

Love In A Jar

By Mari Jo Hoaglund and Tara Grillo



“We always have plenty of fruit.”

Wilma Marshall

Have you ever heard of Buffalo berries? Or how about thimble berries? Well, I hadn't until Mari Jo Hoaglund and I, (Tara Grillo), went around the community of Steamboat Springs and talked to some ladies about canning, jellymaking, where berries grow, and gardening. When the leaves start turning and the nights cool down most local residents know canning time has arrived. This time of the year makes mouths water for gooseberry jelly and other delicacies.

Wilma Marshall, lifetime resident and fantastic hobbyist, has spent many years in her well-equipped kitchen turning out mouth-watering delights. “All the kids in my family worked hard. We lived up at Clark. Boy, we made a lot of jelly! When we strained the bag of jelly we hung the bag up to drip on a clothesline. My dad raised vegetables, red and black currants, red raspberries and rhubarb. Chokecherries, serviceberries, gooseberries and Oregon grapes grew wild, so we always had plenty of fruit!

“I make jams, jellies and syrups, and they are good! I have a whole basement full. Since I don't have a family to feed anymore, I give most of it away, since people like to have something good to eat. The last two years I've started entering my products in the Routt County Fair. This year I received 15 ribbons on seven jars.”

We asked Mrs. Marshall where to find the berries. “One time I found some huckleberries up on Harrison Creek. That was the most unusual berry I've found. Wild currants grow up by Hahn's Peak. Elderberries grow by Sand Mountain and Buffalo berries grow on Buffalo Pass. There's a few scattered bushes of Oregon grapes down by Mount Harris. Chokecherries, serviceberries, wild raspberries, rosehips, mint, rhubarb and gooseberries you can find most anywhere if you look. Thimbleberries are my favorite; they make delicious jelly. The time to pick is around the first of September, some years earlier, some later, depending on the weather.”

After talking to Mrs. Marshall she invited us to help her make a batch of jelly. On a hot fall

Saturday we went down below her house by a bubbling creek and started on the first step of a fun and tasty project.

HOW TO MAKE WILD GOOSEBERRY JELLY

3 quarts wild gooseberries

1 package

4½ cups sugar

To prepare juice:

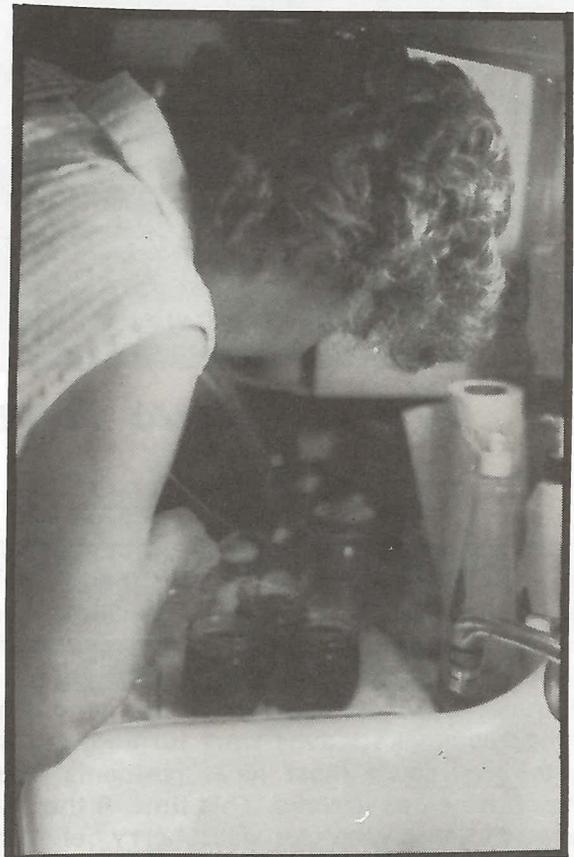
- 1) Sort and wash fully ripe berries; remove any stems and leaves.
- 2) Put berries in kettle with 4 cups of water and boil on 450° until soft.
- 3) Put cooked berries into a jelly bag and allow to drip, or press to remove juice.
- 4) Measure 3½ cups of the juice into large kettle and place back on high heat.
- 5) Add one package of MCP Pectin, stir well and bring to boil stirring constantly.
- 6) Add 4½ cups sugar, mix well. Continue stirring and bring to full rolling boil.
- 7) Boil hard exactly 2 minutes. Remove from heat and quickly skim foam off top.
- 8) Pour jelly immediately into hot containers and seal. Let cool overnight, then store in cool, dry place. Makes eight 6 fl. oz. glasses.



