



River Valley Market

Special news supplement from your locally grown food co-op

Special
New Year
Edition
2012



WINTER MOON FARM

Local vegetables in winter, with a small carbon footprint

Vibrantly colorful, sweet, and locally grown...do these phrases remind you of anything? Root vegetables, perhaps? No? If you still think of root vegetables as a mushy, bland, drably colored affair, it's time to get acquainted with Winter Moon Farm's crop. Winter Moon Farm, located in Hadley, is owned by Michael Docter. His certified organic farm also hosts the Next Barn Over CSA in the summertime.

Docter has been involved in agriculture for more than 23 years; before launching Winter Moon Farm, he managed the Food Bank Farm in Hadley, near his current location. Docter decided to specialize in production of root crops because, he says, they are his favorite crop to grow. "Winter roots," explains Docter, "tend to be sweeter and tastier because of the cool temperatures. The roots actually produce sugar as a natural 'anti-freeze.'"

Docter says his mission is to grow good, healthy food for people, and to do it while creating the smallest carbon footprint possible. Docter has ambitious plans for the farm: By 2015, he plans that the amount of carbon that is used to grow the crops, store them, and transport them to market will be

less than the actual carbon that is taken up by those same crops through photosynthesis.

The farm's cooling system operates without the use of energy-intensive compressors and refrigeration. Instead, it relies on a computer-based regulating system and a fan that mix cold winter air with indoor air to maintain proper storage temperatures. The barn's roof is covered with solar collectors, which power the farm's packing equipment, fork lift, and other devices necessary for operation. Docter also makes deliveries by bicycle whenever possible—last year he and his friend Merve Brussard hauled over 18,000 pounds of roots by bike!

Before you conclude that the season is over for eating fresh, local vegetables, stop by River Valley Market and pick up some of Winter Moon's sweet carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips or psychedelic watermelon radishes. Be forewarned: they are habit-forming! ❄️



Photo: Jim Gipe, Pivot Media

BEATING WINTER'S MENACE

Colds and flu

I got to coughing incessantly, and my voice fell below zero; I conversed in a thundering bass, two octaves below my natural tone; I could only compass my regular nightly repose by coughing myself down to a state of utter exhaustion, and then the moment I began to talk in my sleep, my discordant voice woke me up again. My case grew more and more serious every day. Plain gin was recommended; I took it. Then gin and molasses; I took that also. Then gin and onions; I added the onions, and took all three. I detected no particular result, however, except that I had acquired a breath like a buzzard's.

—FROM "CURING A COLD," BY MARK TWAIN

It's just a cold. You can't breathe, you can't sleep, your head aches and your throat is raw from coughing. The skin on your nose is raw. You feel like you're under three feet of water. Just a cold?

Colds and flu are caused by the same viruses, of which 200 are known. A cold is a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract. A flu attacks both the upper and lower respiratory tracts.

A cold involves symptoms of the head and chest; a flu can be more debilitating, with chills, fever, and body aches.

The viruses that cause colds and flu are transmitted by sick



Continued inside

MYCO TERRA

Bringing nature's work indoors

MYCOLOGIST JULIA COFFEY is a different kind of farmer. Working from specially designed rooms in her Westhampton home, Julia cultivates mycelium (tiny strands of vegetative matter) destined to grow into delicious oyster, shiitake, and lion's mane mushrooms.

Julia launched Myco Terra several years ago and is growing her business slowly; she already has an enthusiastic following among River Valley Market customers, as well as at area farmers' markets.

While winter is typically a slow time for mushroom production, check in our Fresh Produce Department: over the next few months you may find Myco Terra shiitakes, which Julia has discovered to be surprisingly tolerant of cold weather. When spring comes around again, Julia expects that the early cultivating work she is doing now will pay off with a bumper crop of mushrooms.

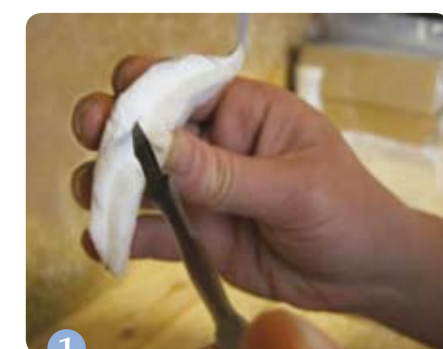
Most of us imagine mushrooms sprouting from an old log in the woods. Julia's process requires carefully controlled environments, scientific experimentation, and an understanding of conditions that help mushrooms thrive. Here's how she does it:



Photo: Jim Gipe, Pivot Media

Continued inside

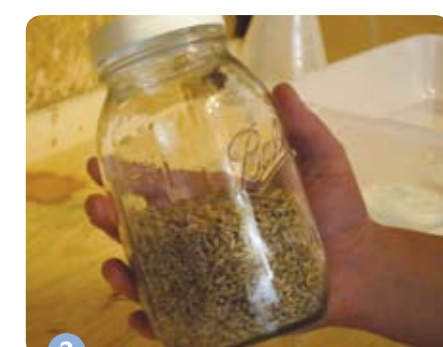
MUSHROOMS, continued



1. Julia starts with a freshly harvested mushroom. She uses a sterilized scalpel to harvest a small piece of the mushroom, avoiding the spores, in order to make a genetic (not reproductive) "copy."



2. Julia transfers the mushroom sample to an agar petri dish (food source) and stores it in a sterilized room, where it will incubate at controlled temperatures for about a week. She samples from the growing culture and transfers it to a new petri dish once or twice to ensure purity. Once she has a clean culture, she makes a "backup copy," which she stores in refrigerated test tubes.



3. She mixes certified organic rye berries (purchased from the co-op) with gypsum in a jar, and adds water. After letting this mixture rest for a period, she sterilizes the entire jar, then inoculates it with the pure mushroom culture she has cultivated in the petri dish. The inoculated rye berry mix incubates for several weeks in Julia's sterile room. A special filter on the jar allows the mixture to breathe, without admitting contaminants.



4. When the mushroom culture has grown sufficiently in the jar, it is transferred to a plastic bag full of grain, and fitted with the same type of air filter. The bag is sealed and incubated for several weeks.



5. Transfers continue as the culture grows: the mushrooms move first to a bag of sawdust, then to a woodchip/sawdust/gypsum/organic wheat bran mix. Shiitake mushrooms grow happily from this mixture, but oyster mushrooms are transferred to long plastic bags of wood shavings, from which they emerge from holes poked in the sides. ❄️

COLDS AND FLU, continued

people. They fill the air when someone coughs or sneezes, and survive on surfaces outside the body for several hours to several days. Why do some of us get colds just from looking at a sick person, while others never seem to get sick at all? People who don't get colds as easily may have stronger immune systems, or have less stress in their lives.

If you are exposed to cold and flu virus, drink a lot of fluids to hydrate your mucous membranes; viruses prefer a dry environment. Hot liquids also do a good job at killing viruses. Spicy foods help produce secretions that thin mucous and defeat viruses; milk blocks those secretions, and can slow down recovery. Most importantly, rest!



Foods that may prevent and shorten the duration and severity of colds and flu include fresh fruits (especially citrus and pineapple); fresh vegetables (especially leafy greens, bell peppers and asparagus); shiitake mushrooms; onions and garlic; and certain fresh herbs, including basil, ginger, chili, and horseradish.

Juices that might make you feel better: Beet, berry, carrot, citrus fruits, cucumber, spinach, and tomato. Also try drinking hot lemon and honey for a sore throat. Echinacea (3 ml of tincture three times daily) has antiviral properties and can relieve symptoms. Grated ginger steeped in hot water with cayenne and honey helps your throat and sinuses. Four to six grams of goldenseal powder three times daily soothes a sore throat and has antiviral properties, as do garlic, licorice, and elderberry.

If you need a little help with cold or flu symptoms, stop by our Wellness Department. We have an entire section devoted to cold and flu care, including homeopathic remedies, immune system defense, immune response at onset formulas, seasonal wellness formulas, Chinese herbal formulas, and traditional elderberry syrups. ❄️

Source: Nutrition Almanac by Lavon J. Dunne, McGraw-Hill 2002.

IS HEALTHY FOOD ELITE FOOD? THE WHAT-IF CHALLENGE



On his simplegoodandtasty.com blog, Lawrence Black wrote about Elizabeth Archerd's "What-If" Food Challenge, describing what he learned in a post titled "Good Food Only for the Elite? Working to Dispel the Myth." We have excerpted from his post with permission.

For the "What-If" Food Challenge (<http://www.wedge.coop/food-resources/my-what-if-food-challenge/>), Elizabeth Archerd blogs about her daily discoveries while living on a tight food budget. The premise had been tested by others, but never with this amount of disclosure and honesty. Archerd started from the vantage point of people who have no income to spend on food beyond SNAP benefits (food stamps). She noticed that other challenges had folks making things from mixes and processed foods. What about those who want to shop at a natural foods store?

Archerd's question turned into a mission to reverse the image of organic, local food lovers as elitist—a test to the dismissive statement, "Well, that's great, if you can afford it." Archerd points out that co-ops were originally founded as a response to rising food prices.

