



News of Hope

Our only hope is in Him who died that we might live. Romans 5: 1-10

Getting ready for the season

We are gearing up for another season here at Hope Fruit & Berry Farm, and from the looks of things it will be an abundant year. We have sustained some damage from the storms this past year, but the blueberry bushes are full of ripening berries. It looks like they will start coming off the bush a little earlier this year.

We have been busy planting in the off-season, adding apple and peach trees, muscadines and a whopping 250 blackberry plants. In the coming years, we hope that will provide our customers with good quality fruits. In the meantime, the blueberries will continue to come. We will have a few blackberries this year, but much of that will go to our jam production.

Speaking of jams, because of the tremendous response we re-

ceived from our customers last year, we have expanded our product line, adding Sugar-free Blueberry Jam as well as Strawberry Jam. The strawberry plants are an heirloom plant from my wife's side of the family. They have been growing them for over 100 years. They don't produce the large strawberries that most customers are



A row of ripening blueberries, ready for the picking.

used to these days, but they make a mighty fine jam. Our garden is in full bloom. For the first time in a long time the deer don't seem to be too interested in it, so it looks like that will keep us busy throughout the summer. A prolific cucumber crop means that we will be able to offer our Red Pickles for sale again. If you've never tried these, be sure to sample them at markets. Our grandchildren would live on them if their parents would let them.

We have plans to attend the New Farmer's Market on the State Fairgrounds. In addition, we will be back at the Belhaven Market and other festivals around the state. We hope to see more u-pickers come to the farm this year, so come by and see us.

In His love,

Blueberry Lemonade

A summer staple at our house. Will cool you off on the hottest days.

- 1 cup blueberry juice
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 cups sugar (more or less according to your taste)
- Water

In a one gallon container, mix the first three ingredients and finish filling container with water. Serve over ice.

Blueberry Juice

Boil 2 quarts of fresh or frozen blueberries in enough water to cover them, for 20 minutes.

Strain the resulting liquid from the berries and use to make lemonade. Store the juice in the refrigerator (or freezer if not to be used within a week). Discard berry pulp.

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DATES OF INTEREST

June 3

Grand Opening of the
New Farmer's Market
State Fair Grounds
www.mdac.state.ms.us

June 10

Blueberry Jubilee
Poplarville
www.blueberryjubilee.org

June 24

Tomato Festival
Crystal Springs
www2.msstate.edu/~ricks/cstomato/tomfest.html

Saturdays

Belhaven Market
McDade's Parking Lot
Fortification Street
Jackson
www.greaterbelhaven.com

July 4

4th of July Celebration
Mississippi Agriculture &
Forestry Museum
www.mdac.state.ms.us

Gardening with Children

We here at Hope Fruit & Berry Farm want to get children more involved in agriculture. While, we don't expect them all to grow-up to be farmers, it's such a shame that many children don't know where their food comes from, except the grocery store. One thing I have observed in my many years is that children love dirt. Why not harness that and let them experience the joy of growing something. One of my grandsons has taken an interest in gardening, and planted his own little patch here at the farm. While he is not quite old enough to do it all on his own, there are ways to en-

gage children of all ages in the growing experience.

1. **Allow them to do it their way-** Encourage the youngsters to pick and plan their own crops. Choosing the seeds and plants is one of the most exciting things they will do. There are many seed catalogs that can help with this task. Most good local nurseries can also help the children decide what is best for their climate and soil.
2. **Offer assistance according to their abilities-** Help when necessary, but don't do it for them. While you might not want small

children to handle sharp tools, you can get children's versions of most tools. A water hose is safe for all ages, if you don't mind getting wet!

3. **Let them get dirty (and get dirty with them!)-** I once heard that a parent's ability to have fun is in proportion to their ability to get dirty. Send them out in old clothes and shoes and bathe them when their done. Dirt always washes off! If gardening at your own place isn't possible, then bring them out to the farm and we'll make sure they see things growing, and get dirty!

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Our Story of Hope

When we purchased the property that comprises Hope Fruit & Berry Farm in 2000, it was covered with woods. After clearing the land, we went about building a farm.

While our emphasis has been on blueberries, we have also planted blackberries, raspberries, muscadines and grapes. We set out peach, apple and pear trees, and hope they will be producing fruit in the coming years. Recently we tried our hands at strawberries.

Our desire is to grow the things that God will allow us to grow, and to share them with you all for his glory. During the fruit season, we take our produce to several festivals and markets across the state. We would be happy to notify you of our schedule when it is available. Also, please feel free to visit us here at the farm to pick your own fruit. This can be a wonderful family outing, a field trip for the kids, or a great way to spend a solitary morning. If you are interested in canning your fruit or growing your own, we can supply you with information on that as well.

Our family has been so richly blessed in this work; we hope that you will come and share with us in God's glorious bounty. We hope to see you soon!