



Hampden Park Co-op Mission: The corporation exists to serve its member stockholders and the surrounding community, promoting wholesome, healthful and ecologically sound food consumption, and permitting member involvement both in the procurement of that product and the operation of the corporation.

HAMPDEN PARK CO-OP NEWS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2008

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Co-op Hours:

Monday–Friday 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The co-op will be closed on Sunday, March 23, 2008.

Board Meetings:

The Hampden Park Co-op Board of Directors meets monthly. See its bulletin board in the entryway for meeting dates and locations.

Newsletter Deadline:

The deadline for the April/May issue is March 3. If you wish to write an article for the newsletter, contact Naomi Jackson at naomijx@juno.com, or leave a note in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the entryway.

HPC Web site:

www.hampdenparkcoop.com

Community Supported Agriculture: Why I Bought a Share

—by Pat Owen



I just bought a share in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm! Many of you reading this probably have already taken this leap. But I've been sitting on the fence for the past couple of years and finally decided to go for it. So, like any good convert to a new enterprise, I want to tell the world about it and increase numbers for the cause.

CSA projects are partnerships between small local farms and the community. People in the community buy "shares" ahead of time for a season and in return get weekly boxes of produce. What you get depends on what the farmer plants and what's ripe. Both sides benefit; the farmer gets an input of cash to get the season started, and community members get a regular supply of food fresh from the farm. Farmers don't have to market or get loans from a bank; community members don't have to shop. And, community members get the incomparable reward of knowing they are helping to keep small farms alive in this era of big industrial farming.

In the United States, CSAs started in the mid-1980s in New Hampshire and Connecticut. At the very beginning, a CSA was set up at one farm in anticipation of the next fall's harvest of apples and apple cider. The following spring the same people bought shares in the upcoming vegetable crop.

Now, there are an estimated 1,500 CSAs across the country. The movement is established in other countries, including Australia, Hungary, India, Hong Kong, Holland, England, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, France, Denmark, Germany, and Japan (<www.newfarm.org>).



While some of my friends have been into the CSA movement, I've hesitated. I had rational reasons for *not* buying a CSA share: friends give me veggies from their garden; I started my own vegetable garden last summer with some success; I like to go to the farmers' market in St. Paul; and, I wonder if a box every week will be too much food.

The biggest "push" for me was meeting the farmer—Matthew Aamot and his family, who was one of the featured speakers at the Hampden Park Foods annual meeting last November. Listening to him describe his commitment to their organic farm in Gilmanston, Wisconsin, nestled among Amish farmers, I knew he was a farmer to cheer for, someone who was working hard to do things right.

Meeting Matthew reminded me of farmers I knew in Senegal, West Africa, where I worked as a sustainable agriculture extension agent with the Peace Corps (2003–2005). Senegal was where I learned to eat locally. There wasn't a "movement"; this was just what everyone did to survive. Everybody knew exactly where his or her food was from.

(continued on p. 3)

Membership News

—by Naomi Jackson, Membership Coordinator

Many excellent volunteers

At last count, our small co-op has around 400 volunteers. That's a lot of people coming and going! Volunteers at our store accomplish a wide variety of tasks that help our co-op run more efficiently. Stocking shelves, chopping vegetables, cleaning, writing for the newsletter, delivering bread orders, cashiering, providing music, and weeding and watering plants are all ably done by our volunteers. Thank you!

As you can imagine, assigning tasks for 400 volunteers takes some planning on the part of our coordinators. You can help the process run more smoothly by showing up on time for your shift, giving us as much notice as possible if you have to cancel, and not cutting your shift short go shop. To help you plan your volunteer time, sign-up calendars are posted at least a

month ahead of time. We tend to be short of volunteers the first week of each month, so that's a good time to get the shift of your choice.

New cards

By now, all volunteers should have filled out a 2008 Rolodex card. If you haven't done so, blank cards are in the back of the Rolodex file. If you didn't receive a 2008 wallet card, leave me a note in the membership coordinator envelope in the entryway. This would also be a good time to let me know about address changes and additions to or subtractions from your household.

If you are no longer volunteering and would like a pink shareholder card, or turned 65 and would like a senior card, fill out a New Card Request form (available at the checkout counter and in the entryway) and leave the form in the membership coordinator envelope.

Welcome, New Members!