- Her challenge looked like this:
- Budget: \$367 a month, the maximum allotment for a two person household

- Full month's benefits in hand at beginning of month
- Shopping exclusively at the Wedge Co-op and taking advantage of member specials
- Buying "elitist" foods such as local, organic and fair trade, co-op-made and bulk products
- Tracking time to test the notion that cooking at home takes too much time for a working person.

Not only did Archerd and her husband survive, they thrived. They had cupboards full of extra food. The freezer was stocked with leftovers. They drank coffee! Their bounty gave me hope. Archerd shared these lessons from her experience:

- Cleaning out your cupboards, you discover what food you actually use compared to what you imagine you use.
- It's important to shop to a plan when on a budget: less money, fewer shopping trips, less randomness.
- Weekly cooking is simpler, more efficient, and requires nothing fancier than a slow cooker or a blender.
- Planning ahead and making larger batches to last for a few days increases flexibility.
- The bulk section at the co-op has amazing diversity and great value.
- Planning meals and freezing leftovers reduces waste.
- The slow cooker saves time and is a real pleasure to come home to at the end of the day.

THE DELIGHTS OF WINTER CITRUS

CITRUS IS IN SEASON IN THE WINTER MONTHS in warmer parts of the United States, bringing bright flavors, brilliant colors, and immunity-boosting vitamins to those of us facing a long cold New England winter. We are fortunate at River Valley Market to be able to offer tree-ripened, organic citrus fruits from Florida, brought to us by our friends at Enterprise Farm in Whately. We have shared a few citrus recipes below; the possibilities for creative cooking with citrus are endless!

ORANGE CRANBERRY VANILLA COMPOTE
Delicious on its own, or over pound cake or ice cream

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 orange (preferably certified organic)
 - 2 cups (8 ounces) fresh (or frozen, thawed) cranberries
 - 1 cup pure maple syrup
 - 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

PREPARATION

Using a zester, finely grate the zest off the orange. Using a sharp knife, cut the peel and white pith from the orange. Cut between membranes to release segments into bowl.



Combine zest, cranberries, syrup, juice, and vanilla in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until cranberries have burst and sauce has thickened, 5-10 minutes. Chill until cold. When ready to serve, gently stir orange segments into compote.

RAW SCALLOPS IN CITRUS SAUCE

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
 - 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce, preferably organic
 - 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons sunflower oil
 - 1 tablespoon finely grated peeled fresh ginger
 - 1 red Thai chile, thinly sliced

- 3/4 teaspoon Sherry vinegar
- 1/2 pound large sea scallops, side muscle removed, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, torn
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced chives
- Sea salt

PREPARATION

Whisk orange juice, lemon juice, soy sauce, oil, ginger, chile, and vinegar in a small bowl. Pour dressing onto 4 large rimmed plates. Arrange scallops over. Garnish with mint and chives. Season lightly with salt.



SOOTHING, NOURISHING TEA



When the temperature drops below zero and crusty snow is covering the ground, just thinking about a cup of hot tea can make you feel a little warmer.

Discovered by accident in China several thousand years ago, black, green, and oolong tea all come from the Camellia sinensis plant. They differ in the way they are processed—black allowed to oxidize for 2-4 hours.

Oolong leaves are partially oxidized, and green tea leaves are not oxidized, but steamed, rolled and dried. Herbal teas are not tea at all, but infusions of other plants with charms of their own.

Tea is potentially rich in health benefits. On its website, the Tea Association of the USA (www.teausa.com) reports outcomes from extensive research on tea and health. Tea can play a role in: Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease; reduced risk of certain cancers; improved oral and bone health; strong immune system; reduced levels of LDL ("bad" cholesterol); reduced weight gain and enhanced insulin activity; and reduced risk of kidney stones and osteoporosis.

River Valley Market offers many wonderful choices of tea—both true tea and herbal infusions. Begin your store-wide tea tour in our Bulk Spices department. We carry more than 20 varieties of bulk teas from Frontier Natural Products Co-op,

OATMEAL: A HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS CHOICE

With all the right fixin's!

January is National Oatmeal Month, an annual celebration of the joys of oatmeal in our world. Oatmeal is a starting place for many terrific recipes, and a hot bowl of oatmeal on a cold winter morning can be both comforting and delicious.

Oatmeal is good for you too. A 2008 study, authored by Dr. James W. Anderson of the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, affirmed 1998 research showing that oat consumption lowers total cholesterol levels and reduces low-density lipoprotein (LDL, the "bad" cholesterol) without adverse effects on high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL, the "good" cholesterol), or triglyceride concentrations.

