

Grow unique edibles to wow your guests

By Melinda Myers

Make your next gathering one to remember by including a few unique vegetables on the relish tray, as a side dish or for dessert. Your guests will be “wowed” not only because you grew your own ingredients, but because of the unique shape, color or flavor of the vegetables you serve.

Create a memorable dining experience with attractive edible containers adorning the patio, balcony or deck. Include a few Candle Fire Okra plants in large containers to create a tropical feel. The dark green leaves, hibiscus flowers and colorful red pods make a striking display in a container or the garden.

Surprise guests with roasted Candle Fire okra and Candyland Red currant tomatoes. Roasting okra eliminates the slime that prevents many from eating this unique vegetable. And don't discard any overripe pods, use them in flower arrangements to dress up any event.



The uniquely shaped

Mad Hatter sweet
red pepper has a
refreshing citrusy
floral flavor.
Photo/All-America
Selections

Allow your guests to harvest their own greens, herbs and cherry tomatoes to toss into their salads or season their meal. Use Prizm kale as a vertical dark green accent in your containers. Then add a contrasting ornamental leaf lettuce like Red Sails, long lasting vibrant Red Kingdom Mizuna (Japanese mustard) and edible flowers like calendulas, nasturtiums and pansies. The new Patio Choice tomatoes produce up to 100 yellow cherry tomatoes on an 18-inch plant. Plant it in a container for a splendid display then watch as guests harvest fresh tomatoes from your centerpiece.

Dress up the table, indoors or out, by using a few potted herbs as centerpieces. Include Dark Opal Basil with dark purple leaves and compact Dolce Fresca in a simple container or more decorative pot to create a splendid display. Just place a pair of garden snips on the table and let your guests flavor their meals.

Make any meal special with a Bok Choy Frittata. Your guests will be impressed when you create this popular dish from your own homegrown ingredients. Asian Delight Pak Choi (or Bok Choy) is slow to flower so you will enjoy season-long harvests. The mild flavored tender white stems and textured dark green leaves look good in containers, the garden and when served fresh in a salad, frittata or stir fry.

Serve a colorful platter of sliced tomatoes with the Chef's Choice series of red, pink, orange, yellow and green fruit. The globe shaped beefsteak tomatoes have the perfect balance of acid to sugar. Their disease resistance, productivity, yield, flavor, color and performance made them winners in the

nonprofit All-America Selections national trials.

Stuff a few of the uniquely shaped Mad Hatter sweet peppers with cheese. Your guests will enjoy the beauty and refreshing citrusy floral flavor of this three-sided red pepper. The vigorous plant produces an abundance of fruit, so you'll have plenty to use fresh in appetizers and salads throughout the growing season or pickled for future enjoyment.

End the evening with a surprise. Serve each guest their own watermelon for dessert. Mini Love watermelon packs lots of sweet flavor into individual size fruit. Or brighten their dessert plates with a slice or two of Gold in Gold. This eye-catching watermelon has a yellow rind with golden stripes. The orange-gold flesh is crisp and sugary.

With just a little planning, you can plant unique and beautiful edibles in your garden and containers this season. Then find fun ways to include these in dishes shared at potlucks, meals for family and friends, or as a snack to enjoy on a summer afternoon.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts the Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" gardening DVD series and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.

Writers to read from 'Permanent Vacation II'

"Permanent Vacation II: Eighteen Writers on Work and Life in Our National Parks" will launch June 13 at 7pm in the Aspen Room at Lake Tahoe Community College.

The second volume of this popular collection features writers from national parks all over the country, including locales like Cape Cod and Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The event is free and open to the public.

Authors reading at the event include Mary Emerick, Andrea Ross, Elizabeth Van Zandt and Tahoe local Joseph Flannery, reading of his encounters with bison in Yellowstone. There will be a short Q&A after the readings.

A second reading will be at Word After Word Books in Truckee on June 25 at 6pm. Authors at this event will include Flannery and John Q McDonald on the powers of Pele. This event is also free and open to the public.

“Permanent Vacation II” may be **pre-ordered online**. Books can be purchased locally at Gaia-Licious and Dharma Love in South Lake Tahoe and Word After Word.