Membership Information

Membership in Hampden Park Co-op involves a one-time purchase of one share of stock per household. The cost of a share is \$30. Stockholders can be eligible for dividends at the end of each fiscal year. You may sell back your stock share if you move away.

Volunteer Discounts

One or two non-senior adults in a household may earn:

15% discount for 3 hours/month
21% discount for 6 hours/month
28% discount for 12 hours/month

Seniors

All seniors receive a 15% discount on the first Wednesday of the month. Senior members always receive a 15% discount. Your membership includes you and your spouse or significant other. If you are 65+ and would like a senior card, talk to any coordinator. Senior working members start with a 15% base, plus time worked.

Food Shelf Contributions

Any shopper, member or non-member, receives a 28% discount on food shelf items. When you get to the checkout counter, let the cashier know that you have food shelf purchases. Donations go to the Keystone food shelves, located in the Midway neighborhood.

Non-discountable Items

Certain items in the store are non-discountable. These include milk (quart and larger), eggs, non-organic frozen orange juice, baby food, brewed coffee, HPC hot soups, gift certificates, and some sale items. There is no discount on these items because the mark-up on them is intentionally low.



(CSA continued from p. 1)

One day a little boy skipped next to me, pointing to the growing bank of dark clouds in the sky ahead of us and said, "Look! I hope it rains! If it rains, the crops will grow, and if the crops grow, we'll have food!" This was the first time I'd heard a kid make a spontaneous connection between weather and food.



Another day I rode my bicycle into my village and saw a small headless crocodile propped up on the rock by the cooking fire, and knew immediately what was for supper that night. No doubt he was swimming in the nearby river just a few hours earlier. Rice, millet, corn, and beans from the fields surrounding the village formed the basis for everyday meals. Mangos, papayas, and bananas from the trees between the huts filled in the gaps.

I'll admit, I got great care packages from home so the American power bars and other treats disqualified me from being a true locavore in Africa. But at least I got to live among people who truly were. Now I have another chance, right here in Minnesota!

After hearing Matt speak at the annual meeting, I read his handout "Turtle Creek Farm 2008 CSA" (available in the Hampden Park Co-op entryway), with photos of his farm. I learned that he'll be dropping off CSA boxes of food on Tuesdays and Thursdays at HPC. I also learned what the share options were, and decided to buy a half share for the summer (probably starting with salad greens already in May!) as well as a Winter Harvest share, which will be delivered all the way into January!

Matt asked for a deposit and a letter—and it was exciting to get a handwritten reply. In it he writes, "We are really looking forward to this summer... we are planning to have a wide variety of vegetables with an emphasis on heirloom varieties. If there are any personal favorites, please let us know. We are trying to customize our shares as much as possible..." How fun is that?! I can hardly wait to see what I'll be getting. And, each share comes with a cookbook called *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Cooking Farm Fresh Seasonal Produce* [seasonally available at the co-op] which I am counting on for great recipes and inspiration.

So here is my list of why I decided to be part of a CSA:

- ✦ I'll be more consistent in my buying and eating of local and organic food.
- ✦ I'll be trying out new foods that I might not buy, like different varieties of squash.
- ✦ I'll be trying out new recipes.
- ✦ I can still garden, but might specialize more in herbs to go with all the great recipes, or try growing more unusual vegetables.
- ✦ Somewhere I've been saving a pamphlet on food storage. I can finally use it! And, a neighbor already promised to show me how to can foods.
- ✦ If I have too much food, I can give some to my friends and neighbors. If I need to go out of town, a friend can pick up the share and eat it that week.
- ✦ I'll spend less time shopping.
- ✦ I'll be able to go to the farm and see how the food I am eating is grown.
- ✦ I feel good about putting my money where my mouth is, supporting a farmer who is committed to sustainable, organic practices.

If you'd like to learn more, pick up a description of Turtle Creek Farm CSA in the Hampden Park Co-op entryway. For a description of CSAs in our region, check out the Land Stewardship Project at <www.landstewardshipproject.org>.

[Pat Owen is an Ace Beverage Stocker, Nut Counter, and Window Painter at Hampden Park Co-op.]



Food Shelf Donations

Our food shelf volunteer Deb Ahlborg reports that Hampden Park Co-op donated 676 pounds of food to the Midway Food Shelf in 2007. This amount is down considerably from previous years, while the need unfortunately continues to grow. Did you know that you can buy food and household items at cost at the co-op and donate them to the food shelf? You don't even have to do the delivery. Deb does that for you. For details, see the Membership Information on page 2.

