



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 2, 2013

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Plenty of Rainfall Makes State's Sorghum Crop a Sweet Success

NASHVILLE -- Sorghum is one of several crops in Tennessee that seems to have benefited from a rainy summer. Some highly anticipated fall crops, like pumpkins, have suffered in some parts of the state due to excess moisture and lack of sun. Others, like corn and sorghum, are on track for record harvests if current patterns of sunny, less-humid weather hold.

Sorghum syrup is a treasured traditional Tennessee food produced when the extracted juice from the sorghum plant is boiled down. Tennessee is one of the nation's leading states in sorghum syrup production.

Sorghum was the main sweetener and an important nutrition source for American colonists and pioneers. It remained America's primary sweetener right up to the beginning of the 20th century.

The green-amber, tangy-sweet syrup retains all of the plant's nutrients including calcium, protein, fiber, iron, potassium, phosphorus and zinc and contains no additives. Before the invention of the daily vitamin, doctors even prescribed sorghum as a daily supplement for certain nutrients that were hard to come by.

Today, sorghum is being rediscovered by today's nutrition conscious cooks, especially for consumers who try to eat locally grown and produced foods whenever possible. Sorghum and molasses are not the same thing. Molasses is a by-product, the leftovers when sugar cane is cooked into granulated sugar. A blended product, modern day molasses contains as much as 20 percent corn syrup and has no nutritional value.

Store sorghum at room temperature. Refrigeration makes its consistency thicker and harder to spread. Like honey, sorghum can crystallize, but putting it in a pan of warm water or the microwave for just a few seconds, either on the lowest setting or even the defrost setting, will restore it to its previous form.

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Find local sorghum producers and recipes using sorghum and other seasonal farm-direct, artisan foods at www.picktnproducts.org.

Tennessee Trails Sorghum Granola

Yield: 6 cups

3 cups old-fashioned (or rolled) oats
1/2 cup slivered almonds
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans
1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
1/2 cup sunflower seeds
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup sorghum syrup
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup golden raisins

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Lightly grease a jellyroll pan and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the oats, almonds, pecans, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and salt. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the butter, syrup, extract, and sugar. Cook five minutes, stirring frequently. Pour over the oat mixture and stir until evenly blended. Transfer to the prepared pan and spread in an even layer. Bake 20 minutes, stirring occasionally or until golden brown. Immediately stir in the raisins and place on a wire rack to cool completely.

Note: Store in an airtight container at room temperature. Use within two weeks for best quality.