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WHOLE FOODS COMMUNITY CO-OP, INC.



Gazette

DULUTH, MINNESOTA JULY/AUGUST



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Gardens I Have Known and Weeded

by Billie Long Anderson, member

As a kid living in Kansas, I used to watch my dad water his garden tomatoes every night in the summer. Dad said the secret was in giving them plenty of water and he must of been right. His beefsteak tomatoes were a great summer meal with corn on the cob and, for desert, thick slabs of juicy watermelon.

Ever since then, I wanted to have a garden of my own and, when my children were small, it was very important to me that everything that went into their little mouths would be free of pesticides, herbicides and any other "cides" I might learn about.

My first garden was two little raised beds in our backyard in Two Harbors. A pick-up load of top soil was donated to my cause and I spent days pulling rocks out of the dirt. One bucket of rocks too many and I sprained my back.

Neighbors brought over hot dishes. A friend gave me manure from her horse pasture. You find out who your real friends are when you're flat on your back and trying to garden at the same time.

I started my personal tradition of planting marigolds in each corner of the garden and onions along the sides to ward off small intruders.

Being in my backyard made it convenient to weed, pick out unwanted bugs and harvest every day. My family, as well as the little kids who shared the backyards on our block, grazed on tender green beans, pea pods and lettuce.

That August was very rainy. I looked out one morning and saw the little onions bobbing along the edge of the garden. I went out during a lull in a storm and, using a little hose, siphoned the water away from my floating onions. Rain water and dirt filled my mouth. A Beginner

Gardener became a Dedicated Gardener.

The next garden I had was up over the hill in Woodland Heights, fifteen minutes away from my home in Duluth.

The widow of a long time gardener hated to see her husband's garden lie dormant, so offered it for a Community Garden. It was on a south facing hill, full of weeds and needed to be terraced. Her own yard was a glossy magazine picture of lawn and flowers so I made a little garden plot for my kids so they would stay close by while

the dew on the lettuce.

My next garden was also a Community Garden closer to home, still not in my own yard but within walking distance. The area I was given adjoined other garden plots on a sunny corner of an inner city neighborhood but I never seemed to be weeding when other gardeners were there.

An old oil tank was cleaned out and kept filled with water by the fire department. I didn't like the smell of the water and had my suspicions about it's organic gardening worthiness so I decided to bring my own water from home in watering cans. Ah, my naturally composted and organically grown garden, and so close to home. The garden wasn't fenced and I planted the tomatoes away from the sidewalks, to be less inviting to people passing by, but it didn't help. Tomato eaters will go out of their way to find the ripe ones, be they garden raiding people or thieving chipmunks.

The garden thrived. Composting was wonderful and hardly a weed had to be pulled. It did need more water than a few watering cans now and then so I came up with a plan. This was before my kids were old enough to be embarrassed by the odd behavior of their mother.

I lined the back of my station wagon with a tarp and filled it with water. Then I carefully drove down the street, and sloshing up the hill to my city garden.

On the way, I realized this probably looked very eccentric. That's when I was waved over by some neighbor friends who wanted to know what I was doing. I stopped slowly, making waves in the back and talked as if I was doing the most natural thing in

the world. I left before their belly laughter turned into unnatural guffaws.

Up at the garden, I dipped watering cans into the car load of water and sprinkled the young green plants wondering if maybe this time I had gone too far in my gardening enthusiasm.

Near the end of the season, I finally met a fellow gardener there.

"Hi, is this your garden?" she asked, coming over with a big smile. "Yes, it is," I smiled back.

"I have a funny confession to make," she said, and startled me with her laughter, "I've been helping some friends with their garden this summer; weeding, fertilizing, watering, and I got mixed up. I thought your corner of the plot was their corner."

She pointed to the other corner and I was sure I saw a big green box of chemicals. "Your garden's been getting extra help!"

So much for my tender organic care and station wagon watering efforts! **cc**



"Tomato eaters will go out of their way to find the ripe ones, be they garden raiding people or thieving chipmunks."

I worked the terraces.

I learned about Duluth's weather that summer. I could work a warm sunny morning on that hill and come home to thick, cooler by the lake, fog.

I also learned about Zucchini. That garden produced a lot. I'm sure I saw some people locking their doors when they saw me coming.

It was a lovely garden but I missed going out to my own backyard, pulling a weed, eating a pea pod, looking at



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Management Report

What's in Your Organic Food?

Most of you will remember the extended comment period in which the US Department of Agriculture allowed growers, consumers, manufacturers and retailers to respond to the watering down of the National Organic Standards Act. We had nine months to gather signatures on petitions, to send off letters, postcards and e-mails, and to make phone calls. In the end, the USDA received more comments than at any other times in its history and the resulting National Organic Standards Act was a document we could live with and respect.

On April 14, 2004, the USDA issued "clarifications" on some key issues relating to organic standards. These clarifications were announced without fanfare or opportunity for public comment. Following are some of the USDA issued "clarifications." Concerns with those clarifications are expressed in brackets []:

Allowing use of antibiotics in dairy cows

[Kelly Shea, director of organic agriculture for Horizon Organics, stated: "We were really surprised when this guidance document was released and really disappointed. We definitely believe that antibiotics should not be allowed in organic milk production, and our policy is that, if an organic animal gets sick and for humane purposes has to be treated with antibiotics, it is no longer considered organic and is never allowed to return to the herd."]

Use of fishmeal with synthetic ingredients as feed for organic livestock

[The National Organic Standards Act said ingredients in feed had to be organic. Barbara Robinson, deputy administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Services, said the law allows natural ingredients, like fish, to be used unless otherwise prohibited. But critics say fishmeal can contain preservatives, PCB's and mercury.]

Use of list 2 and list 3 pesticides

[The Environmental Protection

Agency uses four lists to classify inert pesticide ingredients. List 1 contains ingredients known to be toxic. List 2 contains ingredients with a high probability of toxicity. List 3 contains ingredients of unknown toxicity. List 4 contains chemicals that cause little or no harm. Previously, only List 4 ingredients were permitted in organic pesticides.]

These "clarifications" undermine the integrity of the organic label. Farmers, consumers, organic certifiers and inspectors spoke out against the new directives at an April 30 meeting of the NOSB. Senator Patrick Leahy, Democrat of Vermont and author of the National Organic Standards Act, called the Agriculture Department's clarifications "unilateral fiat which may violate the letter of the law," and he added, "They certainly violate its spirit."

The National Organic Coalition (NOC), of which the National Cooperative Grocers Association is a member, was a leading player in the effort to push for rescission of these

clarifications. And, in late May 2004, USDA Secretary Ann Veneman announced that she is rescinding the Ag Marketing Service's recent "interpretations" of certain components of the national organic standards.

The combination of media (check out Marian Burros article in the New York Times Date: May 26, 2004 Section: Dining In, Dining Out/Style Desk; SECTF Page: 4), industry and congressional pressure helped push the Secretary to require the USDA to re-evaluate the process and to work with organic producers, processors and retailers to get it right. The rescission does not mean the issues are resolved, but it gives the NOC some breathing room to try to ensure that appropriate processes for these rule interpretations are created and followed. **CG**

Sharon Murphy joined WFC in 1970 and served on the Board of Directors from 1978 to 1980. From 1980 to 1988, she was a partner in Creative Energies, the collective that managed WFC. In 1988, she was hired by the Board as General Manager of Whole Foods Co-op.

