**Summer Fruit and Summer Sauce**

*July brings the pleasure of fresh summer fruits from the garden. We have become accustomed to being able to buy most of our fruit year around thanks to global shipping, but nothing compares to eating a warm raspberry just picked from your own fruit patch – add a few blueberries and some strawberries and it is pretty much fruit nirvana. Then I discovered summer sauce. This simple sauce will turn your fruit into a desert that will have everyone asking you for the recipe. I promise to share, but more on the fruit first.*

*My strawberries always seem to ripen first, especially the June bearers, but by planting some ever bearing varieties like ‘Seascape’ or ‘Hecker’ I get them to overlap my blueberries and raspberries. Blueberries come in early, mid and late harvested varieties so by planting some of each you can extend their harvest as well. This also helps with their pollination. I like the combination of ‘Earlyblue’, ‘Bluecrop’ and ‘Chandler’. I also plant several different varieties of raspberries for a longer harvest – ‘Canby’, ‘Heritage’ and ‘Fall Gold’ will take you right into fall. Of course, planting all these different varieties does take some space, but even on a small patio with enough sun you can grow some berries. Strawberries grow well in strawberry pots – the ever bearing varieties do best in them or try some ‘Tristar’ in hanging baskets. The new introduction in the fruit world is a line of dwarf raspberries and blueberries called BrazelBerries\*. These have been hybridized to be smaller and do well in containers. ‘Raspberry Shortcake’ is dwarf and thorn less but with full sized fruit. ‘Jellybean’ and ‘Peach Sorbet’ are blueberries that are also small in size and suited to containers.*

*An early spring application of an organic fruit fertilizer will help with fruiting, with a second application midsummer for container grown plants. A few other tips - For strawberries cutting down and cleaning up the foliage in the fall is important and mulching helps keep them from drying out. Blueberries need even watering while they have fruit and a good layer of mulch like bark mulch or sawdust. Raspberries need yearly pruning out of canes that fruited the previous year and even water while in fruit. They also require staking and are more easily managed grown in rows. Strawberries and raspberries both need full sun for best production while blueberries can take some afternoon shade. For more complete cultural information visit our web site at www.portlandnursery.com.*

*As promised - the recipe for Summer Sauce:*

*1 – 8 oz. cream cheese, softened*

*1 – 14 oz. can sweeten condensed milk*

*2 – Tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice*

*1 – Tablespoon vanilla extract*

*In a mixer beat the cream cheese until softened and add about 2/3 of the can of sweetened condensed milk. When thoroughly mixed add the lemon juice and vanilla. Store in the refrigerator, but serve at room temperature. A dollop on a bowl of berries will always say summer to you!*