“The time to pick is early September.”



The gooseberries starting to boil.



Wilma pouring gooseberry jelly into the jars.

Betty Neish, a lively and interesting lady, lives in Pleasant Valley by the shores of Lake Catamount. The tranquility of the gently rippling water makes a wondrous place for gardening and being outdoors. Although her love of gardening occupies much of her time, she also is an avid bridge player and spends time doing some canning and preserving. Mrs. Neish and her husband Bill have lived in the Steamboat area all

their lives. Their children, Lenore, Sanse, Ed, and their families, live here, too.

"I started gardening out here. I really haven't canned much since we started living out here permanently, yet we have always lived here in the summer. In the winter we would move into town for the youngsters and school. I garden because it is economical. If I did buy the vegetables in the store that I grow it would cost more. I receive a cash outlet from growing my own vegetables. My husband bought me a small tractor so it's easier to expand and work on my garden. It's the satisfaction of gardening that I like; vegetables start coming on the middle of July!

*"Outdoors is
where it's at."
Betty Neish*

"I really couldn't say if it's healthier or not. There's two schools of thought on that. When we eat everything out of the garden and the soil is depleted of something, we don't get any of that mineral. From the standpoint of minerals, food that you buy in the grocery may have more minerals and might be better for you, but not necessarily. A lot of people don't have the 'live off the land' attitude anymore, so they buy all



Thimbleberries

their vegetables from the grocery and don't think a thing about it. It becomes a full time project if you're going to try to grow enough to feed your family.

"Root vegetables are my main crop, carrots, potatoes, radishes, lettuce, swiss chard, peas

and beans. I freeze almost all my vegetables now, except like potatoes which I put in bushel baskets and store on the porch. I grow an assortment of herbs indoors and out.

"My garden can freeze anytime from the first of June until September. We used to say we would get 45 days without frost. This summer we had over 120. My father said if we could get by the 22nd of June it wouldn't freeze until the 4th of July. Think that one over for a minute! I also think the lake warms up the air around here. The last two years I haven't had a June frost.

"Gophers are such a nuisance I run a regular trap line for them. Grasshoppers didn't give me any problem this year, as they did some people. One time we had an invasion of big caterpillars but never again. The lake has brought a variety of new insects. I love living in the country, living by the lake is nice. It's calm and peaceful. I do miss the meadow and the openness, though."

We talked with Mrs. Neish about her canning and preserving. "Well, you get out of these things gradually over a period of years as your family diminishes. When the children were young I did a lot of canning. I grew up in an area and an era where everyone canned, and we learned from observation more than anything. I didn't know anybody that didn't can. It would be cheaper now if you had the jars, lids, etc., and the most important of all, the time. I don't think I make 15 cents an hour canning, even if I really work hard! But I do it because I enjoy it. I keep looking for easy ways to can, although I can't compete with the big canneries, and fresh fruit is so good! My favorite recipe is pear syrup."

PEAR SYRUP

2 or 3 Bartlett pears.
1 cup maple syrup (recipe below)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Peel and slice pears in thin 1/2 inch slices. Put pears, maple syrup, lemon juice and nutmeg in pan and heat on 350° for 5 minutes. Mix 1 tablespoon cornstarch with 2 tablespoons of water. Pour in syrup and bring to boil. Serve warm.

MAPLE SYRUP

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
1/2 teaspoon maple flavoring