Dr. Kohls is moving his practice to downtown Duluth!
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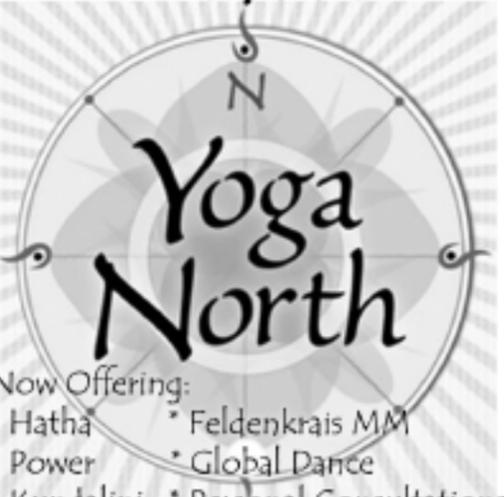
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Garbanzo Gazette

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www.wholefoods.co-op

STORE HOURS:

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Membership Costs:

\$100 per voting membership
Further membership information is available at the Co-op

The Garbanzo Gazette is published six times a year (January, March, May, July, September, November) for the member-owners and patrons of the Co-op. The Garbanzo Gazette is published by Whole Foods Community Co-op, Inc. to provide information on Whole Foods Co-op, the cooperative movement, food, nutrition, and community issues. Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Co-op management, board or member-owners. Submissions must be received one month prior to publication. The next deadline is Monday, August 2. Refer submissions and questions to shannon@wholefoods.coop

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The information in the Garbanzo Gazette is also available on our website at www.wholefoods.coop

BERRY INTERESTING FACTS

The strawberry plant has seeds on the outside skin rather than having an outer skin around the seed, as most berries do. They do not however, normally reproduce by seeds. When the fruit is developing, the plant sends out slender growths called runners. These look like strings. They grow on the ground and send out roots in the soil. The roots produce new plants which grow and bear fruit. Sometimes these plants are taken from the soil and replanted to start a new plantation of strawberry plants.

In France strawberries were cultivated in the 13th Century for use as a medicinal herb. Their fragrance is still used today in children's anesthesia as it has been found to have a tranquilizing effect.

Who knew after seventeen years, I would decide it was time for a change. Yes, I have left my beloved Whole Foods Co-op for a new, exciting venture as an owner of the Green Mercantile. I have had so much fun doing so many things at the Co-op. Now I am looking for something new and challenging. I want to move out of the food industry for now and learn more about the other sides of eco-buying.

I remember getting the call from Sharon, "Would you like to work here?" I said yes and started my way in the Co-op at its previous site of 8th St. and 7th Ave. My first job was a 'clean-up worker'. I was one of the few folks who could stand up in the basement without bumping their head. Then I moved on to clerking evenings and coordinating on weekends.

I learned much from my good friend Linda Kinnunen. Linda and I entered a national display contest competing with all the natural foods chains and co-ops. We won second place. I also learned much from John Fisher-Merritt when I took over the position of produce manager from Dave Benson so many years ago. I was produce manager for most of my tenure at WFC. I truly loved working with the organic veggies and making them into an art piece. I remember when we made a commitment to

offering organic produce. Some were unsure of the drastic change, but it proved to be just what we needed to do. Soon organic products became available in all departments, and our Food Policy and Mission support this

Farewell...

commitment.

Sharon allowed me to do many other things to use my creative juices. We used to have more time to do little events such as Shakespeare's Birthday, Carmen Miranda Day, Alice in Wonderland Day, Moosewood Days and many more. I will never forget dressing Chris up as Shakespeare, John in a grass skirt, Linda as a rabbit, ending up as Alice with everything I needed from my own closet, and Sharon dressed as a cat. Those were some days. My first buying job was spices and I redesigned the old store to better use space. Later I designed the 'new' (current) store layout you all see today. I used my spatial sense together with staff input to squeeze as much out of this store as was possible.

During the last few years, I was given the task of marketing and member services manager. This monumental job was a new challenge that Sharon was assured me I was up for. I loved working with the members and

on the many events such as Earth Day, Food Fest, the Halloween Party and the wonderful General Membership meeting (what fun). I was, again, able to use some creativity with signs and advertising. I will miss the working member crews and the newsletter in particular.

I remember when the newsletter content came from Sharon, Chris, Cele von Rabenau and myself.

Many would ask if we owned the store. Those were great newsletters, but I am glad to see all of the new writers who have come on the scene and brought diversity during my tenure. I really loved working with Maryl on the newsletter but, like Maryl, I felt it was a good time to leave while things were in pretty good shape. I would like to thank Rachel Auchter for her wonderful interim gazette along with Insty Prints continued work on the printing. I know I am leaving it in great hands with Rick Kollath and your new M & MS Manager, Shannon. What a great combo they will be. And good luck to you, Shannon, in all aspects of your new job. I know you will do spectacular work.

I would like to say good bye to all at the Co-op but, hopefully, hello to you at the Green Mercantile.

Thank you for a great time,
Dianna von Rabenau

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Better in Bulk

There are so many foods in our bulk department that some of them are bound to be obscure. Here is my list of favorite bulk items that you may need to give a second look.

Organic Quinoa Flour: Quinoa is arguably the most nutritious grain available. We get our quinoa flour from Bob's Red Mill, where it is stone ground. It is gluten-free and high in fiber, protein, calcium, and iron.

Organic Amaranth Flour: Amaranth is another candidate for the top tier of the world's most nutritious grains. This stone-ground, gluten-free flour is also from Bob's Red Mill. Try replacing 20% of wheat flour with this instead for enhanced nutrition and flavor.

Pumpernickel Dark Rye Meal: AKA Rye Meal. Another amazing Bob's Red Mill product. Add this to European-style peasant and pumpernickel breads for a hearty texture and flavor.

Organic Gold N' White Flour: This versatile flour is unusual in that it is neither whole wheat nor white. Normal white flour has had the germ and the bran removed from the wheat kernel before milling, but Gold N' White has only had the bran removed. It retains the nutritious wheat germ. This makes it comparable to whole wheat in terms of nutrition, but comparable to white flour in terms of how it bakes. Use as all purpose white flour.

Carob Powder: Carob is commonly used as a substitute for chocolate or

cocoa powder in cakes, cookies, and candy. To substitute, replace one part cocoa with one and one-half to two parts carob by weight. Since carob is not as flavorful as chocolate, it is best used in recipes that contain other strongly flavored ingredients. However, because carob is sweeter than unsweetened cocoa powder, it is not usually necessary to add sugar when making this substitution.



Lecithin Granules: Kept refrigerated in a jar in the cheese case. Lecithin supplies several important nutrients, one or more of which are commonly lacking in most people. This includes omega-3 linoleic acid, B-vitamins, and choline. Lecithin granules can be con-

sumed in several different ways in order to minimize their "acquired taste." Try stirring some into juice (although they will float and not dissolve). Also try sprinkling on hot food, where they will melt into liquid lecithin. My favorite: use as a topping for ice cream.