Road Beat: Elantra Eco, a hybrid of a different sort



The 2018 Elantra Eco will impress, especially based on the price. Photo/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Most people will think from the headline that the new 2018 Elantra Eco is a battery hybrid, but it's not. It goes about its business combining a small, 1.4L DOHC 16 valve four-cylinder engine with turbocharging and direct injection. It connects the engine to the front drive wheels via a slick, extremely efficient seven-speed dual clutch automated manual transmission to create one of the most efficient power trains in motordom. While the EPA rates this Hyundai at 32/40/35 mpg city/highway/combined in their prescribed test cycle, real world numbers far exceed those predictions.

With the new Elantra body which continually evolves in a good way (this is a great looking ride with a strong, aggressive grille and front end, smooth, flowing lines culminating in a muscular rear end), this makes for more than the run of the mill econobox, it makes for stylish, fun motoring that is

anything but boxy and boring. Eco is a bit exciting.

And while the Eco exterior dimensions are clearly in the middle or slightly smaller than other compact cars (180L x 71W x 57H inches) it has a long 106-inch wheelbase qualifying Eco as a mid-size car under EPA guidelines at 110 cubic feet of interior volume, including a large, well-shaped 14 cubic foot trunk.

More about that diminutive power plant. It packs a bit of a wallop, belting out 128 hp at a low 5,500 rpm and a massive 156 pounds of twist from 1,400 to 3,700 rpm. And that number is important as while the peak hp is nothing spectacular, 156 pounds of twist at 1,400 rpm is. It equates to 42 hp at just off idle. That is huge when it comes to initial acceleration, especially when driving through that slick seven speeder. Zero to 60 mph arrives in a quick 7.70 seconds, making the Eco the second quickest of base compacts only being bested by a 1.5L turbo Honda Civic. The Eco plays with some heady company.



Specifications

Price \$21,560

Engine

1.4L 16 valve, DOHC,
turbocharged inline four 128
hp @ 5,200 rpm

156 lb.-ft. of torque at
1,400-3,700 rpm

Transmission

Seven-speed dual clutch
automated manual

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 106.3 inches

Length 179.9 inches

Width 70.9 inches

Height 56.5 inches

Track (f/r) 61.5/61.9 inches

Ground clearance 5.3 inches

Fuel capacity 14.0 gallons

Trunk capacity 14.4 cubic
feet

Passenger cabin volume 95.8
cubic feet

Weight 2,857 pounds

GVWR 3,880

Steering lock to lock 2.7
turns

Turning circle 34.8 feet

Wheels 15-inch alloys

Tires 195/65/15

Coefficient of drag 0.27

Performance

0-60 mph 7.70 seconds

50-70 mph 4.01 seconds

50-70 uphill 6.30 seconds

Top speed Well into triple
digits

Fuel economy EPA rated at
32/40/35 mpg

city/highway/combined.

Expect 35-40 mpg in rural
country driving with some
stop and go. 48 plus mpg on

the highway at legal speeds.

Passing performance is also quick with a 50-70 mph simulated pass coming up in 4.01 seconds and the same pass up a steep grade (6-7 percent) only slowing that time to 6.30 seconds. That is satisfying, solid performance that responds without any noticeable turbo lag. You completely forget that the Eco has a turbo motor.

But when you find that your gas gauge doesn't hardly move, you might think that the Eco is a partially battery powered hybrid. Overall, I averaged over 40 mpg with my 200-mile round trip from Placerville to Carson City averaging 44.4 mpg. Highway mileage averaged 48.2 mpg at 70 mph in a two-way highway run. Eco easily outperforms its EPA numbers by 10 percent or more. With its bigger than average 14-gallon fuel tank, just think of the possibilities, a cruising range of nearly 700 miles. Because hybrids have smaller fuel tanks, the Eco will outlast them with the only limiting factor being your own internal tank. Coefficient of drag is excellent at 0.27.

Handling is secure if not a bit sporty. Its credentials are not something to write home about, Tires are 195/65 mounted on 15-inch alloys. While it has MacPherson struts up front it uses a semi-independent torsion beam in the rear and it only has one stab bar up front. But its electric power steering rack is very quick at 2.7 turns lock to lock, is nicely weighted and it has a track of 62 inches front and rear.

Notwithstanding, the Eco still handles quite well with good cornering power. Perhaps its light weight of 2,857 pounds reduces its underpinnings load and requirements. Turning circle is a tight 35 feet. Eco handles nicely.

