

Garden diary : gardening in April/May

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Chuchichäschtli (Kitchen cupboard)

Berner Haselnuss Leckerli (Bernese Hazelnut Leckerli)

The Bernese Haselnuss Leckerli is a sweet that is first described in the 1835 Neues Berner Kochbuch, a cookbook by Lina Rytz.

During the 19th and early 20th century, Bernese cookbooks record numerous recipes for Haselnuss Leckerli or Berner Leckerli. These indicate that the sweet was initially only produced in the small Leckerli form, with the larger rectangular forms (Lebkuchen or Gingerbread) coming into use only in the second half of the 20th century.

The now more common name of Haselnusslebkuchen was first used in a 1946 baker's manual. The Lebkuchen's expensive ingredients such as hazelnuts and sugar suggest that it was always a gift article and a holiday sweet, as up to the later 19th century, sugar was largely unaffordable for the Bernese working class.

Haselnusslebkuchen continue to be made by bakers in the entire canton of Berne during December. In the city of Berne, where tourists provide for a steady demand, they can be bought all year round.

Recipe

This recipe is for a moist dough without flour that is only barely baked, so that the Leckerli stay fresh for a long time in an airtight container.

In Berne, cookie forms in the shape of bears are traditionally used to cut out cookies. However, any simple cookie forms can be used. Care needs to be taken with the finer forms such as stars, as tips are prone to break off. It is also convenient to simply cut the dough into little squares.

Ingredients

- ♥ 180g ground hazelnuts
- ♥ 180g ground almonds
- ♥ 180g sugar
- ♥ 50g glazed orange peel, finely chopped
- ♥ 50g glazed lemon peel, finely chopped
- ♥ 1 pinch cinnamon
- ♥ 1 ½ TBSP honey
- ♥ 3 egg whites



Preparation

- ◇ Add all ingredients except egg whites into a bowl
- ◇ Gradually add egg whites and mix into a moist dough
- ◇ Put hazelnut dough into fridge to cool for at least 24 hours.

Finishing

- ◇ Roll out hazelnut dough on sugar to 1 cm thickness
- ◇ Cut into squares or use any kind of cookie form to cut out shapes
- ◇ Bake Leckerli at 200°C for about 12-15 minutes.

Contributed by Edith Hess



Berner Haselnuss Leckerli

Sources: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berner_Haselnusslebkuchen, www.so.ch/fileadmin/internet/vwd/vlbzw/pdf/hws/Haselnusslebkuchen.pdf (Bildungszentrum Wallierhof)

Garden Diary: Gardening in April/May

Hopefully the drought is over and gardens are no longer suffering from the dry weather. The soil should be sufficiently moist enough to dig and plant new trees and shrubs.

Rake up all your fallen leaves for compost, or fill up rubbish bags and leave somewhere sheltered to rot down and add to the garden at a later date.

Sow and plant a few crops each of mixed brassicas such as red cabbage, cauli, broccoli and cold hardy greens such as Bok Choy or Wong Bok. Sow broad beans, peas, kale, spinach and silverbeet to last over winter by harvesting a few leaves at a time.

Scarlet runner beans are better left to die back naturally on the frame, so wait until the leaves are fully brown, then trim off at the base, as they will grow another year.

Baby carrots and beets can also go in now as they are quick maturing in 50-60 days. Mound up leeks and keep celery/celeriac growing strongly with regular doses of liquid manure. Save the best of your outer garlic cloves to replant in June/July.

Sow and plant winter lettuce and harvest yams once the tops die down after the frosts, then dig up and store in paper bags or sacks. Frosts deal to fungal diseases and lingering pests like white cabbage butterfly caterpillars, as well as sweeten the flavour of parsnips, celeriac, kale and swedes, so don't harvest until after the first frosts if you can wait.

Rig up a poly-tunnel to keep salads and herbs sheltered over winter. Sow spring onions in clumps rather than rows so that you have a bunch to pick when you need them.

Check all your stored pumpkins, onions and garlic for any rot, and use any damaged ones first.

If you choose to wait until spring to plant again, sow a green manure crop such as broad beans or lupins to dig in, or lay a thick layer of mulch or straw to stop any run off and protect garden beds.

By Melissa Lanz