Organic Dried Pear Rings: Pears are not obscure per se, but this delicious source of iron and fiber is frequently overlooked. Simmer them in water or fruit juice with other dried fruits, orange or lemon rind, cinnamon and nutmeg. Serve on hot cereals, waffles, pancakes, or yogurt.

Organic Dried Cranberries: The item itself is not obscure, but there is an obscure detail about this item that I would like to hype. As of a couple months ago, this item is organic apple juice sweetened instead of sweetened with cane sugar. Rejoice!

Wasabi Peas: For those of you that haven't heard of this Japanese-style snack, it is spicy, crunchy, and fun! (Warning: do not eat a couple pounds of these for breakfast. Trust me.)

Organic Maple Sugar: To die for. Just dried maple syrup, this heavenly sweetener can be substituted one-to-one for white sugar in recipes. I have always wanted to make all organic chocolate chip cookies using this sugar, organic chocolate chips, and Gold N' White flour. Let me know how it goes. **GG**

Jim Richardson, Bulk Buyer, is an eight year veteran of the natural foods industry, including six years at Whole Foods Co-op.

At the Point of Sale

It happens every 4 or 5 years. We float along happy as bees in our little co-op lives. Then suddenly, we step up to the tills and we don't know where we are. Dazed and confused, we wonder is this my store? What happened to the happy little screen I am used to seeing? What am I talking about? I am talking about the co-op Point of Sale (POS) or checkout system. The purpose of this article is to inform you, our membership, that we look forward to the installation of a new POS system sometime in the next 3 months.

Why, you might ask, do we need to change? Well, there are several answers to that question. The first and most pressing need is that our current POS system is obsolete. As of last year, 14 digit barcodes (which have been in Europe for some time) became an accepted standard here in the U.S. Our current POS system can not read a 14 digit bar code. Due to this we need to upgrade or change our POS. Since our current membership software only runs on the current POS system and cannot be upgraded, we needed to face the challenge of how to address our membership's, as well as our accounting, needs in the best way possible. Additionally, our current system is a

closed system. One of the problems with a closed system is that reports can only be produced in specified formats. We then hand enter that information to manipulate it to our needs.

A year and a half ago, I began working with Tak Tang, from the Wedge Co-op. The Wedge Co-op in order to address their POS concerns wrote their own software. This software is stable, fast and is owned by the Wedge. The Wedge has successfully been using it for 2 years in their store. Because a co-op owns the code to the software, it allows us the ability to build the software the way WE need it to work, changing our work to meet the software. I have spent the last year working with the Wedge to not only break it out of the Wedge, but also include features that will make our lives easier.

I wish I could say that the transition will be seamless. I do, however, fully anticipate that the transition will not be overly problematic. I do ask for your patience, as well as, your input. Because we own the code (it has been open-sourced to the co-op community), we are able to make changes to it that will make the shopping experience better for all. One of the first changes we are planning is moving

Member Appreciation Day to a Member Appreciation Coupon. We have heard from the membership that having one day per quarter was excluding many from receiving the 5% benefit. With the arrival of our new POS, we will be able to offer every member this benefit once per quarter on any day of their choosing.

We are actively testing and working on the software even today. At this point, I cannot give an exact date of installation, but the goal and expectations is that the installation will occur sometime before September. Please, if you have things that you really find helpful as a customer (or things that drive you nuts about our current system), let us know, either by dropping me a note at the store, with a customer comment card or by popping off and e-mail to me at chris@wholefoods.coop. I look forward to providing our membership better service with the implementation of the new POS.

Chris von Rabenau, Assistant Store Manager, is entering his 19th year as a Whole Foods Co-op employee. In addition, he is also the Information Technology (IT) Manager. As IT Manager, Chris has been working with the larger Co-op network in defining an IT vision for the natural foods co-op industry as well as bringing the Wedge's IS4C Point of Sale system to WFC. **GG**

MEMBER FEATURE

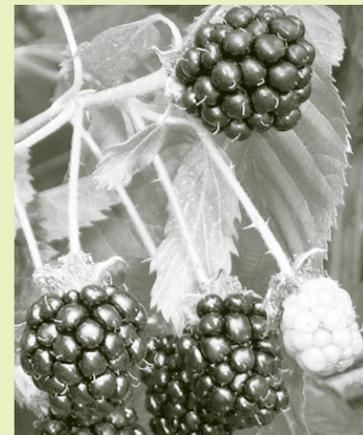
the seasonal table

By Bonnie Williams, member

I love summer, and one of the summer activities I anticipate most fondly is berry-picking. Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, thimbleberries—all grow abundantly here—if they don't get frozen out in a hard, snowless winter! Berries were a staple for Native Americans, voyageurs, and settlers. Even until fairly recent times, berrying was a favorite outing for families and friends. Few gardeners cultivated berries, for they were so abundantly available in the wild. The old-timers prized berries for their medicinal properties, considering them cleansing to the blood.

Ayurveda also regards berries as beneficial alternatives (blood-cleansers). They are cool and watery, sweet, a little sour and a little astringent, decreasing both Vata (air) and Pitta (fire).

Eating berries fresh from the bush is surely the most blissful way to have them, but I also enjoy preserving some "summer in a jar" in the form of jam. Jam is easy to make, and a good way



to ease into canning if it's new to you. Jam is a preserve made of the whole fruit, whereas jelly uses only the juice.

When I make jam I use Pomona's Universal Pectin, available at the Co-op. The box contains complete instructions for various jams and jellies, including low-sugar, honey-sweetened and all-fruit versions. For 4 cups of jam you will need 1 1/2-2 quarts of berries. Canned preserves require cooking; freezer recipes do not. Pomona's includes instructions for both. The canning option is easy—jam needs only the water-bath method, not the pressure canner.

Local spots for pick-your-own include Shary's Berries, Finke's Berry Farm, Lakewood Berry Farm, Berry Pine Farms, and in the wild (ask veteran berry-pickers), or buy berries at the Co-op or Farmer's Market.

When winter winds blow again, you'll enjoy the taste of summer in each jar of homemade berry jam. **GG**

BERRY INTERESTING FACTS

The strawberry is recognized as representing absolute perfection in the Victorian language of flowers.

A Memorial Fund has been established to aid the family of long-time Co-op member and supporter, **Fern Koestner**. Please direct contributions to:

Fern Koestner Memorial Fund • Northshore Federal Credit Union • P.O. Box 159 • Silver Bay, MN 55614

co-op notes & policies

MOVING? Pursuant to WFC Bylaws, Article I, Membership, Section 7: "Each member agrees to provide the association his, her or its current address and to keep the association informed of any changes in address." In an effort to remind our members to keep WFC advised of address changes, the Board, on 8/26/96, approved a policy making a member temporarily inactive (by placing an "i" before the member's number) when there is no current address on file. Inactive members are not eligible for membership benefits and will not receive the newsletter.

CO-OP TOURS & PRESENTATIONS: WFC staff are available to provide store tours or out-of-store presentations on co-ops, natural foods, herbs, organic gardening, etc., to your group, club or class. Please give us at least a week's notice for tours; two weeks for presentations. For more info contact Shannon at 728-0884.

NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING INFO: Call Shannon at the Co-op for current rates and schedules.