Eat Your Oats, Grow Big and Strong!

—by Naomi Jackson



It's winter in Minnesota, and there's nothing like oatmeal to give you what it takes to face an icy windshield and an even icier wind chill. Here's how to prepare your oatmeal:

First, clean out a large kitchen drawer and seal any cracks. Then get out your largest cooking kettle. At a ratio of 2:1, fill the kettle with water and old-fashioned rolled oats—the really thick, chunky kind. Simmer to desired consistency.

When the oatmeal is done, pour it into the clean drawer. Allow it to solidify. Once it has cooled, you can cut it into squares, which can be tossed in the fry pan, or eaten cold as a quick lunch. One drawerful should last you all week.

That's how oatmeal used to be prepared in Scotland. It was the staple diet for crofters. However, if you're like me, you don't have a spare kitchen drawer, so you'll want to cook it in smaller quantities. While you're enjoying your oatmeal, here are some interesting facts to ponder.

Who Tamed Wild Oats?

Since the cultivation of oats (as with that of all grains) precedes written history, no one knows for sure how or when wild oats were first tamed. It is likely that domestication occurred in several locations, using different varieties of wild oats. We know that oats were being grown 4000 years ago in Central Europe, and written records indicate they were well-established in China 2100 years ago.

A necessary step in oat cultivation was locating varieties that hung onto their seeds long enough to be harvested. Wild oats drop their seeds as soon as they are ripe; food writer Alan Davidson comments that this is "a useful feature for a weed trying to spread itself, but not for a cereal crop."

Oats grow well in a cool, wet climate, explaining their traditional popularity in such places as Scotland, Russia, and Scandinavia. They were brought to North America in 1602, where they did well in New England's rocky soil.



Oat Varieties

Looking at a bowl of oatmeal, it would be easy to think that oats are oats. However, there are dozens of varieties of oats, both wild and domesticated. Naked oats are grown mainly in Asia, where they originated. Red oats tolerate warmer weather, so are grown in the southern U.S. Most other oat crops in this country are varieties of common (or tree) oats.

As with wheat, some oat varieties are planted in the fall and others in the spring. Heirloom seed aficionados will not be surprised to learn that far fewer varieties of oats are cultivated now than in the mid-20th century.

Losing the Popularity Contest

Oats have historically elicited strong opinions. The ancient Romans turned up their noses at the "coarse, barbarian fare" of their northern neighbors. They considered oats to be a diseased version of wheat.

Centuries later, Samuel Johnson expressed disdain for the Scots' predilection for oats, defining them in his dictionary as "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

Perhaps the Romans should have tried oats themselves; as John Williams notes in "A Brief History of Oats," the Romans were never able to conquer the oat-eating Scots, and were ultimately overrun by oat-eating Germanic tribes.

Oats are no more popular today than they were in Roman times. Worldwide, most oats are fed to animals. The amount grown for both food and fodder in the United States declined from 1.5 billion bushels in 1955 to approximately 300 million bushels per year in recent years.

But they're good for you!

In spite of intense advertising by American corporations of their oat-based "heart healthy" foods, only 5% of oat crops worldwide are eaten by humans. In the United States, annual human consumption is 11 pounds per person.

Perhaps we should reconsider our breakfast choices. Oats are extremely nutritious, for both humans and animals. Chinese agronomist Shu Wang, in an extensive study of oats as animal feed, learned that, when compared to corn, oats are considerably higher in protein, fiber, and fat. In addition, dairy cows fed oat silage instead of corn silage produced an extra 2.13 kg. of milk per cow per day.

In terms of human nutrition, oats are rich in lysine, unsaturated fatty acids, fiber, silicon, vitamins E, B₁ and B₂, as well as a variety of micronutrients. They are a great source of complex carbohydrates and contain a well-balanced mix of proteins, making them a good choice for vegetarians.

Some of the earliest written references to oats concern their contribution to human health and well-being. Oatmeal soothes the skin and the digestive tract, and nourishes the invalid. Oats are believed to lower cholesterol levels, improve your thyroid function, and renew your bones and connective tissue.