The American Dietetic Association adds that the plant substances in oats may also help control blood pressure. They recommend incorporating one serving of oat-based foods—that's 1 cup of ready-to-eat oat cereal, ½ cup of cooked oatmeal, or 1/3 cup of cooked oat bran.

In 2010, a group of researchers at an American Society for Nutrition symposium examined and synthesized research on the health benefits of whole grains, including oatmeal. They concluded that, as a whole grain, oatmeal can potentially prevent coronary heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, and contribute to body weight management and gastrointestinal health.

So everything points to oatmeal being a great dietary choice. Are there any drawbacks to eating oatmeal? According to a study published in the January 2011 issue of *GUT: An International Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, some oat varieties can be unsafe for those with celiac disease and with a sensitivity to avenin, the storage protein in oats. A more typical drawback to eating oatmeal, however,

is the way many of us prepare it—loaded with high calorie toppings and fats.

Food columnist Mark Bittman pointed out in a *New York Times* essay last year that oatmeal recently introduced by a fast food chain (a "bowlful of wholesome goodness") is hardly a healthy menu addition. With 290 calories and "11 weird ingredients that you would never keep in your kitchen," this sweetened, high-fat oatmeal might be a significantly worse choice than a whole grain muffin or even a breakfast sandwich.

Regarding the potential convenience of fast food oatmeal, Bittman adds "In the time it takes to go in,...stand in line, order, wait, pay and leave, you could make oatmeal for four while taking your vitamins, brushing your teeth and half-unloading the dishwasher...If you don't want to bother with the stove at all, you could put some rolled oats (instant not necessary) in a glass or bowl, along with a teeny pinch of salt, sugar or maple syrup or honey, maybe some dried fruit. Add milk and let stand for a minute (or 10). Eat. Eat while you're walking around getting dressed. And then talk to me about convenience."

In other words, the best (and cheapest!) oatmeal and other whole grains are made at home, with minimal additions. Dr. Chris Seal of Newcastle University states it beautifully: "When shopping in a supermarket there will be a range of healthy,



nutritious whole grain foods; be sure to get them and beware of spurious imitations. After a little time their taste grows on you and refined foods will no longer satisfy you...Whole grains are not a luxury."

Get acquainted with delicious, nutritious oatmeal during National Oatmeal Month. Try some of our bulk, certified organic rolled oats, steel cut oats, and oat groats. Top them with a drizzle of local maple syrup or honey, a sprinkling of nuts, or a spoonful of local granola, and enjoy!

BAKED OATMEAL

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1/2 cup walnut pieces, toasted and chopped
- 1/3 cup maple syrup, plus more for serving
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- Scant 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk
- 1 large egg
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 ripe bananas, cut into 1/2-inch/1 cm pieces
- 1 1/2 cups blueberries (try local Farm to Freezer blueberries!) or mixed berries

PREPARATION

Preheat the oven to 375°F with a rack in the top third of the oven. Generously butter the inside of an 8-inch square baking dish.

In a bowl, mix together the oats, half the walnuts, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt.

In another bowl, whisk together the maple syrup, milk, egg, half of the butter, and the vanilla. Arrange the bananas in a single layer in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle two-thirds of the berries over the top. Cover the fruit with the oat mixture. Slowly drizzle the milk mixture over the oats. Gently agitate the pan to move the milk through the oats. Scatter the remaining berries and remaining walnuts across the top. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, until the top is golden and the oat mixture has set. Remove from the oven and let cool for a few minutes. Drizzle the remaining melted butter on the top and serve with maple syrup, if desired. ❄️



NOURISHING TEAS, continued

a buyers' cooperative. Frontier also provides us with bulk rooibos (red bush herbal "tea") in a variety of flavors, as well as other bulk herbal infusions.

It's hard to find local tea (tea plants prefer warm climates). However, River Valley Market is proud to offer Tease™ loose leaf tea in tins, produced by Tea Guys in Hatfield, available in traditional varieties, as well as enticing flavors like green

walnut, papaya ginger white, and strawberry kiwi. We also sell Tea Guys Hojicha, a Japanese tea that is roasted over charcoal at a high temperature, giving it a red-brown color and mild flavor.

THAI TEA AND PEANUT DRESSING

Delicious over raw or steamed vegetables

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup smooth old-fashioned peanut butter
- ½ cup freshly brewed black tea, room temperature

- ½ cup orange juice
- 3 tablespoons oriental sesame oil
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ teaspoons minced canned chipotle chilies

PREPARATION

Blend all the ingredients together until smooth.