

Local Food Tips Exchange and Discussion

Burnstown, Oct 3/09

The Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative and the Ottawa River Institute hosted a free two hour Local Food Tips Exchange and Discussion on Saturday October 3rd at the Neat CoffeeShop in Burnstown. It was a great afternoon with about 20 people exchanging many ideas and experiences about local food. Thanks to Neat for donating the space and a door prize.

Objectives

1. Learn how to make it easy and affordable to eat healthy local food through sharing tips and experiences of participants.
2. Foster the “local foodie” community in this part of the county (Arnrior, Renfrew, Burnstown, Matawatchan)

Tips

Following are some of the tips which generally fell under 4 categories.

- **Food preparation and kitchen tips.**

- peas – fresh peas are easy to shell and freeze in volume and grow well here
- how to cook “citron” – can be grown locally but not common – no clear direction but may be candied
- dehydrating works great – strawberries, pears, apples, herbs – purchase square with fan blowing from the side at all layers, round one with fan top to bottom also works or build your own or hang things near the woodstove
- corn can be hung by the husks to dry and then kernels peel off easily – great added to soups
- root cellar is great for storing vegetables through the winter
- “Harvest Cooking” - gourmet vegetarian cooking weekend near Wakefield Oct 23-25 with Tanya Wodicka
- carrot harvest – freezing option to scrub, blanch, chop, plastic wrap serving sizes and put in freezer bags – storing raw can be done in damp fresh woodchips, sawdust
- cabbage – make into sauerkraut or store raw with all leaves, stem, and root in root cellar
- squash – if not use all, rub cut end with honey to seal it and stay fresh longer
- apples – mechanical hand crank corer/peeler/slicer makes it much faster to process apples for drying
- sauerkrauting and other natural fermentation – adds flavour, nutrition, and digestive aid to diet
- meat bones – add 1 Tbsp vinegar and water to a pot of meat bones to draw out more nutrients – can also add a bit of salt – boil for 8-12 hours or long enough that cartilage easily falls away (1 hour in pressure cooker) – more flavour and better for you
- make your own bread - bread machine makes it really easy, used machines are everywhere, eat fresh, choose ingredients especially if allergies – other simple ways to make bread without the machine including using white flour to knead a whole wheat bread
- harvest nutritious garden and wild ‘weed’ greens such as lambsquarters and nettles, dry them on screens or hung from ceiling. Crumble into soup, casseroles in winter

- **Gardening to grow your own food.**
 - Seedy Sunday in Pembroke is Mar 7/09 – speak directly to the producers about heritage seeds and how to grow them
 - blue or purple potatoes – better for you than white – hard to come by as sold out early – possible niche for someone to grow them?
 - potatoes can be grown in tires adding tires and soil as it grows – potatoes also grown same way in old freezer
 - potatoes with green should not be eaten – green caused by exposure to sun while growing or harvested
 - soy beans – some had tried jet black which are good for soy milk and perhaps the shorter season – edamame had been grown in a small garden and can eat the fresh pods whole
 - “Square Foot Gardening” – one person just tried with good success – local distributor in Arnprior area attends the Seedy Sunday
 - raised beds, windows leaned against each other over beds and plastic at ends help to extend the growing season (open to vent on very sunny days)
 - apple trees can be grafted to get fruit true to variety- graft onto hardy northern wild trees
 - “biodynamic farming”
 - ‘Just Food’ (www.justfood.ca) has courses on gardening, lots of local food resources

- **Where and how to buy local food.**
 - difficulty making a living from growing vegetables – ideas of where to sell or advertise
 - farmers markets –weekly all season (see Farmers Markets page of our website for listings). Producer not always able to sell everything and weather affects number of customers so need other avenues to sell, in addition
 - Ottawa Valley Food Co-operative – monthly order day but also economical and easy way to have web site exposure with producer info available to public
 - Local Food Buying Guide for the Upper Ottawa Valley – available to print off our website
 - CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) – currently aware of only 1 CSA in Renfrew County (Rainbow Heritage Gardens, Cobden), potential for more
 - advertise at naturopath and other clinics where clients are being encouraged to improve their diets
 - ‘Savour Ottawa’ helps connect producers with Ottawa restaurants interested in using local foods
 - Valley locations with an emphasis on selling locally grown/produced foods in their stores/restaurants: Neat CoffeeShop, Burnstown, restaurant in White Lake, Red Canoe Café, Wilno, Grandma’s Pantry Bulk & Natural Foods, Killaloe, Kasha Natural Foods, Pembroke

- **Favourite resources – books, websites.**
 - ORI member coordinating people wanting to donate books about sustainable living to be kept at the library in Eganville and available across the county through interlibrary loans
 - websites:
 - www.ottawavalleyfood.org

- www.justfood.ca
- www.savourottawa.ca
- books on display (highly recommended in bold):
 - **Fallon, Sally. *Nourishing Traditions***
 - **Wodicka, Tanya. *Harvest Cooking Seminar***
 - **Katz, Sandor Ellix. *Wild Fermentation***
 - **Landau, Lois M. and Myers, Laura G. *Too Many Tomatoes, Squash, Beans, and Other Good Things***
 - **Berry Hill Country Living Tools Catalogue- www.berryhilllimited.com**
 - Munro, Derek B. and Small, Ernest. *Vegetables of Canada*
 - Small, Ernest and Deutsch, Grace. *Culinary Herbs for Short-Season Gardeners*
 - Dietitians of Canada, *Cook Great Food*
 - **Seeds of Diversity, *How to Save Your Own Seeds***
 - **Rodale Press**
 - **Rodal Press. Stocking Up- How to preserve the foods you grow, naturally.**
 - Bernadin, *Guide to Home Preserving*
 - **Herald Press. *Simply in Season- recipes that celebrate fresh, local foods***
 - Canadian Gardening, *the cook's garden*
 - Harrowsmith Magazine, *The Complete Harrowsmith Cookbook*
 - ***Mother Earth magazine***
 - ***Square Foot Gardening***
 - Shepherd and Ellen Ogden. *The Cook's Garden- growing and using the best-tasting vegetables*