

Thursday Night  
Cooking Parties

June

7 Summer Salads

July &amp; August

I'll take a break from open sessions, **special programs are always available on request.**

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Visit the web at [www.susannye.com](http://www.susannye.com)

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603/526 7319

Spring in New Hampshire is divided into two parts, Mud Season and Black Fly Season. Mud Season is messy but Black Fly Season is well, just plain beastly. Black flies are devilish little critters that arrive each year around Mothers' Day. They tyrannize us for a several weeks and with any luck are gone by Fathers' Day. Only the females, in the tradition of Delilah and Lucretia Borgia, bite. It seems they need a hearty meal to give them strength to lay their eggs. The bite starts out as a small, bloody spot and quickly becomes swollen, itchy and irritated. The she-devils' favorite spots to nibble are around the ears and neck as well as that nice soft skin behind your knees. But beware, black flies are devious and will seek out and find even the smallest patch of unprotected skin. I have the ankle bites to prove it. While the males stick to flowers and plants for sustenance, they do like to buzz around the females. If the nasty bites don't get to you, the swarms of buzzing males are sure to drive you bonkers.

Why is New Hampshire a Mecca for black flies? Black flies breed exclusively in running water and between melting snow and spring rains there is lots and lots of running water in New Hampshire. Almost any stream will do, large or small, fast or sluggish, permanent or temporary. Black flies are hardly finicky; with one exception, they can't tolerate pollution. A large black fly population indicates lots of clean, healthy streams and New Hampshire provides abundant housing for a multitude of vicious flies.

Children are especially susceptible to black flies. Years ago over a Memorial Day weekend my brother John and I were sent packing to the beach. I was barely a teenager and convinced I had better things to do with my time than baby-sit for my little brother. However with the sun shining and the water too cold for swimming, watching him was not too taxing. John headed off in search of frogs and turtles. I pulled out my book, a few fashion magazines and lazed around in the sun. After a few hours, our mother showed up to check on us. John was covered with bloody welts. My mother was shocked, how could I let this happen? Her rapid-fire questions were along the lines of "Didn't you notice? Why didn't you do something?" I mumbled something incoherent; after all I figured the questions were rhetorical. I was 12 or 13, of course I hadn't noticed. I was too busy sunbathing and reading about teenage fashion and movie stars. I figured that my job was to make sure he didn't fall into the lake and drown. Details like bug bites and sunburns were way beyond my job description of surely teenager and ditzzy baby-sitter.

Short of staying indoors for 4 or 6 weeks can you avoid black flies? Here are a few hints:

1. Wear light-colored clothing and leave your blue jeans in the cupboard. Black flies are attracted to dark colors and especially love dark blue. Stay covered up from head to toe. A hat with netting is good protection if you don't mind looking like an economy version of a haz-mat worker.
2. Black flies are out and about throughout day light hours, but are particularly vicious and numerous mid-morning and again late afternoon through early evening. While there is no such thing as a fly-free day; dry, sunny and windy is better than a humid, cloudy and still. Black flies make excellent barometers and come out in droves right before a storm.
3. Black flies are slow pokes. You can easily out-walk, run or bike them. Enjoy the sunshine and fresh air; but whatever you do keep moving.
4. When all else fails, do the arm-flapping-head-shaking-run-around-in-circles dance. It won't help but it will amuse your neighbors.

Stay safe, sane and bite-free,

Bon appétit! - Susan



# Beastly, Biting and Buzzing – The Black Flies Are Back

Spring 2007/volume 37

Cooking Parties  
Learn & Laugh

Private Chef Services  
Like to entertain?  
Too busy to cook?  
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## Rhubarb Crisp

*Two years ago my sister gave me a small rhubarb plant. It is now big, beautiful and ready to be turned into dessert. If you like tart desserts, try this crisp!*

Serves 4-6

1 pounds fresh rhubarb, chopped in 1" pieces  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
Juice of one lemon  
1 tablespoons orange liqueur (optional)  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
Pinch of nutmeg  
Pinch of kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Transfer the rhubarb mixture to an 8"x8" glass baking dish or shallow 1 1/2-2 quart casserole dish. Crumble the topping over the rhubarb. Bake until rhubarb is tender and the topping is golden, about 50 minutes. Let rest for 10 or 15 minutes and serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

You can prepare in advance. Re-warm at 350° for 10-15 minutes and serve.

## Topping

1/2 cup oatmeal  
1/4 cup flour  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/3 cup brown sugar  
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter at room temperature

1. Combine the oatmeal, flour, salt and brown sugar in a medium bowl. Add the butter and mix well with a fork or your fingers.