REMINDER: If you let someone else in your household use your account, he/she will need a WFC member card. Contact Penny Nemeck, 728-0884, if you need another card. Limit is two cards per membership.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN: On Sept. 23, 1996, the Board approved a policy requested by staff limiting to two (2) the number of unattended children allowed in the store at any one time. This policy is posted on the door and in the store.

REFUNDS & CHECK ACCEPTANCE POLICIES: These policies are posted on the bulletin board and at the checkouts in the store.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS: Board of Directors meetings, except for agenda items relating to personnel or real estate negotiations, are open to the membership. If you have an item for discussion at the Board meeting, it must be submitted in writing by the first Friday of the month in which you request the Board's consideration. The agenda for each meeting is mailed in advance. Items not on the written agenda will be carried over for consideration. Dates of Board and committee meetings are posted at the Co-op or you can call WFC at 728-0884.

Before recycling this copy of the Garbanzo Gazette, please pass it along or share it with a friend or neighbor. This can help save a bit on paper costs and reduce waste. Also, it's a good way to introduce folks to WFC who aren't current customers or members.

Newsletter ad rates

Newsletter ad rates will be changing with the new newsletter format. If you are a regular advertiser (thank you!) and do not receive a new rate card by mid-July, or if you are someone interested in advertising in the Gazette and need a rate card, please contact Shannon at 728-0884 or shannon@wholefoods.coop.

Minnesota Solar Electric Rebate Program

Solar electricity, like organic food, is a premium product that protects your health and the environment. It will gradually become cheaper over time but is targeted towards "early adopters" or "pioneers" who recognize that not all benefits are monetary. Solar energy is similar. Even though Minnesota has a cold climate, we have more solar electricity potential than Houston, Texas and almost as much as Miami, Florida. Minnesotans can support solar and help shift our state to less polluting power sources.

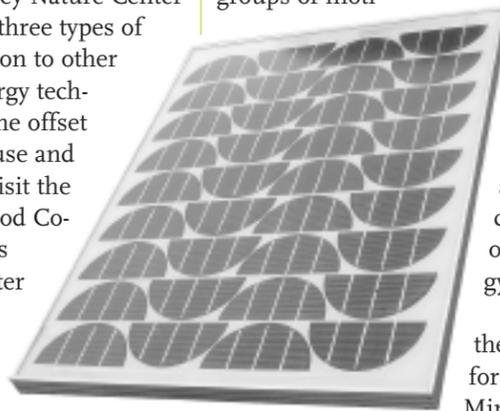
There are three kinds of solar energy — solar design, solar heating, and solar electricity — generally designed to reduce the use of rather than replace conventional energy systems. Solar design allows the sunlight to passively heat and/or light a building and is best optimized when constructing a highly-efficient new building or addition. Solar heating, also known as solar thermal, can heat ventilation air, domestic hot water, and even the building itself by heating air or water in specially designed panels. Solar electricity, or photovoltaics, use specially manufactured panels that con-

vert sunlight into electricity.

There are great examples of community solar projects right here in Minnesota. The Hartley Nature Center in Duluth utilizes all three types of solar energy, in addition to other conservation and energy techniques to maximize the offset conventional energy use and educate people who visit the center. The Wedge Food Co-op in Minneapolis has installed solar hot water panels above the bakery, providing hot water for bread baking, washing, and other kitchen tasks. The fluid in the solar panels is kept separate from the potable water and instead only the heat is exchanged between the two.

Another idea is to create a grassroots solar project, such as the one at the Old Man River Cafe in Saint Paul. Local community members donated funds in small amounts to fund the installation of a solar electric system on top of the coffeehouse, creating perhaps the first solar coffeehouse in the world. Large donors even received free coffee for life. All three of these

models for developing solar energy with community or cooperative benefits in mind can be replicated where groups of moti-



ivated citizens see the educational, symbolic, and financial benefits of solar energy.

Recently the eligibility for the Minnesota

Solar Electric Rebate Program expanded to include any area in Minnesota, including the northeast. Highway emergency call boxes, flashing construction signs, and many cabins in Minnesota already use solar panels to charge batteries for electricity.

However, solar electricity can also be used while you are connected to the electric company — you can buy from or sell electricity back to the company, depending on how much power you are generating with your solar system.

These "grid-connected" solar elec-



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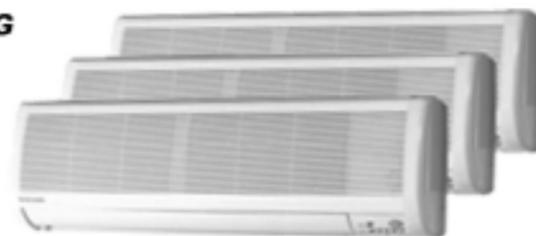
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ENERGY TIP OF THE MONTH



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Contact us to find out more!

Minnesota Department of Commerce,
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85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, MN 55101
651-296-5175 (Twin Cities) 800-657-3710 (outstate)
energy.info@state.mn.us or www.commerce.state.mn.us



Solar Electricity Pioneers

tric systems are eligible for the solar rebate program, which reduces the cost of installing a system by 20–25%. A state sales tax exemption on the panels reduces the cost an additional 5%. Businesses are also eligible for an additional 10% federal tax credit and accelerated depreciation. Community-based projects may be more financially viable if a “host-business” owns and operates the system since they can take advantage of these additional benefits.

“A solar electric system will save you money on your electricity bill but the payback for your investment is long. We choose to buy organic food products because they are better for our health, our local economy, and the environment, and a solar system has similar benefits,” says Mike Taylor, Rebate Program Manager. “Organic

food shoppers are more aware and more involved in these issues and they are likely to be interested in the rebate program.”

The price for a one kilowatt solar electric system might start at \$9,000 and the rebate would give you \$2,000 back once it is installed. The solar system would produce about 1,100 kilowatt hours each year (kWh/yr) — roughly 15% of what is used by the average Minnesota home or up to 100% of a more energy-efficient one. A solar electric system can be paid for with cash, a conventional or home equity loan, or even rolled into a new or refinanced home mortgage payment.

Whether you decide to “go solar” or not, using electricity more efficiently with Energy Star appliances and lighting (www.energystar.gov) can reduce

the amount of electricity you use without sacrificing time or comfort. If you are committed to going solar, spending energy conservation money will save a significant amount of money needed for solar.

For more information on the solar electric rebate program, other renewable energy options, and home energy conservation guides contact the Minnesota Energy Information Center at 651-296-5175 or 800-657-3710, energy.info@state.mn.us, or www.commerce.state.mn.us > Energy Information Center. **CG**

staff news

WFC welcomes **Brad Rozman**, Buyer's Assistant, **Cheryl Weir**, Assistant Deli Manager and new clerks **Bonnie Barker**, **Sarah Brokke** and **Ashley Jimenez**.

Congratulations to **Shannon Szymkowiak** on her promotion to Marketing & Member Services manager, **Briana Lowrie** to Assistant Operations Manager and **Virginia Wigger** to Coordinator. Good luck on your new challenge to **Justin Hemming** who is sliding over from his position as Assistant Deli Manager to become Assistant Produce Manager.

Best wishes to **Dianna von Rabenau** who has left WFC to manage her own business, The Green Mercantile.

