

# Black Berry Picking

By J. W. Henson

Its still dry here in north Georgia and gets rather hot in the middle of the day. This morning early while it was still cool Audrey hustled me out berrying (or is it berring . . . not burying for sure). This was our second foray into the berry patch this summer. She made a most respectable Black Berry Cobbler last time. I am uncertain what the word cobbler in a pie has to do with shoe making, but I didn't invent the expression.

As I go from vine to vine with cup and stick in hand I am carefully watching for snakes. You can't run very fast with the vines pulling and tearing at you. You see, the birds come to feast on the berries and the snakes get protein from the birds they catch. If I see a snake he gets more than he bargained for. I seldom see one but am sure that they are watching me in large numbers.

It all reminds me of the old days when Mom would shake me out of bed at daylight. She wore long sleeves, a slouch hat and carried a broom handle with a nail at its end which was bent into the shape of a question mark. That was for drawing the distant vines to within reach. Audrey and I carried a small quart plastic cup, but not Mom. She took two small pans and a five gallon tub. I could tell from the paraphernalia that we were going to be there the better part of the day. It wasn't a fun outing it was an existence trip. Mom canned the berries and made jelly and jam from them. I am sure that those trips took away my taste for the berry. That dislike still exists to this day.

I asked Audrey what she was going to do with these berries and she said, "Wash them and eat them!" I bet they pucker her mouth a goodly amount. I won't be assisting in the eating.

There is one good thing that I observed and that was that the berries are on their last leg and we will not be going out among the chiggers and snakes again this season.