



Tony and Sandra Phillips are now selling frozen wild blueberries, grown and packaged at their farm on George Weatherby Rd, Debert. (Harrington Photo)

New Supplier of Local Frozen Wild Blueberries

By Linda Harrington

Driving down Hwy 4 in Glenholme, there was a truck parked with a big sign advertising wild blueberries for sale. Not what you might expect at the height of winter, but then again, it is cold and flu season and a daily dose of blue could be just what is needed.

Tony and Sandra Phillips, cleared a patch of woods in Debert back in 1973 and this was the beginning of what would become 16 acres of wild blueberries on the George Weatherby Rd. They originally harvested with a crew, using rakes and buckets, but when getting responsible workers became a challenge, they switched to a walk behind harvester.

Several years ago, they added a wild blueberry u-pick to their season. "I can't say it has been a very profitable venture, but a lot of people look forward to it each year," says Tony. "It has been an enhancement for the Wild Blueberry Festival, as there didn't used to be any place for people to go and pick their own berries."

About two years ago, Tony and Sandra were over in Newfoundland visiting a friend who is also a beekeeper. He took them to visit some local blueberry fields, where Tony chatted with the owner. They had a cleaning line they were not using and about 6 months

later Tony had thought it over and decided if it was still available he would buy it and move it to his farm in Debert.

This past harvest season, the equipment was set up and used to sort, clean and package their own berries. "We knew this being our first year, we didn't have the ability to sell much volume of berries on the fresh market, so I built a freezing room and we are currently selling 5lb boxes of frozen wild blueberries," says Tony. Studies have shown frozen wild blueberries to provide equal or better nutrition, meaning their healthy dose of anthocyanins and Vitamin C are maintained.

Tony says he is very confident in the quality of the wild blueberries he is selling in 5lb boxes for \$15. Wild blueberry producers received a discouraging low price per pound this year and this has consumers wondering why the retail price has remained stable. The price paid to a producer for five pounds was not much

more than \$1 and yet the retail price is still around \$15/5lbs.

But Tony says there are many more inputs to be considered than just the cost of the fruit. "Right off the top there is at least a 20 % loss after cleaning and sorting, there is the labor involved in the packaging, the cost of the package, the cost of electricity to store the frozen berries and the costs of purchasing and upkeep to the equipment."

Tony gives his customers a break on the price, by offering the tenth box free for every 9 boxes purchased. He will also give a reduced price for



The competition of the 2018 National Axe Throwing Championships to be held in Victoria Park, Truro will be set up in the format of this championship held in Germany last June. (Submitted)



Ryan McIntyre, one of the organizers visited Germany last June and was impressed with the format of the competition area. Already axe throwers from Ireland have confirmed their attendance. (Submitted)

National Axe Throwing Championships

The 2018 Canadian National Axe Throwing Championships will be held in Victoria Park, Truro August 25 & 26. The event is being organized by North Nova Lumberjacks Society (NNLS), with support from lead sponsors Timberlounge Halifax and Wildaxe Productions.

The event will bring together the best axe throwers in the country and attract some of the

best in the world to compete for prize money and the prestige of being Canada's top axe thrower. Already some axe throwers from Ireland have confirmed they will attend.

For more information contact Ryan McIntyre (jryanmcintyre@gmail.com), Darren Hudson (sports@mac.com) or visit North Nova Lumberjacks Society on Facebook.



Robert Phillips harvesting the wild blueberry crop with a walk behind harvester. (submitted)

Sandra have been selling honey for over 30 years. "We got into honey because our neighbours wanted hives for pollination, so we kept expanding to meet the wild blueberry pollination demand."

Wild Blueberries are not the only "fruit of their labour" offered for sale at the Phillip's farm. Tony and

the roadside but you can give Tony or Sandra Phillips a call at (902) 662-3399 and then stop by 159 George Weatherby Rd, Debert, NS. You can also find more about their business at www.phillipshoney.ca or follow them on facebook at Phillips Honey & Wild Blueberries.

Debert and Area Community Association - "The DACA Dish"

By Mary Adshade

Hey everyone Happy New Year to You!!! Hope all is well with everyone. It has been a very cold winter hope all are keeping warm. We are trying a few new things to be able to reach everyone.

The Debert and Area Association is working on lots of things in the community and would like to see more people get involved. We get together once a month with us meeting at the old Masonic Lodge. We have taken the building over. The new name for the building is Debert and Area Community Association "The Lodge".

Our new sign will be done in the next few weeks and we are getting a reader board which will be in the park, located across the street from Debert Elementary. We will post activities and events so everyone will know what is going on.

Keep for a watch of different activities in the community. We are trying to do things for all ages. We welcome new members!! Hope to see you at our next event. You can check us out on Facebook: Debert and Area Community Association.

Until next time, Have a great day.

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