

FARM GATE ROUNDUP Saturday April 19th 2008

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REMINDER : Solicit Community Announcement Calls

Alan Good Morning,

G'Day Simon

Nuts are finished ?

Yes Simon, I was at both Nuts farms on Monday and they have had a terrific season. All 30 acres of Chestnut and Walnut have been picked. The Mount Irvine area and Mt Wilson area is just beautiful with the leaves turning. Coming home in a park at Mount Wilson we spotted a Korean family huddled around a chestnut roaster, just enjoying themselves. This is perhaps the most rewarding sight.

Top Forty is this really an orchard ?

It is an orchard, Simon in the Oakdale region in the beautiful Wollondilly Shire and also a new Farm Gate on the Farm Gate Trail.

What do they grow and you better explain the name?

Lyn Rideout and her family have been growing at this farm since 1948. It was 40 acres of the Top Land according to Lyns Dad and it is also the highest 40 acres in the region, hence the name 'Top 40'. They spent a few years revitalising the land with Green manure crops, green fodder peas etc, turning this all back into the soil to improve it before laying down the orchard.

And what do they Grow ?

Lyn tells me that they kick off their season in mid November with their Christmas trees and in mid December, the plums, peaches and nectarines arrive. Next is the Apple season with the orchard producing 5 varieties of Red Delicious as well as some Granny Smiths.

These are 'Tree Ripened' Apples

Three Ripened, what does that mean.

Basically Simon it means that the apples stay on the tree until they are ripe. The longer they stay on the tree the more sweeter they become. Lyn tells me the current crop of Granny Smiths are so juicy that she warns Customers to put on a bib before they eat them. She says there are two indicators of freshness, 1) Cut them open the seeds should be brown 2) leave them on a plate, they flesh should stay white for quite some time.

How do know when to pick them ?

Lyn uses old technology for this, her dad said wait for Anzac day or the first frost. Whatever comes first will kick off the season.

It is good to see this knowledge is past down to the Children

Yes Simon, Lyns Dad has past away now but she certainly has taken to farming uses all his farming tips. They also have 120 varieties of Bearded Iris's that arrive in October.

Whats on around the region.?

Firstly don't forget the Hawkesbury Harvest Farmers and Fine Food Market at Rouse Hill next Saturday. Over 40 stall of local and regional tucker. The market is building and it should be a great morning. Also Polly, from Black Castle Event, our Market Manager from Castle Hill is also commencing a Market at Blakehurst on the same day.

The Collectors Plant Fair kicks off on the 26th and 27th April. They have over 40 stalls of unusual and rare plants topping of the day with the Rare plant Auction on Sunday. The proceeds from 50% of the lots at the auction will goto to Lifeline Simon

The property has one of the most beautiful views in the region and you can picnic, have a wee drink and just enjoy the fair. I'll have some Bilpin Apples there.

Here is a plant you find there, I know the listeners cannot see it maybe you can you describe it to them.



It is the 'Caralluma dummeri', with an unusual green flower, looks like a succulent

Not bad Simon and great work on the pronouncement

- The plant is an unusual succulent
- Native to South Africa
- Needs little water
- good for pots, even indoors and well drained rockeries
- It has no leaves and in March/April has strange hairy olive green flowers

Anything Else;

On the 3rd May in the Grounds of the Mount Tomah Botanical Gardens their Famous Autumn Harvest Food and Wine Festival will be kicking off. It is a great day, but bring a coat.

Plenty of local vegies, fruit and value added tucker around.

And the Website is

www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au

Hey Simon speaking of the website how is this for networking,

Richard from in Charleville, Queensland could not talk his butcher into ordering duck, he sent Hawkesbury Harvest an email for help in locating some duck so we spoke with Pepes Duck and put them together. Richard is coming to UWS for live in course next week and will be taking some Duck back north next Friday.