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## A Note from Glen

Thanks for taking time to read the Glen's Place Newsletter. Can you believe this is issue number 6? I hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as I have enjoyed doing it. It was a challenge at first, but now it seems like I have been doing it forever. I have learned a lot in the last 6 months, and I hope at least some of the information has been helpful to you too.

## Fun Facts and Trivia

A 1.5 oz. milk chocolate bar has only 220 calories.  
A 1.75 oz. serving of potato chips has 230 calories.

Chocolate manufacturers currently use 40 percent of the world's almonds and 20 percent of the world's peanuts.

In the United States, approximately seven billion pounds of chocolate and candy are manufactured each year.

## Brain Teaser

If you don't decipher this one, you may be . . . . .

fareedce

**Answer at the bottom of the last page.**

## Phishing: What You Need to Know

Phishing is a type of deception designed to steal your identity. It works by using false pretenses to get you to disclose sensitive personal information. You may get a fraudulent email message that appears to come from a web site you trust, like your bank or credit card company, requesting personal information such as credit and debit card numbers, account passwords, or Social Security numbers. These email messages may include official-looking logos from real organizations and other identifying information taken directly from legitimate sites. They may include a link that appears to go to the legitimate web site, but it actually takes you to a phony scam site. Once you're at one of these "spoofed" sites, you might unwittingly send personal information to them.

Some common phrases to look for in a phishing scam:

- **"Verify your account"** – Most phishing emails try to deceive you with the threat that your account will be in jeopardy if it's not updated right away. Since businesses don't normally ask for personal information in an email, this should be a clue.
- **"Dear Valued Customer"** – Since these scams are sent in mass to thousands of email addresses, they won't include your first or last name.
- **"Click the link below to gain access to your account"** – A phishing email will usually try to direct you to a fraudulent website that mimics the appearance of a popular website or company. The spoof website will request your personal information, such as credit card number, Social Security number, or account password.

Remember, when it comes to phishing, you are always in control. To protect your personal financial information, and your identity, ignore the requests in these phishing emails. Never click on any link that seems suspicious and never provide any information. Looks can be deceiving, but with phishing scams, the email is never from whom it appears to be!

## Tips and Techniques

Do you love mangoes but hate to cut them? Help is on the way! To cut a mango:

1. Slice both ends off the mango, revealing the long, slender seed inside. Set the fruit upright on a work surface and remove the skin with a sharp knife.
2. With the seed perpendicular to you, slice the fruit from both sides of the seed, yielding two large pieces.
3. Turn the seed parallel to you and slice the two smaller pieces of fruit from each side.
4. Cut the fruit into the desired shape.

*This and photos at [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)*

## The Wine Corner



In order to get the most enjoyment out of every bottle of wine, at least some thought should be given to choosing the wine glasses you plan to use.

At the very least, you should choose a glass that is plain and clear since part of the enjoyment of wine is appreciation of the color. The color can provide clues to the grapes used, the age of the wine, and so on.

The bowl of the glass should be large enough to allow a fair measure to be poured, while leaving enough room for the wine to be gently swirled without spilling the wine. This swirling action is important because it releases aromas from the wine.

Good wine glasses taper in somewhat at the top, so that the aperture is narrower than the bowl lower down. This appearance is aesthetically pleasing and functional. This tapered shape serves to concentrate the aromas towards the nose when the wine is swirled in the glass.

Basically, glasses for red wine should have a larger bowl, those for white wines a smaller bowl, and flutes are used for Champagne and sparkling wines.. You can find a range of wine glasses, of many different types, suited to every conceivable style of wine available.

*Adapted from [www.thewinedoctor.com](http://www.thewinedoctor.com), "Wine Glasses"*

## California's Breadbasket

Every time we drive through California's Central Valley, I am awed by the vast expanse of farmland. Maybe it is because I grew up on a farm that I have such an appreciation of the crops that are grown there.

California's Central Valley dominates the central portion of the state. It is nearly 400 miles long, stretching from Bakersfield in the south to Redding in the north and from the Coast Ranges on the west to the Sierras on the east. Nearly half of California's farmland, 2/3 of the crop land, and 75% of irrigated land is located there. A number of U.S. crops are grown exclusively there. These include almonds, figs, kiwifruit, nectarines, olives, persimmons, pistachios, prunes, raisins, and walnuts.