However, when consuming oat products, remember that processing lowers nutrient content. In spite of what the advertising industry would have you believe, those "little o" cereals just can't compete with oat groats and old-fashioned rolled oats.

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Do they or don't they?

Everyone with gluten intolerance wants to know: "**Do oats contain gluten?**" It depends on who you ask. The resources I consulted offered opinions ranging from "high in gluten" to "almost no gluten."

Gluten or no gluten, the Celiac Sprue Association advises not eating oats, because they do provoke reactions in some (but not all) people with Celiac Disease. While oats appear to be very low in gluten, they contain a substance that resembles wheat gluten enough that some people react to it.

So, if you're very sensitive to gluten, be safe. Don't eat oats.

Expanding Your Seed Horizons

—by Emma Onawa

Tired of Alberta Clippers, wind chills, and shoveling? Take heart! It's not too early to start planning for the spring planting season. Checking out seed catalogs can bring a bit of color and anticipation to drab winter days and variety to our spring gardens. But is there life beyond *Burpee* and *Jungs*? Happily, yes.

It is possible to grow broccoli other than "Premium Crop" and tomatoes other than "Early Girl." A relatively small variety of seeds have come to dominate the world seed market, particularly with the development of hybrids in the last 50 or so years. For example, in the early 1900s there were approximately 7000 varieties of apples in the United States; now there are fewer than 1000. A handful of large agricultural and chemical companies have taken control of the world's seed supplies, to everyone's detriment.



Preserving our Seed Heritage

More and more growers and seed companies, however, are becoming interested in preserving the rich diversity that nature provides. Heirlooms and other lesser known species are increasingly preserved and available, providing variety in taste, nutrition, and beauty not found in traditional garden markets and the largest agricultural companies.

What exactly is an heirloom and how does it differ from a hybrid? An heirloom is an openly pollinated plant that will reproduce year after year true to type, meaning it will look, act, taste, and grow the same every year.

A hybrid is a plant that is bred by crossing two distinct plants to create a genetically different third plant. Hybrids are sterile, since they cannot reproduce true-to-type. They cannot reproduce the crossed variety, but will revert to one of the parent plants. Hybrids are bred to take advantage of certain characteristics each parent may have. Although some hybrids are freed of weaknesses that are problems in one or both parent plants, e.g., susceptibility to a certain environmental condition, their use and development are primarily for economic reasons. The use of hybrids has resulted in a drastic reduction in plant diversity and increased monoculture farming. The Irish potato famine was primarily the result of planting a monoculture crop.

Finding Heirloom Seeds

Gardening is one area where the individual can make a difference in the impact of the agribusiness monolith. By growing our own food, particularly from seed, with sustainable organic practices and by preserving diversity, we take back power from a food industry that has profit as its primary motive. In the last couple years a handful of heirloom transplants have appeared in traditional



garden centers. Although encouraging, the options are still very limited in these centers.

Fortunately, many seed companies provide other options. And, it's critical that we support these companies. In addition to providing valuable visual and written descriptions of their plants, seed company web sites and their catalogs may offer seed mixes, recipes, growing tips, newsletters, and other gardening-related products and information. Most seed companies will send a catalog on request, either free or for a nominal charge that is refunded with a purchase.

When shopping seed catalogs, keep two things in mind: 1) Unless a company is organic, be sure to ask for untreated seeds; 2) Some heirlooms perform poorly in certain environments and climates. If you have a particular environmental or climatic condition, e.g., soil issues or pests, it's advisable to inquire about the performance of a particular variety in that condition before planting it.

Here's a selected list of seed companies that provide heirloom and other lesser known varieties, along with their phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web sites:

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Ad rates:

\$15 per issue for a camera-ready, 2½" by 3½" ad. Ads may be either vertical or horizontal, although vertical is preferred. Contact the editor.

(Seed Horizons continued from p. 5)

Seed Savers Exchange

A premier organization dedicated to the preservation of heirlooms. Located just a few hours away in Decorah, Iowa, SSE is a non profit organization of organic gardeners and plant collectors who save and share heirloom plants. They maintain 25,000 heirloom vegetables and 1700 herbs and flower varieties. SSE offers tours, classes, and events during the growing season. Their catalog and web site offerings include recipes, a forum, planting guides and other gardening information.