WFC is proud to recognize the following employment anniversaries:

July

Jessica Belich, Coordinator – 3 yrs

August

John Fisher Merrit, Projects Assistant – 28 yrs

Amy Burkett, Deli Assistant – 2 yrs

Avy Jackson, Deli Assistant – 2 yrs

Diana Preisen, Clerk – 2 yrs

Ian Alexy, Produce Assistant – 1 yr

Virginia Wigger, Clerk – 1 yr

Welcome, new members!

Paige Lunsford
Katy Hemberger
Christine Dearing
Darlene Subialka
Susan Cook
Helen Hoglund
Sally Parsons
Melissa Bromme
Michelle Pierson
Mary Kirschling
Alice McConnell
Sally Turner
Stacy Oltmanns
Peggy Naylor
Nena Johnson
Richard Duus

Kristin Viren
Emebet Davies
Camp Amnicon
Vicki Davis
Michael Forbes
Michael Jader
Edna Blanchard
Melissa Janzen
Joan Setterlund
Linda Schwartz
Kris Cameron
Paul Zoldahn
Dana Keliin
Mary Carlson
Ingrid Sutherland
Kathleen Roufs

Mary Lemire
Janine Cushman
Jennifer Schultz
Debra Filipovich
Amy Peterson
Roberta Edstrom
Gene Karwoski
Richard Lenos
Delisha Hinojosa
Kerry Accola
Crystal Grey
Robert Larson
Tara Nelson
David Piphon
Leanne Vecchione
Maxine Stewart

Bridget Leighton
Veronica Michalski
Amy Westbrook
Lee Anne Cummings
Sheila Sutton
Tracy Griggs
Jane Busche
Abby Scarcella
Rebecca Paddock
Deanne Furo
Michael Larson
Lisa Bents
Kristin Wiedenfeld
Amber Swader
LeAnn Littlewolf

Rita Nimz
Bruno Notzke
Michael Scherer
Doris Machones
Elizabeth Maeshima
Wanda Jacquot
Jolen Ujura-Wilds
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news bites

- WFC policies require a receipt for a cash refund. Please save your receipts. Thank you!

- Food Policy Committee meeting, Monday, August 9, 5:30 PM, at WFC's Annex, 1522 East Superior Street (upstairs/front entrance).

- WFC will be closed on Sunday, July 4, 2004.

- COMING SOON!!! WFC's Midsummer Organic Food Fest (MOFF), Saturday, July 31, in our parking lot.

- When you join the non-profit Arbor Day Foundation, you will receive 10 free flowering trees selected for your area at the right time for planting. To receive your free trees, send a \$10 membership contribution to 10 Flowering Trees, The National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410 or join on-line at www.arborday.org.

- In our effort to avoid errors, please tell the clerk if you have sale apples, sale bananas or seed potatoes before they ring them through the till. Thank you!

BERRY INTERESTING FACTS

Medieval stonemasons carved strawberry designs on altars and around the tops of pillars in churches and cathedrals, symbolizing perfection and righteousness. During the same time period, strawberries were served at important state occasions and festivals to ensure peace and prosperity.

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834-6035 ferdly2001@yahoo.com
Term expires in 2004

Chris Edwardson
Board Recruitment Committee
Finance Committee
31 East Arrowhead Road
Duluth, MN 55803
724-6357
edwardsonfamily@juno.com
Term expires in 2004

Lynn Fena
Membership Committee
Food Policy Committee
110 Laurie Street
Duluth, MN 55803
728-1394 lynn.fena@chartermi.net
Term expires in 2005

Dennis Kaleta
GMEC Committee
P. O. Box 312
Two Harbors, MN 55616
384-3658 dekaleta@yahoo.com
Term expires in 2005

Katie Neff Dawson, President
GMEC Committee
Board Recruitment Committee
5993 Arnold Road
Duluth, MN 55803
721-3065 knd@cpinternet.com
Term expires in 2005

Jean Sramek, Vice President
Food Policy Committee
316 Mygatt Avenue
Duluth, MN 55803
724-0237 sramek2@yahoo.com
Term expires in 2005

Geiger Yount, Treasurer
Finance Committee
3000 London Road
Duluth, MN 55804
724-0652 geigman@aol.com
Term expires in 2004

e-group address for entire Board
including General Manager
Sharon Murphy:
wfcbod@wholefoods.coop

Mission Statement

The Whole Foods Co-op is committed to the Cooperative Principles, to providing its members, patrons and community the highest quality nutritious whole foods, and to the products and practices which make positive changes in the life of its community, employees and environment.

Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership.
2. Democratic member control.
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence.
5. Education, training and information.
6. Cooperation among co-ops.
7. Concern for community.

Board Report June 2004

Welcome to all the new member-owners of Whole Foods Cooperative. We are tickled that you have decided to participate in this business. It was just about a year ago the Board started the practice of calling new members and welcoming them to our cooperative. For me, it has been fun to talk to folks and hear what they have to say about the store. If for some reason you got missed, we hope you still feel welcomed. Please, don't hesitate to call or e-mail any Board member with concerns or joys about the direction of our store. Thank you to all our members for their contribution to making our store successful as we burst out of our seams at this site.

Welcome to new staff and a huge thank you to all of our staff for the work they do.

The WFC Board is having such an exciting spring. There are high hopes for a new site. We are all keeping fingers and toes crossed that the site may be announced soon.

The Board accepted Claire Kirsch's resignation at the April Board meeting. Travel and family took her away from us. The open position was posted and prior candidates were contacted. The Board accepted Member Chris Edwardson's application and, at the May Board meeting, appointed him to fill out Claire's term (expires October 2004). Chris has experience with Common Health Cooperative Warehouse in Superior and appears to have other good qualities like a sense of humor and "plays well with others." We thank Claire for her work on the board.

At the April meeting the Board set a number of goals including to: link with other co-op boards to plan, lead and think nationally, expand financial understanding, implement a successful member loan program (more later), create defined opportunities for member linkage, maintain great attendance at annual meetings (be there or be square!) and review the bylaws. Just a few things.

"Dining with the Directors" happened in May, and it was delightful. Ten member-owners who placed their name in a drawing to dine with us attended. Several folk were from outside the Duluth area: Hibbing, Superior, Cloquet and Knife River. That is so cool! We feasted on an excellent Mediterranean meal prepared by our deli. The conversation was about a new store, of course, but we also asked these folks, what will help to maintain their business and loyalty while we are in this expansion transition. We all know the present site can feel quite small at times and, yet, we all want more availability of products. Everyone in attendance expressed great patience and acceptance of the difficulties at the present site. Heck, the member from Hibbing is driving 80 miles to shop here. We talked about visions for the new store and some great ideas came up. I really enjoyed this chance to hear from member-owners. I hope you will consider "Dining with the Directors" in the future. We would love to hear from you anytime.

Next up this spring, four members of the Board and several managers will head down to the Twin Cities for the 48th Annual Consumer Cooperative Management Association Conference. It is always a great experience to hang with other co-op folks and swap stories. This year I will be working extra hard by facilitating a workshop on Local Board Effectiveness.

