

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 812 (which corresponds to Litir 1,116). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

A few weeks ago, I was telling you about a new plant I planted this year – perennial kale. Now I want to tell you about a shrub I planted three years ago. Fruit appeared on it this year.

In English, people call it a saskatoon berry. In Gaelic, I'll call the plant a preas sasgatùn and the berries dearcan sasgatùn. The plants belongs to western Canada. The word sasgatùn comes from the Cree language. The place-name Saskatoon – a city in Saskatchewan – marks a location where the Cree were collecting the berries.

I bought two small bushes three years ago. Now they are two metres tall. They carried many fruit this year. The berries go from green to red to purple while they are ripening. They are not large. They're a little smaller than a blackcurrant. And they have an unusual flavour. I'd say it's a little like the taste of young raw peas. They are better cooked up with a little sugar.

Canadians are very keen on them. There is a commercial

O chionn beagan sheachdainean, bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu lus ùr a chuir mi am-bliadhna – an càl buan. A-nise, tha mi airson innse dhuibh mu phreas a chuir mi o chionn trì bliadhna. Nochd measan air am-bliadhna.

Ann am Beurla, 's e saskatoon berry a chanas daoine ris. Ann an Gàidhlig, canaidh mise preas sasgatùn ris an lus agus dearcan sasgatùn ris na measan. Buinidh an lus do thaobh an iar Chanada. Tha an facal sasgatùn a' tighinn bho chànan nan Crì. Tha an t-ainm-àite Saskatoon – baile mòr ann an Saskatchewan – a' comharrachadh làrach far an robh na Crì a' cruinneachadh nan dearcan.

Cheannaich mi dà phreas bheag o chionn trì bliadhna. A-nise tha iad dà mheatair a dh'àirde. Bha tòrr mheasan orra am-bliadhna. Tha na dearcan a' dol bho uaine gu dearg gu purpaidh fhad 's a tha iad ag abachadh. Chan eil iad mòr. Tha iad beagan nas lugha na dearc dhubh. Agus tha blas car àraidh orra. Chanainn gu bheil e car coltach ri blas pheasraichean òga amh. Tha iad nas fheàrr air am bruich le beagan siùcair.

Tha Cainèidianaich gu math measail orra. Tha gnìomhachas

business based on saskatoons. Many people in Canada eat saskatoon pie. And some make wine with the fruit.

I am not concerned about the effect on them of the winter cold. The winter weather where they grow naturally is extremely cold, down to fifty degrees below zero Celsius. It's never that cold in Inverness!

The fruit are good for you, with a lot of vitamins and minerals in them. In that way, they are a bit like blueberries. They ripen in the early summer in June. In the United States they are called 'juneberries' for that reason.

The bushes also look pretty nice. They carry white flowers in spring. The leaves turn red in autumn. If you have room in the garden, why don't you plant one or two saskatoon bushes at the end of the winter?

coimeirsealta stèidhichte air saskatoons. 'S iomadh duine ann an Canada a dh'itheas saskatoon pie. Agus bidh feadhainn a' dèanamh fion leis na measan.

Chan eil dragh sam bith orm mu bhuidh fuachd a' gheamhraidh orra. Tha aimsir a' gheamhraidh far a bheil iad a' fàs gu nàdarrach cianail fhèin fuar, sìos gu caogad Celsius fo neoni. Cha bhi i uair sam bith cho fuar sin ann an Inbhir Nis!

Tha na dearcan math dhut, le beothamain is mèinnirich gu leòr annta. Anns an dòigh sin, tha iad car coltach ri dearcan gorma. Bidh iad a' tighinn abaich tràth as t-samhradh anns an Ògmhios. Anns na Stàitean Aonaichte bithear a' gabhail juneberries orra air an adhbhar sin.

Tha na preasan a' coimhead glè shnog cuideachd. Thig flùraichean geala orra as t-earrach. Bidh na duilleagan a' dol dearg as t-fhoghar. Ma tha rùm agaibh san leas, carson nach cuir sibh preas sasgatùn no dhà ann aig deireadh a' gheamhraidh?