Eco is also quiet, especially on smooth roads only getting a bit noisy on coarse roads, but its ride is quiet and bumps transmits little if any noise. On the highway there is no wind or engine noise as this little engine that can only spins

2,200 rpm at 70 mph.

While the Eco gets front ventilated discs, the rear brakes are drums. But not to worry ABS and all the other braking acronyms are standard and since the front brakes to 80 percent of the braking rear brakes are not that important. And Eco exhibited strong braking performance. Many other small compacts also use standard drum brakes. Rear cross traffic alert and blind spot detection is also standard as are an array of other safety acronyms. Headlights are good.

Eco's interior features comfortable seats with spacious dimensions. All trim materials are of first rate quality down to its nicely padded instrument panel. Instrumentation is excellent with a large tach and speedo flanking an info center/trip computer. Well done. The center stack is another picture of simplicity and ease of use. The large color screen is touch controlled except for volume and tuning (done with knobs) and the dual HVAC is simple knobs and buttons.

The price of admission makes the Eco a bargain. My tester stickered for \$20,550 with only one "option" the obligatory carpeted floor mats which added \$125. Shipping from its Montgomery, Ala., assembly plant is \$885 bringing the total to \$21,560. Eco is one of the highest value cars in production and its fun to drive, uses gas like its being siphoned through spaghetti and goes like stink. I would drive one every day.

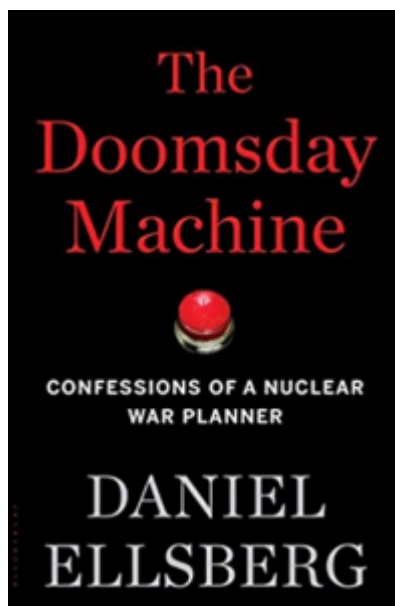
Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

LTN Book Club: 'Doomsday' brings clarity to nuclear war

By Kathryn Reed

Sobering. Scary. Eye-opening. Educational. Thought-provoking. Those are just a few of the ways to describe "The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner" (Bloomsbury 2017) by Daniel Ellsberg.

If the author's name sounds familiar, it's because he is the person who released the Pentagon Papers, which were the subject of the 2017 movie "The Post."



The now 87-year-old worked for the RAND Corporation as an analyst on nuclear strategy and then for the Defense Department through the 1960s.

What is so alarming is how inaccurate the information was about the destruction that would occur from the use of nuclear weapons. And then who knew what and when is incredible. The facts that were kept secret from those making decisions is downright frightening. The lack of trust between the military and civilians – including the president and his advisors – is stunning.

Scientists for decades didn't understand about nuclear winter being a reality if there would be an all-out war. The fires

and then smoke that would follow the bombs' detonation weren't part of the calculations at the get-go. This would eventually lead to worldwide starvation because plants wouldn't be able to grow without adequate sunlight.

The fact the United States for years had only one plan for all of its nuclear missiles was startling. They were to be used to wipe out the then Soviet Union and China. Both. There was no other plan. The fact that all of the bordering countries would be severely impacted was of little consequence to the war planners.

The segment on the Cuban missile crisis is like none I ever learned about in school or have read about until now.

I read and listened to "Doomsday" based on my schedule. It took longer to read because I would reread parts. It's complex. I wanted to make sure I had read things correctly. I feel like I should reread or listen to it all again down the road to fully comprehend everything Ellsberg shares.

Yes, it's a history book of sorts. But it is so incredibly relevant to today because we have even more weapons that can wipe out life as we know it on Earth – as do the Russians and others.

Ellsberg makes a strong case for getting rid of these weapons of mass destruction. It would be hard to argue otherwise. The ethical and moral use as well just the possession of these weapons is worth a serious discussion.