563-382-5990
<www.seedsavers.org>

Jordan Seeds

Jordan hails from Woodbury, Minnesota, and offers a wide selection of hybrid and open-pollinated varieties of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and herbs, as well as growing supplies. Most seeds are untreated, but be sure to indicate you'd like untreated seed. Quantities are available for both the larger grower and the home gardener. Prices are lower than at many other companies. Shop locally!

651-731-7690 or 739-9578
<seeds@jordanseeds.com> <www.jordanseeds.com>

Baker Creek Seeds

Baker Creek is located in Mansfield, Ohio, and offers rare untreated heirloom seeds from 66 countries around the world. BC publishes the magazine *The Heirloom Gardener* and an online newsletter. Its other online offerings include sample magazine articles, planting guides, a photo galley and *YouTube* videos, and other gardening related information.

417-924-8917
<seeds@rareseeds.com> <www.rareseeds.com>

Turtle Tree Seeds

Turtle Tree, located in Copake, New York, is a rare source of heirloom vegetable seeds grown with the biodynamic gardening practices of Rudolph Steiner. Varieties certified by the Demeter Certified Biodynamic Certification are available; the company has a safe seed pledge. Turtle Tree has a vegetable trial program for biodynamic growers. Its catalog can be downloaded.

888-516-7797 (orders only) 518-329-3038 (questions)
<turtle@turtletreeseeds.org> <www.turtletreeseeds.com>

Abundant Life Seeds

Abundant Life, located in Saginaw, Oregon, offers only organically certified or biodynamic seed. It specializes in seeds that have been discontinued by large seed producers. Abundant Life works closely with the World Seed Fund and Organic Seed Alliance, and offers seeds for both home gardeners and small commercial growers. A committed organization to support with our gardening dollars.

541-767-9606
<als@abundantlifeseeds.com> <www.abundantlifeseeds.com>

Horizon Herbs

Horizon is located in Williams, Oregon. The company grows over 700 organically certified medicinal and aromatic herb seeds and plants, including rare and indigenous herbs from Native American, Ayurvedic, and Chinese traditions. Horizon Herbs also offers herbal extracts, herbal processing supplies, herbal collections, and a growing guide.

541-486-6704
<hhcustserv@HorizonHerbs.com> <www.horizonherbs.com>

Prairie Moon Nursery

Prairie Moon, located in Winona, Minnesota, is a complete source of native prairie seeds and seed mixes, wildflowers, trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, cactuses, sedges, grasses, and rushes. Prairie Moon had its birth in the Wiscoy Valley Community Land Cooperative. Shop locally!

866-417-8156 or 507-452-1362
<info@prairiemoon.com> <www.prairiemoon.com>

Glacial Ridge Growers

Glacial Ridge is located in Glenwood, Minnesota. It offers a wide variety of heirloom tomatoes, native perennials, grasses, sedges, rushes, hardy perennials for the northern gardeners, as well as annuals, herbs, vegetables, strawberries, and mums. Shop locally!

866-518-1671 or 320-634-0136
<glacialridgegrowers@aol.com> <www.Glacialridgegrowers.com>

Select Seeds

Select Seeds, located in Union, Connecticut, offers seeds and plants for heirloom and antique annual and perennial flowers, vines, foliage plants, container plants, and bulbs. The company's Web site provides gardening how-to information.

800-684-0395
<info@selectseeds.com> <www.selectseeds.com>

Fedco Seeds

Fedco, located in Waterville, Maine, is a cooperative seed company that is 100% worker- and customer-owned. It offers seeds, trees, and plants especially adapted to cold climates. Fedco has organic certification and offers heirloom varieties and organic gardening supplies. Learn about seed saving on its Web site.

207-873-7333
<www.fedcoseeds.com>



Peaceful Valley Farm and Garden Supply

Peaceful Valley is a large organically certified supplier located in Grass Valley, California. It offers a wide variety of seeds, plants, pet and animal feed, and organic gardening supplies. You can find the Peaceful Valley catalog online, as well as a forum, reference library, and news articles.

888-784-1722 or 530-272-4769
<helpdesk@groworganic.com> <www.groworganic.com>

For additional alternative seed and plant sources, go to
<www.onewest.net/~klack/Garden/seed_sources.htm>.

A short dictionary of oats

Whole oats: The whole grain before processing; retains all of the original nutrients. You can sprout them, or cook and eat them.