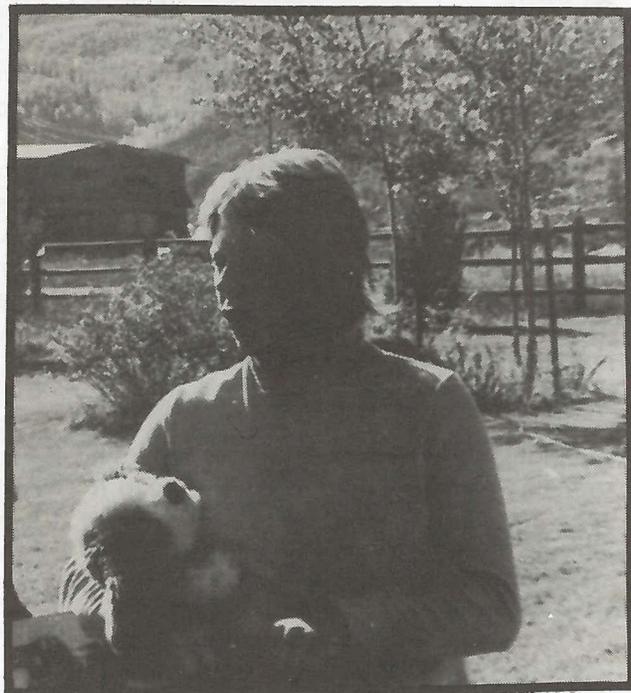
Combine all the ingredients in a pan and heat on 350° until syrupy.

Mrs. Neish prefers the syrup drizzled over French toast.

"Now I freeze everything. It's so much easier that way. My grandmother didn't have the option of freezing. I've had a freezer since they first came out. With freezing you can virtually eliminate the problem of botulism.

"I make my own recipes up as I go along. People sometimes complain about too much of one thing or not enough of another, but they eat it. It must taste pretty good! Jams and jellies I don't personally like too much; I'm kind of anti-sugar. I can pears, peaches, tomatoes, and mostly fruits from Grand Junction.

"I don't do too many local berries, except serviceberry wine, and that's about it. A lot of berries grow up Service Creek. There is a great variety of berries around this area and so many people don't take advantage of the wonderful opportunity outside their door; not only canning and preserving, but also gardening and just being outdoors is where it's at."



"I do it for my family." Jeannie Lodwick

After talking to several members of our community, we decided to explore the amount of home canning by some of the younger generation. Jeannie Lodwick, mother of three, homemaker and canning enthusiast told us why she spends so much of her time in the kitchen, "Canning is a lot of work, especially with kids, they're always in the way. My mother taught me basically how to can, and I can the basics. I don't have time for other things. I do it mostly because of the kids. You know when you have kids and nutrition is involved, I would much rather feed them good stuff instead of garbage. The fruit that you get in stores has so much sugar in it and a lot of preservatives. You don't know what they put in it. I use very little sugar, and a lot of honey.

"I look at being a homemaker as providing for my family as far as good nutrition. It's an eight

hour a day job. My canning is functional. It's for my family to eat everyday, and I think fresh fruit is a necessity. It makes me feel there is a worth-whileness in being a homemaker, not a housewife, a homemaker."

Jeannie told us of the many things she cans and preserves for her family. "I make pear butter. It's delicious, and apple butter too. I make sauerkraut and fruit cocktail which is made of pineapple, cherries and blood plums. They were divine this year. Peach chutney is my most unusual making. It's made of peaches, onions, garlic, raisins, and brown sugar. It's great. We buy all of our fruit in Grand Junction. We bought 12 bushels this year. I make jelly and jam out of the leftovers and bruised fruit. I also make fruit leather. To make that all you have to do is put the fruit in a blender, then put it on saran wrap and put it in a dehydrator for about a day. You just about have to use a dehydrator since the temperature is unbelievable in Steamboat. The kids love it.

"My husband, Dennis, loves canning as long as he doesn't have to peel peaches, and my dad loves to help my mom, too. I like to do it because it tastes better and because of good nutrition. I get a great deal of pleasure out of canning, seeing all of that stuff (jars) over there, Oh, it's beautiful! I did that for my family, and I plan on doing it every year."



*Jeannie's kids,
picking tomatoes*

Daisy Anderson



“I make it with a lot of love.”

Daisy Anderson, a charming contributive member of this community, has shown her generosity and talent to many who know her. She believes in canning and baking love along with storing food and other necessities for upcoming winters. We talked to her on a brisk afternoon sitting in the patio area next to her still flourishing garden. She told us of some of her favorite cooking techniques, as well as things she has grown, canned and preserved.

“I make a lot of jelly, and I can’t pick all those berries, so for the last two years I didn’t pick them myself; I hired students to pick them for me. They picked chokecherries, serviceberries, Oregon grapes and what I call rose apples, more commonly known as rosehips, and Buffaloberries. People pick them on Twenty Mile Road and sometimes down by Oak Creek and Toponas. Out here I have quite a bit of that stuff on my place.

