

On a mild, just-right-temperature Sunday, a group of beautiful people celebrated a shared affection for the Markham. There was wine, food, live music and private tours of the International Gardens. It included a command performance by Jules and Rita that we really should have taped...

The day started with a tomato tasting. You have probably tasted many a [love apple](#). However, the day's selections were daring. The 10 varieties offered were some of those grown and sold this spring by the Markham. **We specialize in tomatoes that should**



meet 4 criteria: great taste, easy to grow, unusual, beautiful.

Since this puts us on the cutting edge, not every variety turns out to be perfect. Further, this year's drought and temperature swings played havoc with the crop. That said, here are the tasting impressions:



Winners

- Blue Gold – hit all 4 of our criteria and comes in true Cal colors: go Bears!!
- Blue Chocolate – just a tiny bit less interesting and subtlety of taste as Blue Gold.
- Speckled Peach – wonderful texture, sweet and mild, grew like gangbusters.
- Berkeley Tie-dye Heart – Superb taste, easy to grow, exciting looks.

Keepers

- Black Ethiopian – this has been a perennial crowd pleaser: rich flavor, gorgeous color, dependable and easy to grow.
- Dark Galaxy – pretty, easy to grow, but taste may be more distinctive in a non-drought.
- Dragon's Eye – interesting flavor and striking color, but skin a bit tough.

Maybe next year

- Purple Calabash – uh oh: tough skin, mushy flesh, and actually left an aftertaste!
- Dark Galaxy - tough skin and indistinct taste.
- Dragon's Eye - same as Dark Galaxy.

Whether you were able to make it or not to the event, Suzy S., our chef-in-residence, shares her recipe below for the scrumptious marinated chicken that was the featured entrée.

Markham Picnic in White Cold Smoked Chicken

This recipe was adapted from the Blue Hill Cafe of Tarrytown. It works well for chicken that is either oven



roasted or cooked in a smoker. The meat is delicious served hot or cold, making it an excellent "do-ahead" dish. The marinade makes enough for 4 pounds of chicken legs and/or thighs:

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup good quality soy sauce
- 1/4 cup fresh squeezed orange juice
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 2 tablespoon honey
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon mild smoked paprika (use good quality plain paprika instead if cooking the chicken in a smoker since the wood chunks will provide the flavor)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 4 pounds chicken legs and thighs

Optional: J. Lee Roy's Original Dippin' Sauce (available at Safeway). For classic BBQ flavor drizzle sauce over cooked chicken. J. Lee Roy's is my favorite all-purpose product for barbequed meats.

Directions:

Place all ingredients except the olive oil, s & p, and chicken into the bowl of a blender. Puree for 30 seconds on high.

With the motor running, slowly add the oil. Season well with salt and pepper. Pour marinade over chicken and marinate for 24 hours in the refrigerator. In a 400°F oven, roast legs in a roasting pan or on a cookie sheet for 40-45 minutes, or until nicely browned and cooked through. If using a smoker use a mild flavored wood like pecan and cook for approximately 2 hours (check for doneness at 1 2/3rds hours) at 225 F. Serve hot, room temp, or cold.