Groats: The whole grain, minus the hull. In the cleaning process, groats are slightly roasted. They can be cooked like rice, roasted and ground up (see "Irish Oatmeal"), or you can "roll" them yourself with a wooden mallet or rolling pin.

Oat bran: The outer covering that is removed from the hulled oat groat. It's the part of the oat that has been shown to lower cholesterol levels. It's also tasty in baked goods.

Steel-cut oats: Unrefined groats chopped into small pieces. They contain most of the original nutrition of groats because they haven't been heated. They take longer to cook than rolled oats, and are chewy, but they are preferred by oatmeal connoisseurs.

Rolled oats: Groats are steamed and rolled flat. Oats cook more quickly when rolled.

Quick oats: Groats are chopped into several pieces, steamed and rolled into thin flakes. They cook in 3–5 minutes, but lack a certain something in flavor.

Instant oats: Groats are chopped into tiny pieces, pre-cooked, dried, and smashed with a big roller. Add hot water, and *voilà*, you have oat paste for breakfast. However, instant oats are nice for camping trips.

(*Eat Your Oats* continued from p. 4)

Fun with Oats

Here is a sampling of recipes to tempt you into the nutritious, delicious world of oats. Scottish oatcakes are like shortbread with oats. Haymakers' Oatwater is a variation on an old-time drink called switchel, known as "the original Gatorade." It's very refreshing when you have to work hard on a hot, sunny day.

Irish oatmeal requires some advance planning, but it's so easy you could do it during commercial breaks. The result is the best oatmeal you ever tasted in your life. Muesli is easy; it prepares itself while you shower and dress.

Scottish Oatcakes

(from *Betty Crocker's International Cookbook*)

½ cup shortening or butter
1 cup oats or quick-cooking oats
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
2 to 3 tablespoons cold water

Cut shortening into oats, flour, baking soda, and salt until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until mixture forms a stiff dough.

Roll dough until 1/8 inch thick on lightly floured surface. Cut into 2½-inch rounds or squares. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 375° oven until oatcakes just start to brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Cool on wire rack.

Serving suggestion: Spread maple butter on warm oatcakes.

Variation: for Oatcake Cookies, prepare as directed above, except add 1/3 cup sugar with flour.

Muesli (Dutch-style)

(from *Extending the Table*)

1 cup yogurt
½ cup milk
¼ cup uncooked quick or rolled oats
½ cup dried fruits and nuts
fruit syrup, honey, or sugar to taste

Mix well and allow to stand 30–40 minutes. It will have a pudding-like consistency.



Irish Oatmeal

(from *Nourishing Traditions*)

1 cup whole oats
1½ cups warm filtered water
4 tablespoons whey, yogurt, kefir, or buttermilk (If you have dairy allergies, use lemon juice or vinegar.)
1 teaspoon sea salt
1½ cups filtered water

Place oats on a baking sheet and bake at 350° until they turn light brown. Process roasted oats to a medium grind in a home grinder. (The resultant meal will be part flour, part small bits.) Add 1½ cups warm filtered water and whey, yogurt, kefir, or buttermilk to the meal, and soak it 7 to 24 hours in a warm place.

Bring 1½ cups of filtered water and sea salt to a boil. Add soaked oatmeal and cook over very low heat, stirring frequently, for about 10 minutes.

Haymakers' Oatwater

(from *Nourishing Traditions*)

1 gallon filtered water
1 cup rolled oats
1 cup lemon juice or raw apple cider vinegar
1 cup molasses

Mix all ingredients and keep at room temperature several hours or overnight, stirring occasionally.

Variation: Add 1 cup brown sugar and 1 tablespoon powdered ginger.

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Vegies from the Sea

—by Meredith Sommer

I couldn't resist a class offered by St. Paul Community Education on "Cooking with Sea Vegetables" (also known as seaweed). Not knowing much about seaweed except that nori is used to wrap sushi, I was a sponge for an adventure with treasures from the sea.

Sea vegetables are actually a form of algae. They grow both in the wild and in saltwater tanks, where they are cultivated by commercial growers. In the United States, wild edible sea vegetables grow off the cold coastal waters of Maine and Washington, and around Mendocino, California.

