

CURRENT

From page 25

fruit crisp, cookies and paired with cheese.

"A lot of fruit is really great, but we don't culturally use it," Harbut said.

The market for fruit is also flourishing. According to Ann, they have wineries and jelly producers interested in their crop, as well as a spot in St. Paul and Brookfield, Wis., farmers markets — all before the first berries have arrived.

"There's a phenomenal demand," Albrecht said. The Thewis family is expanding their farm to

"Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith.

But it's just amazing how many people are willing to help you start."

Ann Thewis

include 1,000 more plants for upcoming seasons.

Ann advises anyone who is interested in experimenting with a small-fruit crop to start early and do their research. Planning during the fall months for a



Gary and Ann Thewis stand with their daughters and their daughters' families on the Thewis farm.

spring planting is also the highest variety of plants to choose from. She sought a

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant and assistance from an agricultural agent.

However, Ann is the first to admit she does not know what the farm will yield.

"Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith," she said. "But it's just amazing how many people are willing to help you start?"

Harbut adds farmers should "start small and

think creatively" when first starting out. Crops like elderberries and hazelnuts are also growing in popularity in the state.

"(Small scale farms are) a growing industry that has a lot of potential for communities. It's one of the few things that still allow family farms to exist," she said. "This is going to be really good for Wisconsin."