“The chokecherries, I think, usually get ripe in September, but at different times for different areas. The serviceberries usually come on before that. You can pick them in August wherever you can find them. There must have been a generous amount all over the area this year, because what bushes I had here were just loaded, and what beautiful berries!

“The Buffaloberries grow up on Buffalo Pass.

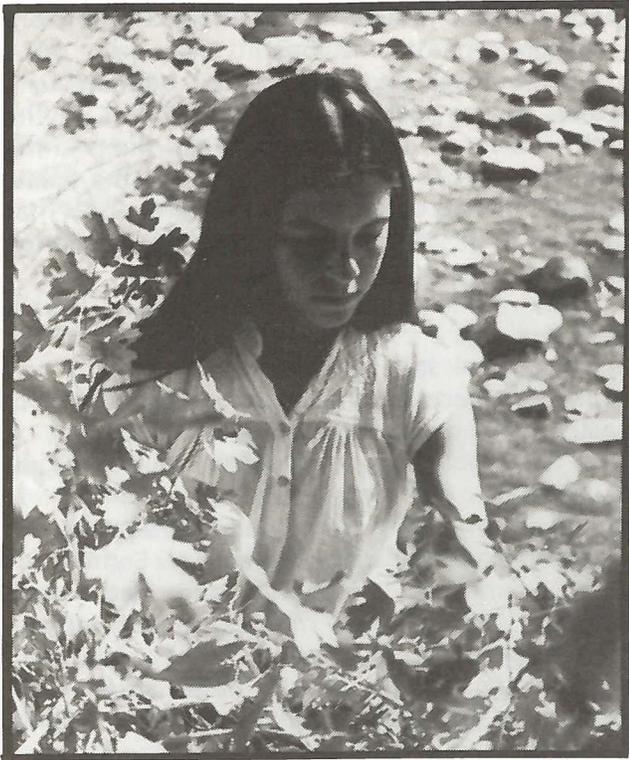
There’s a special way to pick them. Lay a cloth down underneath the bush. They just grow around the trees, and they are very delicate little things. If you shake the bush they fall on the cloth, and then you only have to put them in the pail. They grow not very tall around the trees, and they make beautiful jelly. It’s too bad that the only place you can get them is way up on top of Buffalo Pass.

“They’re similar to red currants, and I have tame red currants and the black ones. I didn’t pick them all this year, and they’re still just loaded with berries. It’s a shame to let them go to waste, and people ask me always if they can pick them if I’m not going to use them. I always want to use them, but sometimes I just can’t. They make beautiful jelly. Why, we always take them to the fair and we usually win a prize. Sometimes I mix part red raspberry and part tame currants. And, oh, that makes the best jelly! I tried it once, and now I never make it without both. It’s so delicious that I have frozen raspberries and currants to make into jam or jelly in the winter.

“I also have too many strawberries to know what to do with, and also I have about three gallons frozen to make jam later, because my crop got out of hand this year. I couldn’t keep up with it this summer, but I did make a lot of jam. A couple of days ago we picked nine quarts and right now we could go through the patch and find three or four more. It’s amazing how they are still producing. We keep them covered through the winter. Some people say they can’t believe the size of my berries.”

Daisy told us of the importance of being frugal, while storing up for the winter. “They say never make a double batch, but I do. I work up two batches at a time, like in chokecherry juice. I cook the berries and juice in a big kettle and strain them. I found that I had more than I could use in a batch, so rather than make a single batch, like some say I should, I make a double batch. So I use a plastic pail and freeze the juice and later I make the jam or jelly. Sometimes I use fresh oranges or fresh pineapple and throw that in the food grinder and save the juice and pulp and put that in the mix. Sometimes I put in some lemon juice, and I want to tell you, that’s the best tasting stuff. I make several batches and give it all away to my friends.

“I do the same things with my rosehips. I cook up the rosehips in a kettle with plenty of water, then run that through the sieve. It needs plenty of room to boil. Then I take a small plastic cup and freeze the mixture to use in jelly, or even when we don’t have any sunshine, I take a spoonful every day for the vitamins. In the small containers I can use it before it ruins. I put it in a glass of milk or my coffee or eat it over my cereal. I like to do it this way because it is so



Tara, picking berries.

good for you and it's very expensive in the store.

