



This month...

October Harvest
A Seedy Business
The Value of Seeds
Tips
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Apple Pastry

e-newsletter

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Local Food Benefits

1. Contributes less greenhouse gas emissions because food travels less distance from farm to fork.
2. Healthier: Fresher and more nutritious
3. Supports local farmers and helps maintain a vibrant local economy

The SFU Local Food Project is funded by Environment Canada

October is Harvest Month!

Aaahhh, the smell of autumn is in the air. And while we prepare ourselves for the imminent rain and darker days, this is also a time to celebrate the local harvest!

"Harvest" conjures up idyllic, pastoral images that may seem nostalgic and out-of-reach to city dwellers. But there are many ways that Lower Mainland residents can savour the season. For those with transport and a little extra time, a country excursion is a fun October outing. Farms in the Fraser Valley, Richmond, and Westham Island offer pumpkin patches, hay rides, corn mazes, wine, and of course seasonal produce, preserves and eggs.

Otherwise, search out places where the country comes to you! Weekly farmers markets, including the SFU Pocket Farmers Market, continue until the end of October. Plan a Thanksgiving dinner or potluck that reflects the bounty of local food available and find the ingredients at a farmers market near you. For those who eat poultry, even your choice of turkey can support the efforts of local growers and farmers.

Last but definitely not least, what could be more emblematic of BC Harvest than a fresh, crisp apple? The UBC Apple Festival (see events on page 2) showcases more than 60 varieties of BC-grown apples! For a listing of local farms that you can visit this month, check out this excellent resource: www.bcfarmfresh.com

A Seedy Business

The theme for this month's newsletter is inspired by the notion of a "Bountiful Harvest" and getting to the root, so to speak, of diversity.

We're talking about seeds. Have you ever wondered what heritage or heirloom mean? Every bought a perfectly red tomato and wondered why it was hard as a rock and had no flavour? How can it be true that nearly 200 varieties of apples are grown in BC, when our supermarkets display only a handful of options? This newsletter can only scratch the surface of this topic, but hopefully it will get you thinking and talking about the importance of seed diversity in our lives and society. See the next page for more!



Exploring the Value of Seeds

Why do we eat food? Because our bodies need it and, and because it tastes good! Modern day agribusiness selects plant varieties that will meet a particular criteria. Unfortunately, this criteria has less to do with flavour and nutrition, and more to do with profits. Preferred varieties are ones that have a high yield, are large, facilitate transport over long distance (firm, resilient, uniform ripening time), have uniformity of shape and colour, and are resistant to disease. The result is that out of thousands of varieties of food crops that could be grown, a small percentage of them are produced on a large scale. For consumers that means less choice.

But variety is not just the 'spice of life', it is necessary for life. The variety of organisms living together in an ecosystem give that system its resilience. Monocropping under modern industrial farming leaves crops more vulnerable and more dependent on heavy inputs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Traditional farmers, over generations and through much trial and error, have selected and managed seed banks that are best adapted to local conditions. The diversity of their crops and their seed banks provides the basis of their food security.

The effects of industrial farming have led to a growing interest in the conservation of heirloom and heritage seeds around the world as well as here in BC. Heritage seeds are older, non-hybrid varieties that are open-pollinated. Farmers markets abound with local heirloom varieties: did you know that there are over 4,000 varieties of tomatoes that range from tiny tumbler toms to the giant Ponderosa tomatoe, which can weigh up to three pounds? Local farmers are happy to share with you such tidbits of information!

Tips of the Month

- 1) Continue to cultivate a thoughtful food culture. If we truly value our food, then we should have some say in its production. We don't have to accept a decline in flavour and nutrition. A thoughtful food culture entails thinking about our food's origins and impact on the planet and people. It means taking time to select, prepare, discuss and enjoy food, rather than just 'putting food by'.
- 2) Support local food production! Farmers with a local market are not as constrained by transport issues, and are more able to cultivate local varieties. Many farmers markets offer heirloom and heritage vegetables. Try them!
- 3) If you have an interest in growing things, pay attention to where your seeds come from. Check out community seed saving groups.

Events

BC Harvest Wine Tasting

Oct 4, 1-4pm
Marquis Wine Cellars

UBC Farm Sowing Seeds

Open House (organic apprenticeship program)
Oct 11, 3-6pm

UBC Apple Festival

Oct. 18,19 11am-4pm

Workshop on Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Tues Oct 14, 9:30-12:20
SFU Bby, ASSC1 9095

Resources

Books:

The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food (Wayne Roberts, 2008)

Seeds of Diversity

www.seeds.ca

Primal Seeds

www.primalseeds.org

Deconstructing Dinner Radio

Heritage Foods:

Preserving Diversity I



Apple Pastry

A tasty alternative to apple pie! Try different combinations of seasonal fruit.



Ingredients:

Crust

2 1/2 C flour
2/3 C sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 C butter
1 egg

Topping

1/3 C sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
6-8 C peeled, sliced BC apples
(or a combination of seasonal fruit, including peaches, nectarines, berries, pears etc.)
juice of 1 lemon (plus zest if desired)
Optional: handful of chopped pecans or sliced almonds
1 egg
1 C sour cream

Instructions:

For crust: in large bowl mix flour, sugar and salt. Using pastry blender or forks, cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Beat egg and mix in. Press into a greased jelly roll pan (15 by 10). Bake at 400F for 10-15 minutes or until golden.

For topping: peel and slice fruit, toss in lemon juice. Mix sugar and cinnamon, add to fruit. Arrange fruit evenly over crust. If using nuts, sprinkle over fruit. Bake 15 minutes.

Reduce oven to 350. Combine egg, sour cream and sugar. Drizzle over fruit. Bake until fruit is tender, about 10 minutes. Cut into squares. Serve warm or cold.