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Notes:

· The next book will be "Emerald Bay and Desolation Wilderness" (Arcadia Publishing 2018) by Peter Goin. The review will be published July 1.

Truckee Duckee Derbee benefits dogs-cats

After a one-year hiatus, the Truckee Duckee Derbee returns to the River Ranch Lodge on June 24.

Billed as the “most unpredictable two minutes in Tahoe,” this year’s event will mark the official summer opening of River Ranch’s popular outdoor patio.

The rubber duck races, which were canceled last year because of high water conditions, benefit the Humane Society of Truckee Tahoe. The afternoon’s festivities also include live music provided by the After Eights on the outdoor patio, a barbecue, drink specials, raffle, the hilarious “Dogz in Dudz” K-9 costume contest, and the “Cool Catz in Hatz” contest open to all “human” attendees.

Once again a local canine will be honored as the TDD’s “Pet of Honor.” This year’s recipient is Leana who was found abandoned on Donner Summit emaciated and with a bullet fragment in her head. Through the efforts of the HSTT, Leana was rescued, rehabilitated and adopted. She now serves as a therapy dog.

The pre-race party and registration starts at 1pm. Cost to sponsor a duck is \$10 and the top three ducks win cash. There is no cost to enter the K-9 costume or hat contest.

Ducks may be purchased **online** prior to the event and Derbee winners need not be present to collect cash prizes.

Poets to take center stage at SLT Library

El Dorado County poet laureate Taylor Graham will be joined by local poets and Poetry Out Loud students for an evening of poetry readings and an open mic session on June 15 at the South Lake Tahoe Library.

Joining Graham at this final stop will be local poet, essayist, and travel writer from the South Lake Tahoe area, Suzanne Roberts. Roberts has been chosen as El Dorado County's next poet laureate.

Poetry Out Loud finalists will join the nomadic poets with recitations and original works to share with guests. An open mic session will finish up the evening, allowing some of the region's up and coming poets to spread their literary wings.

This event will be at the South Lake Tahoe Library at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd. at 5:30 pm.

For more information, contact Caitlin Thompson at 530.295.3496 or caitlin@eldoradoartscouncil.org.

EDC offering free caregiving classes

The El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, Family Caregiver Support Program is presenting a free Aging & Caregiver Mini Series on the West Slope.

The educational, three-part series will be on July 24, July 31

and August 7 from 2:30-4pm at the Greenwood Community Center located at 4401 Highway 193 in Greenwood. The series will provide instruction and support for people who care for or plan to care for a family member or friend aged 60 or older.

Series topics include: Effective Communication Strategies, Advanced Health Care Directive vs. POLST, and Grief, Palliative Care and Hospice.

Participants may attend one or all of the classes. The classes are free, although donations are accepted.

Call 530.621.6192 to register or for questions.

Chautauqua to celebrate historical society's 50th

Lake Tahoe Historical Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary this summer with a Chautauqua on Aug. 18.

Icons from Lake Tahoe will perform, like D.L. Bliss, George Whittell and Lillian Virgin Finnegan.

The show will be at the Duke Theatre at Lake Tahoe Community College.

Doors open at 5:30pm. There will be food, drink and music.

Audience members are encouraged to come dressed in costume.

The show starts at 7pm. For tickets, call 530.541.5458. The are \$50 for museum members, \$55 for others.

Brian Boyer – 1968-2018



Brian William Boyer

Brian William Boyer of South Lake Tahoe passed away unexpectedly at home on May 9, 2018. He was 49.

Brian was born on July 4, 1968, in Van Nuys to Brian and Pamela Boyer. The family moved to South Lake Tahoe in the summer of 1971. Brian attended Meyers Elementary School, South Tahoe Middle School and South Tahoe High School, graduating in 1987.

Brian loved Lake Tahoe for all its beauty, all the activities it offered and all the great friends he made through the years. Brian loved snowboarding, golfing, mountain biking, tennis and being out on the lake with friends.

His dad was in construction and taught him carpentry. He excelled at it and took great pride in his work. He enjoyed helping his mom plant flowers and taking care of the yard. He loved doing things with his favorite nephew Thomas. They liked to watch his Cowboys play football together. He would always make sure to tell everyone what a good mother his sister was.