"I don't have the appetite I used to, but I guess I really like all of it. Raspberry and red currant you just can't beat. But you can make jelly out of most anything. One day you might want one thing and another the next. There is even a way to make jelly out of beets.

"I think the most unusual thing I've made is mixing apricots and raspberries for a flavor that you just can't believe. One lady, a couple of years ago, asked me if I had any rhubarb stalks and I wanted to know what she wanted them for. She was going to make jam out of them. She went home and sent me a recipe of how she did it. I must tell you, you just can't say one jelly is better than the other because they are all good. In her rhubarb jam she used rhubarb and sugar and a package of black raspberry Jello and maybe some other things. I must tell you that if you like jam and jelly you would have loved that.

"I've made jelly just about all my life. I have helped other people and I started doing that when I was eleven and after I married, I call that on my own, and that's been since 1922."

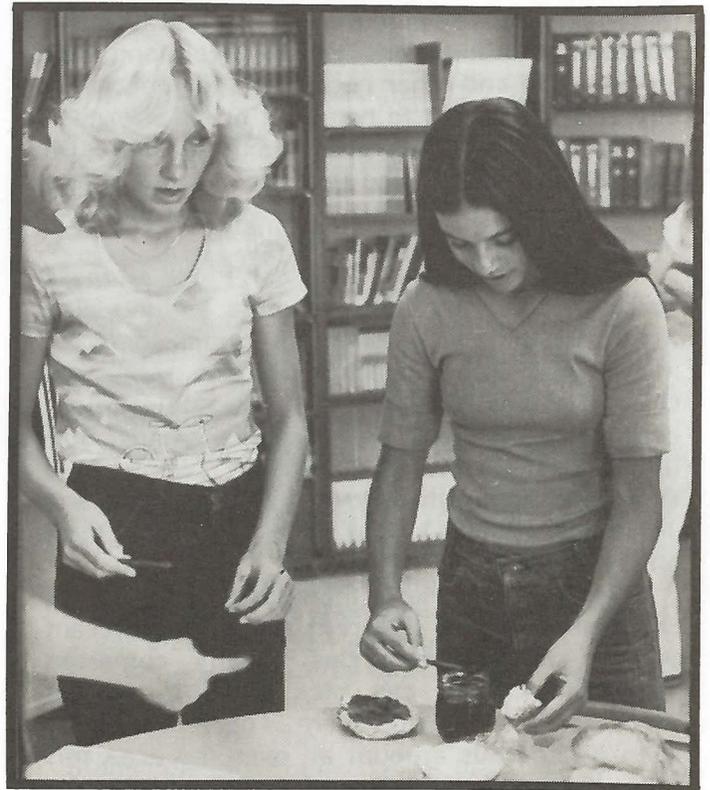
We found in our interviews that freezing has taken a major place in the home preserving routine. Daisy spoke with us about some things she freezes today that in the past she might have canned. "I don't can as much anymore. I have two freezers and freeze a lot of things. When my sister lived across the road, we canned a thousand jars apiece. We'd gather up things like carrots, beans and make soups and chilies and all sorts of things. Now I freeze most everything that I can use. I would be in trouble this way if

the juice went off and we weren't prepared for it. I can remember keeping the freezer closed for three days so the stuff wouldn't go bad. This might be even taking a chance, but I try to use the good things anyway. I freeze things mostly for security. It's an economical deal to go to work and prepare foods for winter security."

Daisy's garden is the envy of many who live in Steamboat. "We grow most anything that grows in a garden in this area. There's nothing that we don't have. Same way with the flowers, anything that comes up year after year we have on this acreage. Most of it multiplies and when we get more than we want we pass it on to other people or they come and purchase it for a small price."

Daisy's prowess in the kitchen is obvious in other ways besides canning and preserving. She told us about a few of the other things she makes. "I made sauerkraut about ten days ago. Some friend of mine helped me get it together and, good land, I don't think there's anything that can beat homemade sauerkraut. I can also make the best pickles and I used to think that I could pass them out at Christmas and Thanksgiving. My habit is to try and reach my friends through their stomachs. Sometimes I use a fancy recipe or one that I have and make them for my friends. Recently I've been on a candy making binge

Just talking with Daisy and thinking of all those taste tempting treats that made our tastebuds tingle, we felt that our learning about canning and preserving had enlarged our knowledge of succulent foods that grow here and how they can be utilized.



Enjoying our jelly.