



June 22, 2002

Boánn's Banks

Sustainable Agriculture Along the Broad River

This Week at Market

- Lambs' Quarters
- Chinese Cabbage "China Choy"
- Carrots "Red Core Chantenay" and "Kuttiger"
- Rutabaga "Joan"
- Kohlrabi "Dyna"
- Blackberries
- Beets "Albina Verduna"
- Small amounts of Basil "Red Rubin", "Lemon", "Aromatic Cinnamon", "Greek", "Genovese Sweet"

Makvlis Supi (Blackberry Soup)

- 1 lb Blackberries (one full pint)
- 1 Clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 c Finely chopped cilantro
- 1 T Finely chopped mint
- 2 T Finely chopped thyme
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded, & diced
- 1 Small onion, finely chopped
- Salt
- 1 t Wine vinegar
- Sour cream



Crush blackberries and strain off juice. Add water to juice to make 3 1/2 cups liquid. Add garlic, cilantro, mint, thyme, onion, cucumber, salt to taste and vinegar. Stir well and chill. Pass with sour cream. Makes 6 servings.

This traditional Polish soup, reminiscent of a beet borscht, shows that berries don't just mean dessert. It isn't a sweet soup, and would make a nice lunch or a warm up to a heavier dinner.

From Eric's online journal (www.ericwagoner.com): "Yesterday evening, I took a big bowl and set out for the brambles. There are a few things I've noticed blackberry bushes are good at. First, they like to grow very thickly so that one can see many more berries than one can actually reach. Also, the thorns on them are very sharp and grab hold tight to clothing, skin, or anything else they contact with. They hold so tightly that you'd think they, like creatures from a B monster movie, feed on passing animals. Also, they love to grow among stands of locust trees, which happen to have four inch razor-sharp thorns of their own.

So to reach the maximum amount of fruit, I had to call upon the gymnastic skills taught to me 25 years ago at the Y. An arabesque here to extend my reach another foot, a pirouette there to twirl out of overhanging branches. The local wildlife watched my berry ballet. A group of frogs sounding exactly like a gang of chihuahuas barked as I went

by. One of our cats along for the walk flushed out rabbits larger than he was. And finally a tiny fawn, barely old enough to walk, watched from a safe distance.

He was the smallest fawn I'd ever seen. His mother left him right in the middle of a small group of briars. He watched me warily as I approached his bed. I tried to give him some of the fruit I'd picked, but he wouldn't let me get close enough. Instead he circled me and followed me for about an hour, never going more than 15 feet away.

Eventually the sun had set enough that it was getting hard to see where the thorns were. I turned for home and the fawn stayed behind. The cat had long gotten bored and was waiting for me back at the house."

Thanks for coming to market this week. Eat well!

-- Chris and Eric Wagoner
www.boannsbanks.com
 706-245-9774

Featured Vegetable

This week's featured vegetable is not a vegetable at all but a group of fruit. Blackberries, *Rubus procuris*, are collections of tiny individual fruit called drupes, each with its own seed. Peaches, cherries, and pecans are also drupes. There are many berries that are collectively known as blackberries, including varieties of raspberries, dewberries, logan berries, boysenberries, and others. The most common variety around here is the wild Himalayan blackberry (actually a native of Iran), a noxious weed that has spread to most every corner of the globe. We don't know what type we have growing. There are indications that a cultivated variety was planted some time ago (maybe 50 years or more), but it has since crossbred with the wild type and spread. Maybe someday it'll be known as the boannberry.

Many landowners curse the plant. It can quickly overtake quality pasture and invade yards. Some area cattlemen mix a few goats with their herd to eat the bushes before they get big. Frequent mowing can also control them.

Ripe berries are more squishy than firm. The sweetness will vary from bush to bush and indeed from berry to berry. A general rule of thumb is the larger the drupe, the sweeter the berry.