I hope by the time this is mailed the weather has warmed and all the rest of my seeds and seedlings are planted and thriving. May your garden, whether it be external or internal, thrive. GG

Katie Neff Dawson
Board President

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Dear Co-op,
Please find more rice crax without wheat. There is only 1 now – Brown Rice Snaps. *Signed, Wheat Free*

Dear Wheat Free,
We now carry 2 varieties of San J Rice Crackers, 3 varieties of Edward & Sons Rice Snaps and Health Valley Rice Bran Crackers, all of which are wheat free. Thanks! *Lisa – Grocery Buyer*

everyone's so nice (like Michigan). Have a good day & we'll see you on our return. *Signed, Joe Sandren*

Dear Joe-
Thanks for the kind words. In the words of Frank Burns "It's nice to be nice to the nice."
Shannon – Marketing & Member Services

Trade Certified. Chocolve sources chocolate from suppliers who have signed a statement "...that no forced labor or exploitive labor practices..." have been used. Dagoba chocolate standards claim that their (cocoa) "...farmers work in an eco-friendly manner according to fair trade philosophies." Endangered Species chocolate sources their chocolate from "Fair Trade Certified" sources. Newman's Own Organics states that their inspectors verify the farm is "slavery free".
Lisa – Grocery Buyer

-Also look for Fair Trade produce such as bananas, mangoes and grapes. Ask a Produce Staff member for availability. *Michael – Produce Manager*

Dear Co-op,
Please bring back sheep feta. *Yummy!*

Dear Yummy,
We still have sheep feta – the same brand, but now it is pre-packed & not in a tub. Plus, it's less expensive! – *Debbie- Deli Manager CC*



We Respond

Dear Co-op,
Please bring back early greens in the box. *Signed, Greens Less & Blue*

Dear Greens Less & Blue,
We do now and plan to continue to stock this item. If it was out when you were shopping, it may be that our supplier shorted us. If you ever have a question about an out of stock produce item, just ask a Produce Staff member. We'll be happy to help!
Michael – Produce Manager

Dear Co-op,
Raw Mixed Nuts. *Thank you, Billy*

Dear Billy,
Raw mixed nuts were a slow seller last time we offered them, but I will definitely consider this option if space opens up – I prefer them myself.
Jim – Bulk Buyer

Dear Co-op,
Which of our chocolate bars is Fair Trade Certified? *Signed, Fair Trader*

Dear Fair Trader,
Our Rapunzel chocolate bars are Fair

Dear Co-op,
Nice to stop by here from MI;

Savor The Season

Throughout this issue of the Garbanzo Gazette, you have seen some Berry Interesting Facts. Perhaps you read Bonnie Williams' article about berries. Berries of many types are grown all over the Northland. Off season, organic strawberries are available almost year 'round. If you have the knack, you may have a yard full of delicious berries. If you're lucky, you will happen upon some wild blueberries on a hike. Either way, we hope you will be inspired to enjoy some of the best fruit our area produces.



We hope you enjoy these strawberry recipes throughout the year.

STRAWBERRY ANGEL PIE – WHEAT- FREE!

- 1½ c. sugar or *evaporated cane juice
- 1/4 t. cream of tartar
- *eggs, separated
- T. grated *lemon rind
- 3 T. *lemon juice
- 1 c. *heavy cream
- 1 qt. *strawberries
- 1 small jar of *apricot or strawberry jelly (optional)

* With all recipes, we recommend using organic ingredients for best flavor

CRUST: Preheat oven to 275°F. Sift together 1 cup of the sugar and the cream of tartar. Beat the egg whites until stiff. Slowly fold the sugar mixture and beat until well blended. Butter the sides and bottom of a 9" pie plate. Scrape the meringue mixture into the pie plate, covering the sides and bottom to form a shell. Bake for one hour. Place on a rack to cool. *NOTE: you will have the best results if you have the eggs, beater and bowl at room temperature. Make sure your beaters and bowl are absolutely clean and dry.*

FILLING: Beat egg yolks until light and lemon colored. Add 1/2 cup of the sugar. Add the lemon rind and lemon

juice and beat to blend. Stirring continuously, cook in the top of a double boiler until thickened. Remove from the heat and let cool. Whip the cream until stiff and fold this into the lemon filling. Pour this into the cooled meringue shell. Chill until the filling is set.

TOPPING: Wash the strawberries with the leaves on to prevent water from soaking into the berries. Remove the leaves (and hulls if desired). Set aside. If you are using the glaze to give the berries a shiny, sweet effect, melt the jar of jelly in a small

saucepan over low heat. Cool. **ASSEMBLY:** Place the strawberries whole, bottoms up to cover the top of the filling or slice and lay out in a decorative pattern. If you are using the glaze, drizzle lightly over the berries. (You may not use the whole jar). Chill and serve.

-Adapted from New York Times Cookbook

BALSAMIC BERRIES

- 1 pt. strawberries, sliced
- 2 T. balsamic vinegar
- 2 T. sugar or evaporated cane juice

Wash the berries with leaves and hulls intact. Remove leaves and hulls. Slice into a bowl, alternating berries, vinegar and sugar. Toss lightly. Serve alone, on a salad or on ice cream.

ORANGE YOU GLAD I MADE SHORTCAKE

- 2 c. flour
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1/4 t. cinnamon
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. (2 sticks) butter, softened
- 1-1/2 c. plus 2 T. sugar, evaporated cane juice or maple sugar
- juice of two oranges
- zest of two oranges

- 1 qt. strawberries
- Optional – vanilla powder or vanilla extract to taste, whipped cream, ice cream, mint leaves and/or additional orange zest*

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease and flour one 9-1/2" x 5-1/2" x 2-3/4" loaf pan or one 10-1/2", 3" deep tube (bundt) pan.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon twice. Set aside. In another bowl, beat the eggs and vanilla. Set aside.

In a large bowl, cream the butter until light and fluffy. Add 1-1/2 c. sugar gradually, making sure it is incorporated before adding more. When all of the sugar added, beat another two minutes at medium speed.

Add the egg mixture a little at a time, beating well at medium speed after each addition. When all of the eggs are added, beat at high speed for one more minute.

Add the dry ingredients by sprinkling over the batter a little at a time and folding them in, again making sure it is incorporated before adding more.

On low speed, add the orange juice and zest, beating only long enough to mix it together completely.

Pour the mixture into the prepared pan, pushing the batter up the sides of the pan to prevent excess rising in the center.

Bake the loaf pan for 70 – 80 minutes or the tube pan for 50 – 60 minutes or until

a toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the center of the cake. Cool for ten minutes in the pan on a wire rack, then turn out and finish cooling out of the pan on the rack.

While the cake cools, wash, hull and slice the strawberries into a bowl. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 T. sugar on the berries and stir well to get the berry juices flowing. You may also add vanilla powder or a small amount of vanilla extract to taste at this time. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 2 hours before refrigerating.

When you are ready to serve, slice the pound cake and alternate with the berries and whipped cream or ice cream if you like. Garnish with orange zest or mint leaves. *CC*

Shannon Szymkowiak, Marketing & Member Services Manager is a 10 year veteran of the natural foods industry. In addition to working for WFC for a little over a year, she is also an Apprentice Organic Inspector.

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I've Bean Good to You

Ever wonder what the most popular summer vegetable is in Europe or North America? Well, if you looked at sales volume it would be potatoes or yams.