The people who hand-harvest the wild seaweed are called "wildcrafters." Using small boats or kayaks, they search for seaweed in underwater caves and on rocky formations near the edges of cliffs. For sustainable harvesting, only the blades, or leaves, are cut so the holdfasts, which are like roots, are not damaged. The best harvesting times are during the new and the full moon, a time called the minus tide, when the ocean is the farthest out from land. Harvesting often takes place at night; and with the waves and rocks and cold water, it can be very dangerous.

Seaweed floating in the water or lying on the shore should never be eaten. Nor should amateurs harvest seaweed without an expert wildcrafter to guide them. Like foraging for mushrooms, it takes knowledge and experience to identify edible and safe varieties.

Wild seaweed is also harvested off the coasts of Scandinavia, Ireland, and Asia. Common in Asia are sea farms that are either enclosed areas in the ocean or stainless steel saltwater tanks. This form of mariculture protects wild seaweed from over harvesting and appears to be sustainable and nonpolluting.

After the plants are cut, they are rinsed in fresh water and hung on lines to dry in the sun. The plants deteriorate and discolor quickly, so as soon as they are dry, they are stored in a dark, dry place before packaging.



Seaweed is also harvested mechanically by some commercial enterprises. The machines use suction, detaching the holdfasts from the rocks so the plants cannot regenerate themselves. Commercial seaweed is dried with dehydration equipment rather than the sun.

Nutritional Value

Sea vegetables are one of the most nutrient- and mineral-rich foods. In addition, their minerals are easily absorbed and used by the body. They are high in calcium, iodine, potassium, iron, and trace minerals. They are also an excellent source of protein, low in fat, and low in calories. Although seaweed may appear salty, the soaking process leaches out much of the sodium. The salty taste is actually from potassium.

You can buy sea vegetables at Hampden Park Co-op. The small square packages are hanging at the end of the soy milk shelves.

Asian grocery stores carry large selections of sea vegetables, mostly imported from Asia. Instructions are on the package, but they may be in Japanese or Mandarin. No matter what the language, sea vegetables always should be rinsed with fresh water before soaking or cooking. In general, they expand 2–3 times their original size when soaked.

Common Sea Vegetables

Arame, a delicate grasslike vegetable from Japan, is mild in flavor and easy to prepare. After soaking in water for 5 minutes and no more, it can be added to soups or casseroles, or sautéed with land vegetables. It can also be added to grains for a rich, salty-sweet flavor.

Dulse is salty-tasting but low in sodium and high in potassium and protein. Use the flakes as a seasoning, sprinkled on eggs, soups, salad, or popcorn, straight from the package. When baked 5–7 minutes in a 250° oven, dulse becomes crunchy and can take the place of bacon.

Hijiki has a deeply intense flavor that is tamed by 20 minutes of soaking. During this time, it will quadruple in volume. It has the highest calcium content of all sea vegetables and is one of the best nondairy sources of calcium available.

Kombu and Kelp are interchangeable in recipes, although kombu comes from Asia and kelp from the North Atlantic. They are the most widely used of sea

vegetables, and can be added to make beans more tender and easier to digest. Use them to make a broth called *dashi*, to which miso may be added for a lovely soup. Granulated kelp is found in bulk in the herb and spice area at the co-op. As a seasoning, it can be used to replace salt.



Nori is processed into flat sheets and is most commonly used to wrap sushi or California rolls. It can also be used to wrap finger foods; it's especially convenient for children's meals to replace bread or crackers. Also, nori can be eaten raw from the package. It is extremely high in protein and A and B vitamins.

Wakame, in Japan, is noted for flushing salt out of the body, thus reducing the risk of high blood pressure. It is a rather sweet tasting sea vegetable and can be eaten raw after rinsing and soaking for 5 minutes. It is very high in calcium and Vitamin C.

Seaweed Sidedish

1 cup loosely packed wakame
 ½ cup loosely packed cut-up kombu
 ½ cup loosely packed arame
 6 cups boiling water
 2 tablespoons tamari or Bragg's Liquid Aminos
 5 tablespoons rice vinegar
 3 tablespoons maple syrup or brown rice syrup
 1 tablespoon Umeboshi plum vinegar
 1 teaspoon roasted sesame oil

Rinse sea vegetables in a fine strainer and place in large bowl. Pour boiling water over the vegetables. Add tamari or liquid aminos, let sit 10 minutes and then drain through a fine strainer.

