



days at
Dunrovin

July 2019



**Ranch
Talk**



When Fruit Appears Dunrovin's Orchard Begins to Bear Fruit



When Dunrovin Ranch owners SuzAnne and Sterling Miller moved to Montana after many years of living in Alaska, one of the first things they did was to plant an orchard and garden. Fresh fruit and vegetables were always a big treat in Alaska. They wanted to take advantage of the Bitterroot Valley's reputation for being the "banana belt" of Montana with its weather patterns that offer a longer growing season than the rest of the state. Sterling was from Wisconsin where he learned to garden from his family. Sterling and SuzAnne felt sure that they too would become a gardening family.

Well, it didn't work out exactly as planned. Yes, the orchard was planted. Many of the trees have not only survived, but flourished. The vegetable garden has waxed and waned from being spectacularly abundant to being totally abandoned and infested with weeds, which is its current state of affairs.

Life in the form of horses and ranch activities for SuzAnne and wildlife research for Sterling intervened. There just hasn't been enough time to go around and the garden and orchard have consistently come up on the short end.



Dunrovin's Grapes and Hops are Just Waiting to be Put to Good Use for Wine and Beer

This hit and miss, on-again/off-again approach to the orchard and garden has its advantages as far as some are concerned. Frequently Dunrovin staff are the ones to pick the fruit and take it home to can or use in baking. In the past, staff have used the hops to make and bottle homebrew beer,. Several times the young Miller boys and their friends pretending to be in Italy or Greece as they used their feet to crush the harvested grapes to make juice.

Best of all, from the horses' and DIVAS' perspectives, over ripened fruit that falls from the trees is there for them to steal whenever they can sneak into the orchard!

Dunrovin's Sterling Miller has a Reputation for Making Great Plum Jam, Fruit Leather, and Liqueur



Broadcast Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Location: _____