The Central Valley is a primary source for a number of food products including tomatoes, grapes, asparagus, apricots, and almonds. California's agricultural industry sells an average of \$18 million in farm exports daily.

Here are some interesting facts:

- The Central Valley has 1,393 cotton farms with an average of 500 acres each.
- The estimated cotton acreage this year is 450,000 acres of which 265,000 acres are American Pima cotton.
- In 2006 there were 10,200 acres of onions harvested in the Central Valley.
- In 2005 there were 25,000 acres of apple orchards producing 205,000 tons of apples.
- California's Bartlett pear crop in 2006 was 195,000 tons. Other pear production was 40,000 tons.
- In 2006, 3.2 million tons of wine grapes were produced and 790,000 tons of table grapes.
- The olive crop in 2005 produced 125,000 tons of olives on 32,000 acres.
- Rice production in 2006 was 40.4 million cwt.
- 6.94 million tons of alfalfa hay was produced.
- Corn production for grain was 739,000 tons.
- 1.2 million cwt of beans were harvested in 2006.
- Sugar beet production was 1.77 million tons.

If you haven't driven through California's Central Valley, you haven't really seen California.

## Asparagus: Food of Kings

Asparagus is a member of the Lily family. It has been cultivated for over 2000 years, starting in the eastern Mediterranean region. King Louis XIV of France had special greenhouses built so he could enjoy asparagus all year long. Since then it has been called the "Food of Kings."

Asparagus grows in a fairly wide range of climates; however, it thrives in Mediterranean-style regions such as California. About 70 to 80 percent of America's asparagus crop is produced in California. The United States imports a huge quantity of asparagus from Mexico, Peru, and Chile.

When selecting asparagus, choose spears that have a green color with purple highlights. It should be firm with tips that are tight and compact. It should have a white, woody bottom that is less than 15 percent of the total length. You know it's fresh when you give the bunch a squeeze, and it squeaks!

It is sometimes believed that thin, so-called pencil asparagus would be more flavorful and tender than fatter asparagus, but actually the reverse is true. The younger the plant, the greater amount of jumbo asparagus it produces.

Asparagus should be stored in cool temperatures (between 37°F and 41°F). Cut off about an inch from the bottom, wrap the fresh-cut areas in wet paper toweling, then place in a plastic bag. Place it in the refrigerator crisper drawer. This will increase the storage life beyond the normal recommended storage time of three or four days, however, the flavor will gradually deteriorate.

When preparing the asparagus, just hold the top half of one spear in one hand, the bottom half with the thumb and forefinger of the other hand. Bend each spear until it snaps. It will snap naturally where the toughest part meets the tender part. Asparagus can be boiled in salted water, like green beans or broccoli. Bring the water to a boil with a teaspoon of salt, and then add the asparagus and cook until tender but quite firm. It can be steamed, stir-fried, or cooked in the microwave. It can also be done on the grill. Boil, steam, or microwave halfway, brush with olive oil, and grill over medium heat.

## Recipe of the Month

### Sesame Shrimp and Asparagus

1 cup jasmine rice  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
4 teaspoons olive oil  
1 1/2 teaspoons sesame oil  
2 pounds asparagus, trimmed  
1/4 cup soy sauce  
2 teaspoons seasoned rice vinegar  
1 large green onion, chopped  
1 pound large shrimp  
1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper



Preheat oven to 450° F. Prepare rice as directed on the label.

Meanwhile, in a cup, combine salt, 2 teaspoons olive oil, and 1 teaspoon sesame oil. In a jellyroll pan, toss asparagus with oil mixture. Roast 10 to 12 minutes until tender.

In a small bowl, whisk soy sauce, vinegar, green onion, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil; set aside dressing. Shell and devein shrimp.

In a non-stick 12 inch skillet, heat 2 teaspoons olive oil over medium-high heat until very hot. Add shrimp; sprinkle with the crushed red pepper and cook 3 minutes, stirring frequently.

Arrange shrimp, asparagus, and rice on 4 plates. Drizzle with dressing and serve. Makes 4 main dish servings.

## A Final Word

I hope you are enjoying (have enjoyed) your summer. If you have comments or questions, I would love to hear from you. If you have something special that you would like to see added to this newsletter, just send it along to [glendal@glensplace.com](mailto:glendal@glensplace.com).

Until next time, remember:

**NOBODY OWNS A CAT**

Answer to Brain Teaser:  
Red in the face

