

Wild Berries Are Healthful And Plentiful

By DR. ALFRED MORDECAI
From the time of his savage state man has welcomed the sight of certain wild berries, which not only please the palate, but which he associated with better health. At one time indeed, he regarded them as a medical boon. Among these may be mentioned strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and cranberries. These fruits contain small amount of citric acid, such as found in orange, lemons and limes. Tied in with this acid there is also ascorbic acid (vitamin C), which prevents and cures scurvy. Scurvy at one time was a scourge in all climates where the summers was short, the winters long (and the diet faulty). Wild strawberries and raspberries were widely distributed in nature and even cultivated in the old country to some extent 2000 years ago. The same wild plants were found

in abundance by the white settlers of this country.
The little wild strawberries possessed a delightful aroma and a delicious flavor, but the fruit was very small and the yield scant. In the course of time gardeners learned to select the better plants for cultivation. Cross breeding followed, so that we now have many varieties. Some that bear fruit throughout the summer, some that climb trellises and some that are of gant size. However, Queen Victoria of England was probably right when some years ago she complained to her gardeners that in striving for more spectacular berries, they had sacrificed the aroma and delicious flavor of her "little favorite". She preferred the "old time, unimproved variety". This latter kind we have wild in the fields and along the roadsides throughout the Appalachian Mountains. For

flavor they have never been excelled. If you see small family groups crawling about in the stubble with tin cups and pails as you wheel through the mountains in early summer, you may be quite sure that such people are combining business with a day of pleasure. Small jars of wild strawberry preserves will then soon appear on the roadside stands. When carefully prepared nothing is more appetizing than the "little favorite", made into "preserves", or just eaten from the plant.
The red raspberry of our mountains also ranks high as a gustatory delight, whether served raw with sugar and cream, stewed or preserved. For some reason however the supply never meets the demand.
We have at least three varieties of black-berries which grow more or less abundantly in our mountain valleys. One kind grows somewhat erect with

long canes, the berries as a rule inferior. Another kind is more bushy, the berries larger and sweeter. Then we have the trailing kind, known as the Dew-berry, which excels all the others. This variety is now extensively cultivated in the low country. Blackberry pie; blackberry cobbler and blackberry preserves are hard to beat. But eat the ripe raw fruit with cream for vitamins.
The root of the blackberry contains considerable tannic acid. Extracts of the root therefore were employed as a medicine in former times. A delici-

ous cordial was also made by meringing the berries with sugar in sprices, when bottling the juice. This proved a popular homemade remedy for patients convalescing from typhoid fever and other exhaustive diseases.
The gooseberry, once popular in our mountain valleys and erroneously called "currants", was probably introduced from England, where on fest days the stewed berries were served with roast goose. We still have memories of the jars of jelly that graced the pantry shelves in former days, but the plants

no longer can be found except occasionally as an escapee growing wild in some out of way place. In late summer the bush is laden with berries.
The gooseberry plant was found to be susceptible to a fungus disease, which was intensified by the mountain fogs and dampness. This disease was transmissible to our valuable white pines and a serious threat to their existence. Congress enacted a law forbidding the cultivation of gooseberries. The Agricultural Department had the plants destroyed.
(Continued on page three)

Goldwater heavily favored by Young Republicans. Kennedy would cut aid to \$1 billion.

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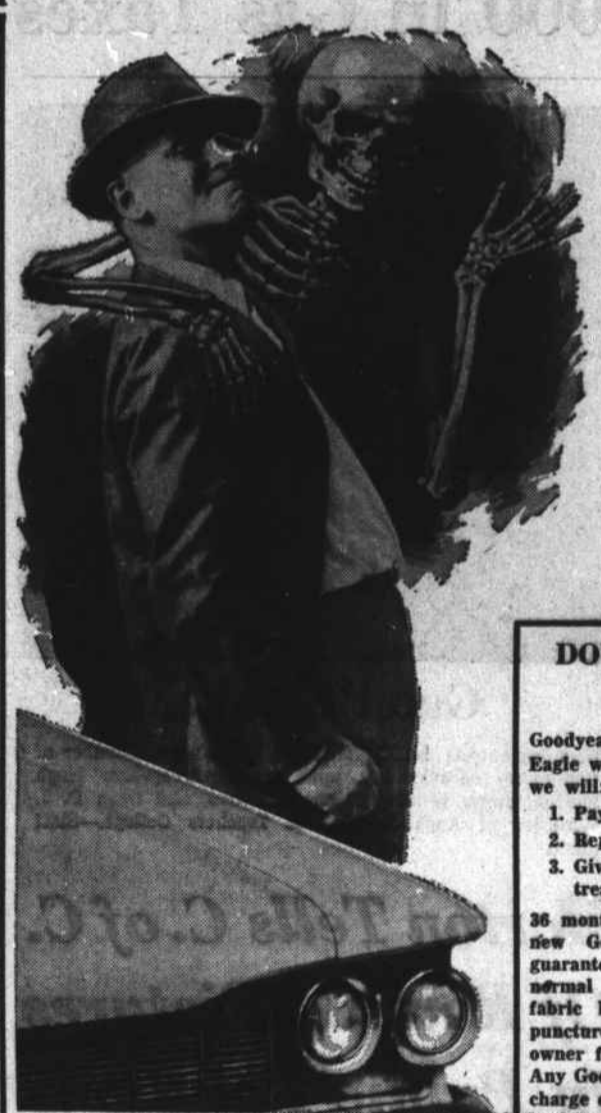


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