sour cherries, but frost ruined this year's crop. They just started picking red and black raspberries. Call (586) 784-6062 for crop availability.

Erwin Orchards in South Lyon will have u-pick raspberries the first week of August. Call (248) 437-0160 or visit www.erwinorchards.com for updates.

Long Family Orchard in Com-



Easy pickins': Keely Kaleski, assistant managing editor of features, reaches for a ripe cherry at Wasem Fruit Farm.

merce Township will offer u-pick sweet corn and tomatoes the last week of July. Call (248) 360-3774 for updates. Both Wasem predicts this year's apple crop will be late - middle of September - because of the weather.

Despite the unpredictability of farming, Beth enjoys her work,

and encourages people to visit her family's farm to pick fruit because of the experience of it.

"Getting out in nature is a totally different experience than going to the supermarket," she said. "While you're out picking you notice things around you - a soybean or corn field, wild flow-

ers. "Picking your own fruit and vegetables puts you in touch with nature, it's a different energy. It's peaceful and quiet. You can hear birds chirping and see butterflies. The sounds are different from the city."

I agree with her that picking fruit, especially currants, can be a lot of work, but it causes you to appreciate the hard work a farmer goes through.

Thomas put some currants and cherries in the freezer, and made jam, jelly and compote. As the jars began stacking up, I thought about winter and how nice it will be to have fresh cherry jam and the memory of a perfect day for picking cherries.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture publishes a farm market and u-pick directory. To get your copy, call (817) 373-1104 or visit www.michigan.gov/mda.

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Get a healthy boost with some berries

BY CLIFFORD PUGH FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Finally, there's something good for you that tastes good.

Recent research suggests that strawberries, raspberries and blueberries may help prevent cancer, heart disease, diabetes-related circulation problems and other diseases.

Of course, that's without the mound of whipped cream on top. For a long time, nutritionists have recognized berries as a valuable source of vitamin C. Ten medium strawberries provide more than 100 percent of the daily requirement of vitamin C.

Now scientists are joining in the praise because berries are rich in antioxidants that vacuum up cell-damaging free radicals. Berries held the top three slots in a Tufts University study measuring antioxidant levels of 50 fresh fruits and vegetables, according to a report in Newsweek magazine.

The berries get much of their antioxidant strength from anthocyanin pigments that give the red, purple or blue tint.

Another Tufts study indicates that blueberries help fight age-related memory loss. A Clemson University study indicates that strawberries and raspberries can block two kinds of carcinogens that might lead to cancer. No one has figured out yet how

many berries are needed each day for such health benefits. The National Cancer Institute urges Americans to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables from five color groups - orange, red, green, white and blue-purple - a day.

The good news is that it's easier to get finicky eaters to sample berries than to try broccoli. One survey by a trade group found that fresh strawberries were consumed in nearly 94 percent of households.

One easy way to add berries to your diet is to sprinkle some on a bowl of cereal in the morning.

A low-fat and surprisingly tasty way to enjoy a bowl of strawberries is to drizzle a couple of tablespoons of good-quality balsamic vinegar over them.

In the *Frugal Gourmet Whole Family Cookbook*, Jeff Smith writes that "what (balsamic vinegar) does for a ripe strawberry can only be tasted, not described. I dare you to try this one on your household."

Another suggestion from Smith, in *The Frugal Gourmet Cooks Three Ancient Cuisines*, is to mix fresh strawberries with yogurt and drizzle with honey.

From a health standpoint, honey is better than sugar because it takes longer to digest, so it requires your pancreas to produce less insulin and prevents diabetes, according to Men's Health magazine.

Use tart cherries to make sweet desserts

See related story on Taste from

CHERRY BANANA BREAD

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 stick margarine
- 1 1/2 cups mashed bananas
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup drained, pitted and cut up sour cherries
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- Cream sugar and margarine. Add eggs, cherries and bananas. Mix dry ingredients together and add to first mixture.

Bake in two 9 by 4-inch greased bread pans at 350°F for 45 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

CHERRY COBBLER

- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

- 1 cup water
- 3 cups pitted tart cherries
- Mix sugar with cornstarch and water. Cook until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and add cherries. Pour into a greased 9 by 9-inch baking pan.

- Topping**
- 1 cup flour
 - 2 tablespoons sugar
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 3 tablespoons margarine
 - 1/2 cup milk

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut margarine into dry ingredients and add milk. Mix well and drop by teaspoons on top of the hot fruit mixture.

Bake at 375°F for 20-25 minutes. Serve warm.

Recipes compliments of Wasem Fruit Farm, Milan, Mich.

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