But if you looked at what is a favorite on the dinner table it's probably green beans! Let's take a look through some kitchen windows and you'll see what I mean. In a favorite moussaka dish Bulgarians replace the traditional eggplant with fresh green beans in a sauce made with flour, butter, onions, bay and mace. In Italy it's green beans smothered with onions and stewed a long time, while Germans enjoy a wonderful dish that combines green beans with apples, carrots, and bacon. Of course, on dinner tables across the US, you can always count on the famous green bean and mushroom soup casserole. And, there are countless Midwestern or East coast natives that have fond memories of pickled green beans livening up a winter supper or winning a blue ribbon at the county fair. Most of this would not

1800s. Why new? Well, many of us still call green beans "string beans" but today there is no need to remove the string that used to run the length of the bean because most are now stringless. With their wonderful flavor and versatility it's no wonder they are a welcome addition to dinner tables worldwide. But their virtues don't stop there. As a good source of fiber, folic acid, Vitamin A and C and the minerals potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron and calcium, green beans are a great nutritional value. They are also rich in phytoestrogens, which have been shown to be helpful in balancing hormone levels in men and women. Phytoestrogens are also valuable for women who have problems with PMS or menopause. All this and only 40 calories per cup—it's no wonder so many of us are bean lovers!

Pole Beans and Bush Beans: What's Your Choice?

During the off-season when most of our beans come from Florida and Mexico, pretty much all the green beans are bush beans. Once summer rolls around we hit bean season when

Blue Lake: Probably the most popular green bean. Large, long and slender with deep green color.

Haricots Verts: Small, skinny and tender French bush variety.

Kentucky Wonder: Favorite pole bean variety, both green and yellow wax types are good.

Romano: Italian, flat-podded pole bean, although there are now also bush Romanos. Versatile and flavorful, it holds up well to stewing, and is usually chopped.

Royal Burgundy: Beautiful purple bush bean with green interior. Entire bean turns green when cooked.

Yellow Wax: Tender bean with slight waxy texture. Best if eaten young, large beans may be tough.

References for this issue: "Freezing Green Beans", Linda Neil, U of MN Extension Service, www.extension.umn.edu; Sally's Place, www.sallys-place.com; Manuel Jimenez, Farm Advisor, UC Davis; Dan Dirnberger, Organic Grower, Homestead, FL; Johnny's Selected Seeds 2001, Commercial Catalog; Golden Gate Gardening by Pam Pierce

Fresh Perspective

"They were a Mexican favorite for nearly 7,000 years before the first European explorers arrived. These explorers brought the beans back to Europe where they gained instant acceptance because they resembled two favorites— asparagus and a popular broad bean."

Most of this would not be possible if they hadn't be possible if they hadn't journeyed from this continent to Europe. Green beans were a Mexican favorite for nearly 7,000 years before the first European explorers arrived. These explorers brought the beans back to Europe where they gained instant acceptance. Europeans loved green beans because they resembled two favorites—asparagus and a popular broad bean. They were even given the name "sperage beans" in reference to both. They were so loved that it set the course for their journey back to North America. It made perfect sense that the immigrants who traveled to the U.S. would bring seeds of one of their favorite vegetables, not knowing there were many varieties already here. varieties already here. we eat two main types of green beans: bush and pole. of green beans: bush and pole. Growers prefer bush beans because the bushes are compact, because the bushes are compact, they are easy to grow and can be easily harvested by hand. These are the long, round beans you'll find year-round at the store. Pole beans must be trained on poles and netting, making them more of a local, summertime treat. They may be round or flat, and many say they have the best flavor. Both bush and pole beans come not only in green, but purple and yellow (wax). The green bean varieties most commonly found in our markets can be considered both old and new. Why old? Because the popular Kentucky Wonder which is long and flat and the Blue Lake, which are round and thin have been around since the mid-



there can be many bean varieties to choose from, including pole beans and different colored bush beans. Pole beans tend to be flatter and fatter than bush beans. They take more labor to grow because they have to be trained to a pole, so it's usually the smaller size farms that grow these. Pole beans may have strings but that's a small price to pay for what can be good, flavorful beans with solid texture—something different than your usual bush bean. Because they don't take well to mechanized production and harvesting, pole beans aren't as hybridized as bush beans so, you're more likely to get old-fashioned bean flavor. Because bush beans are easier to grow they're more common in the marketplace. They're an excellent all-purpose bean and so easy to prepare now that the string has been bred out. If they're not that big you may only need to trim the stem end and not the tip. Some varieties to try:

We call them green beans or snap beans but not long ago we called them string beans. Older varieties have a string that runs down the length of the bean, which needs to be peeled off. Plant scientists bred out the string, making green beans less stringy and more snappy.

If you want them fresh then try this test: bend a bean. It should SNAP! If not, it's old. All types should be crisp, unblemished, and bright in color. Store all beans dry in a plastic bag. Use within five days.

Ask Dr. Patty Produce

Q: What is the difference between how organic and conventional green beans are grown? P. Jones

A: Dear P, An important difference is the use of fungicides. In warm, humid or wet weather disease is a big threat. Organic growers can prevent and slow disease with sulfur products and plant-based oils, although many organic growers are eager to find better ways to control disease without sulfur, which is an allergen to some people. Conventional growers use sulfur and oils but they also may use chemicals like *chlorothalonil* (Bravo brand) or *Mancozeb*. Both are suspected carcinogens (and toxic to fish). Chlorothalonil, a Class I material, is one of the more toxic and common residues found on green beans. This is why it's always a good idea to wash your beans before using them. **CC**

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gourmet to go

By Frank Ingram, member

Summer (even a Twin Ports summer) is the time for salads, so our cheese features have a Mediterranean theme. We will have Feta in July and Mozzarella in August. The Co-op carries a plain feta, a feta in oil and herbs, goat feta, sheep feta, and an organic feta as well as a low fat mozzarella and a fresh mozzarella.

If your Twin Ports summer day calls for something warmer, this Turkish recipe is an interesting accompaniment for dishes from the grill.



Kabac Mucver - Zucchini Fritter

Serves 4 (8 Fritters)

- 10 Zucchini. Peeled and mashed. (Cores from Zucchini used for stuffing can be frozen and used in this recipe)
- 4 tablespoons Cornstarch
- 4 tablespoons all purpose flour
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 eggs
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 oz Feta cheese
- 2 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro or coriander
- vegetable oil for frying

Mix the Cornstarch and flour in a bowl with just enough water to make a thickish paste. Beat in the eggs.

Mix in the remaining ingredients (except the oil).

Heat the oil in a shallow pan. Put a dollop (about 1/8) of the mixture in the pan. Flatten with the back of a spoon to make a disk. Repeat to use mixture. Fry fritters for 8–10 minutes—turning once or twice—until golden.

Feta Cheese Salad

Serves 4

- 1/2 iceberg lettuce (shredded)
- few endive sprigs (optional)
- 1/4 onion, sliced thinly
- 1 green pepper, cored, seeded and sliced thinly
- bunch watercress
- 8 radishes, quartered
- 6 oz Feta cheese, cubed
- 12 black olives

Dressing

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar
- salt and pepper to taste

Arrange the first six ingredients on a platter or in bowls. Sprinkle with cheese and olives. Mix together the dressing ingredients and pour over the salad just before serving.

