

Local food products in the spotlight

Home is where the food is. So it makes sense for food to be an integral part of the Colorado Garden & Home Show, which runs through Saturday at the Colorado Convention Center.

It's a great place to catch up on local food products that aren't usually found on supermarket shelves, including tow that earned international recognition at September's Fiery Foods Challenge, sponsored by Chile Pepper magazine (chilepepper.com).

The 3-year-old Black Forest Bison Co. of Colorado Springs took first-and-second place honors in the jerky category with the only two products it's ever entered. Double Black Diamond Bison Jerky was second only to the company's brand-new Caliente Canyon Bison Jerky, which brought home the coveted Golden Chile award.

"We're pretty thrilled to score a sweep our first time out of the chute," said co-owner Susan Popp.

She and her husband, co-owner Peter Popp, will give away samples of both jerkies at the show, where you'll also be able to buy them: \$11 for a 4-ounce package, \$20 for an 8-ounce package. If you want some but don't make it to the show, you'll have to either order by phone, 719-488-3898, or drive to the Springs and buy from their store at 1234 E. Woodmen Road.

On the other hand, this is the 10th Garden & Home show for Aurora's Two Hot Chili Peppers. And owner Anita Criticos just took home her fifth Golden Chile, winning in the Soup and Stew category for her Green Chili Stew mix.

She's lost track of her second-and-third place awards and will take only a few recent ribbons with her to the show, including the 2006 second-place award in the Fruit Salsa category for her mango-peach salsa.

Criticos-whose motto is "Only in America can a Greek lady make a living selling Mexican food: - started making salsas in the '90's, when she was married to Cuban man she has since divorced.

"It was kind of a fluke," she said. "We couldn't find any good salsas on the market, so I made my own."

Criticos will introduce the latest of her 30 products, an artichoke salsa, at the Garden & Home Show.

Her products, \$3.50 to \$7.50, can be found at Echter's Garden Center, 9170 W. 52nd Ave., Arvada, 303-424-7979; Cook's Fresh Market, on the 16th Street Mall at Glenarm Place, 303-893-2277; My Favorite Things, 1827 Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, 303-462-1373; several Mountain Man stores; and the newsstands at Denver International Airport. Other Colorado food makers taking part in the Garden & Home Show: Beary Best Dips, Walsenburg; Gourmet Farms of Colorado, Brighton; Mile High Jerky, Parker; Picalldilly Pantry, Wheat Ridge; and Stryia Bakery, Frederick.

For details on the show, go to gardeningcolorado.com.

If you're a Colts fan, perhaps you'd like to celebrate their Super Bowl victory by treating yourself to one of those pork tenderloin sandwiches featured in last week's column. We're indebted to Susan Goodwin, a naïve of Illinois, who reports that the Midwestern favorite also can be found at Gunther Toody restaurants and at The Rock, 22934 E. Smoky Hill Road, Aurora, 303-690-7934.

Goodwin wrote that "they are wonderful, and a trip home is never complete without going out for tenderloins, which are frequently much larger than any bun that accompanies them." And, as career adviser for the School of Culinary Arts at the Art institute of Colorado, she should know what tastes good.

They're serving up chili and cornbread samples from the Women's Bean Project from noon to 3 pm Saturday at Ten Thousand Villages, a fair trade and nonprofit gift shop at 2626 E. Third Ave., 303-316-8773, and representatives of the questions. Ten percent of the store's gross for the day will go to the Women's Bean Project, and customers will receive coupons good for a 10 percent discount on any Women's Bean product.