By Mark Geil, The Conversation

In 1905, an Ohio farmer survived a railroad accident that cost him both of his legs. Two years later, he founded the Ohio Willow Wood company, using the namesake timber to hand-carve prosthetic limbs. The company grew, surviving the Great Depression and a fire that destroyed the plant, and still thrives today in rural Ohio. Few who work there now might remember the curious footnote in the company's history that occurred during World War II, when the rebuilt factory was diversified to build parts for PT boats and B-17 bombers.

Today, it is ironic to consider a company that specializes in prosthetic limbs building parts for the war machine that unfortunately increases demand on companies making prosthetic limbs. Indeed, the tragedy of war has pushed prosthetics researchers to work ever harder to help service members and veterans who have lost limbs.

Not only are soldiers losing limbs from IEDs; older veterans are losing limbs from diabetes and vascular disease. Mobility is key to long-term health, and prosthetic limbs are key to mobility.

That has made the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs a key player in prosthetics development and technological innovation. But what is created for service members and veterans has benefits far beyond them, helping nearly 2 million Americans – civilian children, elderly people and young adults with amputations – maximize their mobility.

A key funding source

As a biomedical engineer specializing in prosthetics, I've reviewed grant proposals seeking funding from the VA to research prosthetic limbs for several years.

The federal government has long played a vital role in advancing prosthetic technologies. Before the 1980s, prosthetic feet were adequate for standing and walking, but very limited for more intense activities involving running and

jumping. Veterans Administration Rehabilitation Research and Development funds were used to develop the Seattle Foot. That device and its carbon-fiber contemporaries paved the way for “blade”-style prostheses seen in the Paralympics.

Decades later, defense-related government spending continues to drive innovation in prosthetics. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency has gained attention with the “Luke Arm,” named after a certain fictitious Mr. Skywalker, and headlines that read like they’re actually from Star Wars: “DARPA Helps Paralyzed Man Feel Again Using a Brain-Controlled Robotic Arm.”

For prosthetics researchers, funding from traditional sources such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation has become remarkably difficult to obtain, at least in part because of competition. Consequently, many researchers have turned their attention to soldiers and veterans. In 2014-15, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program funded 18 proposals in Orthotics and Prosthetics Outcomes. But that funding is getting more competitive too: 98 proposals were rejected.

Connecting with the body

All this work is, generally speaking, focused on transforming a prosthesis from an external tool used by a person to an integrated replacement that becomes a part of a person. Much of the research involves taking small steps toward reproducing the grand complexity and robust design of human anatomy. We have not yet achieved the flashy and functional capability of a real-life Luke Skywalker with cranial nerves attached directly to motors in a robotic hand. But researchers have made important progress through intermediate steps.

A process called targeted muscle reinnervation can connect nerves carrying messages from the brain, like “close hand,” to a muscle over which a set of electrodes are placed. Those

electrodes in turn send the signal to the motorized hand to close. Sensory feedback is being developed in a similar manner. While these efforts are not yet ready for everyday community use, they represent crucial progress.

Consider also a CDMRP-funded project at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and Vanderbilt University. The lower-limb prostheses used are not just passive spring-like materials: They're active, motorized joints. Motors require careful control, and the project headed by neuroengineering specialist Levi Hargrove has attempted to learn from the amputee's muscles when she wants to transition from walking to, say, walking up stairs or down a ramp. Just like your phone's voice recognition better understands your voice over time, Hargrove's control algorithm allows the motorized prosthesis to make fewer errors in ambulation.

Clearly, projects like Hargrove's stand to benefit much broader populations than just soldiers and veterans. My own research focuses on children with limb loss, and I see so-called "civilian spinoffs" every day. In our Center for Pediatric Locomotion Sciences at Georgia State University, we're modeling the material and structural properties of pediatric prosthetic feet. Many of those components can be traced back to that original VA-funded Seattle Foot. Across town at the Shepherd Center, a renowned hospital specializing in brain and spinal cord injury, robotic exoskeletons help paralyzed individuals move their limbs and remap neural pathways, a project with connections to VA prosthetic research.

Though they won't get the public recognition of the Jeep or GPS, these civilian spinoffs from military-funded research in prosthetics will have long-term benefits for people of all ages, and they'll feel the results every day.

Mark Geil is a professor of kinesiology and health at Georgia State University.