Fresh Mozzarella and Tomato Salad

Serves 4

This simple salad really needs fresh mozzarella—the brick in plastic works for pizza but is not the right texture for this salad. Fresh mozzarella is sold from a container of whey or other liquid. If you see a mozzarella cheese in a plastic pouch with liquid, these work with this recipe.

- 1 pound tomatoes, sliced
- 8 basil leaves, chopped
- 1 fresh mozzarella, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- pepper to taste
- basil leaves to garnish

Arrange the tomato and mozzarella slices on individual serving plates, sprinkle with basil. Just before serving drizzle tomatoes with oil, season and garnish.

Both above recipes from "Sainsbury's Salads" - Mary Cadogan (Cambridge, UK 1986) GG

new products

Body Care:

- Pure & Basic Anti-Dandruff shampoo and Conditioner
- Alba Hawaiian SPF 30
- Common Sense Lotion (3 Varieties)
 - Jojoba Rose
 - Lemon Cypress
 - Baby Mild

Supplements:

- Tropical Oasis Liquid B Complex
- Wally's Beeswax ear candles 4pack
- Similason Allergy Eyes
- Similason Dry eye drops
- Similason Sinus Relief
- Boiron Optique 1 eye drops
- Alacer Mixed berry Emergen-c
- Natren Healthy Trinity probiotic

Deli:

- Shullsberg Creamery White Cheese Curds
- Shullsberg Creamery Yellow Cheese Curds

Cool:

- Plugra Butter
- Farmer's All Natural Creamery Buttermilk
- White Wave Unsweetened Soy Milk
- White Wave Very Vanilla Soy Milk
- Larry Schultz Organic Eggs

Frozen:

- Turtle Island Beer Brats
- Natural Touch Lentil Rice Loaf
- Nature's Highlights Brown Rice Crust
- Cascadian Farm Whole Green Beans
- Ian's Harvest Fries

Special Frozen Note: Wild Alaska Salmon will be back in at the beginning of September.

Grocery:

- Nature's Path Toaster Pastries* in 3 varieties
- Bob's Red Mill Almond Meal
- Knudsen Just Pomegranate Juice
- Food for Life Ezekiel 4:9 Cereal* in 4 varieties



- BioSolo Compostable Bags in 2 sizes
- Native Forest Artichoke Hearts; marinated or quartered
- Crofters Peach Passion Conserves*
- Guayaki Mate; Vanilla Nut, Dark Roast and Mocha Maca

**indicates organic*

Bulk

- Woodstock Farms Organic Vegetarian Jelly Pebbles
- Woodstock Farms Organic Vegetarian Gummy Cubs

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by Charlotte Klesman, member

Like money, tomatoes don't grow on trees. If they did, they'd be easier to grow here in the North Country. Still, Mike Olund and his wife Lynn have established Olunds' Organic Greenhouse and Superior Forest Flowers, a successful organic farm in Brimson, where they grow vegetables and cut flowers for the Whole Foods Co-op and the Natural Harvest Food Co-op in Virginia. I spoke to Mike while he was delivering lettuce to the store.



“The biggest problem is chipmunks. They're just death on green tomatoes and they eat lettuce seedlings.”

Garbanzo Gazette: *What kinds of vegetables and flowers do you grow?*

Mike Olund: We grow lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, kale, Swiss chard and garlic. And we grow a considerable variety of flowers. Dried flowers are peonies, statice, some larkspur, some nigella, peppercress, and linum, or flax. The fresh flowers are sunflowers, rudbeckia, snapdragons, ageratum...a large variety.

GG: *Were you always organic?*

MO: We started as organic nearly twenty-three years ago. We wanted to grow food in a safe manner, without harming the environment. A lot has changed since then, but the basics are the same.

GG: *Why grow organic flowers?*

MO: Mostly for crop rotation. And when people buy a bouquet, they rearrange and handle it. If there's pesticide residue on it, anybody with allergies or chemical intolerances will have a problem.

GG: *How do you cut your flowers?*

MO: Usually we harvest in the afternoon. We hand cut them with a bypass pruner and put them immediately into a bucket of warm water to hydrate. Next we cut the stems again, arrange the bouquets and sleeve them. They're immediately put into cold water and placed in cold storage in our basement overnight. I deliver them to the Co-op the next day. They usually last a week to ten days. When we bring them to the store they've only been harvested 8-10 hours, so they're very fresh.

GG: *Can customers request a particular crop?*

MO: Tell the produce manager, (Michael), you're interested in a specific variety. If the Co-op finds people are interested they'll ask I or another grower if we would be interested in it. Right now we're growing corn salad. Michael noticed people were buying the commercial stuff and thought certified organic corn salad might sell.

GG: *Do you grow heirloom vegetables?*

MO: We've grown some. But heirloom varieties don't perform well

Association farmer's market at UMD and from her home near Two Harbors.

GG: *Do you see a future in organic farming?*

MO: I think there's a big future in it. Not just the organics, but the whole movement toward locally grown produce and small scale produce growing. We're always competitive. We're always producing a better product than what's commercially available. And so far we've been able to get a reasonable price for it. It helps to be certified organic also. I don't see the

Olunds' Organic Greenhouse

An Interview With Mike Olund of Olunds Organic Greenhouse and Superior Forest Flowers

in greenhouses. We've been saving seed from one heirloom tomato called Vendor, developing our own seed strain over 23 years, selecting for earliness and productivity.

GG: *Do you eat what you grow?*

MO: We do. Otherwise we'd have to buy it here. (Laughs) We harvest our own lettuce in April, before it's big enough to bring into the store, and we're still eating our own fresh stuff out of the greenhouses usually into December, even after it's not marketable anymore. My favorite is anahiem peppers. I love to roast

peppers. We also grow just the normal garden things I don't grow to sell.

GG: *You start your plants from seeds?*

MO: Yes, we start everything from seed. We start tomatoes and lettuce in the basement the last week of January, and usually open the first greenhouse in mid March.

GG: *Any problems with invaders?*

MO: In the greenhouse the biggest problem is chipmunks. They're just death on green tomatoes and they eat lettuce seedlings off. We have very little trouble with insect pests.

GG: *Who harvests?*

MO: We do. Everything is hand harvested. Tomatoes, cucumbers, all the flowers; nothing is done mechanically. We do hire some part-time help, and this year we have an intern from University of Minnesota Duluth. Her name is Andrea Sande and she's majoring in environmental education. She sells at the Sustainable Farming

demand for higher quality vegetables ever going away.

GG: *What should readers know about organic farmers?*

MO: We want people to understand the effort and investment that goes into raising warm weather crops in a greenhouse here. It's an awful lot of work, you're tied down for a very long time, that you can't leave because you could have a disaster in a very few hours. A few weeks ago I lost about 300 tomato plants to a sudden temperature drop.

We'll probably lose a couple weeks of tomato production from that greenhouse, so it's gonna cost us some dough.

Fortunately Shary Zoff, Diane Dickey, and John Fisher-Merritt provided tomato plants to help replace the ones that froze out. It was very kind of them and we are very grateful. But there's an advantage and disadvantage to growing diverse crops.

Every year one kind of crop or flower will have a really poor year, but something else will just go crazy. It balances out. **GG**



Mike & Lynn Olund