Whisk vinegars, syrup, and sesame oil together in a small bowl. Pour over vegetables and mix well. Cover and cool. Refrigerated leftovers will keep for 3–4 days. Serves 6.

Resources

✦ *Mike Stickel*, cooking class instructor: <mike_stickel10@hotmail.com>.

✦ *Vegetables from the Sea* by Jill Gusman

✦ *Eden Foods*, the oldest family-owned natural food company in North America, has a newsletter and recipes online at <www.edenfoods.com>.

Have You Tried...? The HPC Aisles Revealed

—by Katharine Holden

Hampden Park Co-op is full of products you may not have tried yet. Here's the info on a few:

Kitchen Helper

Stainless Steel Sink Strainer

Let this be a lesson to all those who think food co-ops stock nothing but bulk quinoa and carob: HPC sells nifty things to keep food particles from clogging your kitchen drain. They're made to fit the standard 3¼" sink opening. You'll find these strainers and other useful kitchen items hanging from a little rack near the boxed cereal and opposite the cheese.

The Original Red River Cereal

Red River Cereal contains only three ingredients: cracked wheat, cracked rye and flax seed. No sugar, no salt, nothing else. According to <www.redrivercereal.com>, a ¼ cup serving contains 5.5 grams of protein. Recently, the Manitoba manufacturers of Red River cereal startled their fans by introducing two versions of Ready-to-Serve Red River Cereal in pre-measured pouches. I use the word startled because lovers of the simple and unadulterated nature of Red River Cereal were surprised to find that the Maple and Brown Sugar version contains salt, sugar, and phony maple and brown sugar flavoring. My suggestion is to stick to the original cereal and add some real maple syrup to it if you feel like it one morning. It's not like you really need someone to pre-measure your cereal anyway for you, eh? Look for it in the breakfast cereal and potato chips aisle opposite the frozen foods.

Olsen's Imported Herring Cutlets

They say it's good luck to find a new love in the last month of the year. Well, I discovered a love for herring cutlets in wine sauce at the December meeting of my book club. Herring cutlets are eaten as is, or in appetizers and salads. If you keep an unopened jar in the fridge and you have some crackers, you'll always have the ingredients on hand for some quick appetizers. Eight-ounce jars of Olsen's Herring Cutlets can be found in the

cheese case. [Editor's note: Sometimes the co-op carries other brands instead of Olsen's. They are all tasty.]

Sushi Sonic Pickled Ginger

Sushi Sonic Pickled Ginger has no added food coloring, so it's not the silly pink color of the pickled ginger you find at Asian-American buffets. Pieces of pickled ginger add a bit of bite to rice, sushi and fish. I like pickled ginger with pork chops. You'll find jars of this condiment in the Asian food section opposite the jars of jam and jelly.

Wizard's Reply pasta

Who can resist multi-colored pasta in different shapes? Sunridge Farms makes organic Wizard's Reply pasta from vitamin-enriched semolina flour, spinach, beet, red bell pepper and paprika. It's tasty and looks very cute in a serving dish. You'll find Wizard's Reply pasta on the bulk dispenser wall.

A Selection from the Book Nook

Okay, so it's not a book nook. It's really more like a couple of shelves squeezed in next to the herbal mosquito repellent and behind the bread. But the salient point is that HPC does have quite a few cookbooks and books on healthful eating. Many of them are books put out by small publishers that you may not find on the shelves of big box book retailers. On your next visit to the co-op, stash your cart somewhere out of the way and squeeze into the book nook to take a look at the books for sale. Try not to knock over the herbal mosquito repellent. Today's randomly selected book is *Cheap and Easy: A Cookbook for Girls on the Go* by Sandra Bark and Alexis Kanter.



[HPC member Katharine Holden has been thinking of wearing a sandwich board that reads "Please! Marketing Communications Manager Job Wanted," but just can't decide on the right font.]

Upcoming Events at Hampden Park Co-op

Insects in your Garden

Slide show and discussion led by entomologist and HPC member Margot Monson. Learn about pollinators and beneficial insects, and how to attract them to your garden.

Date: To be announced; probably early March. Watch for posters.

Location: St. Anthony Park Library meeting room, 2245 Como Avenue



HPC Book Club

Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Time: 6:45 p.m. Gathering and get acquainted
7:00–8:00 p.m. Discussion

Location: St. Anthony Park Library meeting room, 2245 Como Avenue

Book selection: *Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping* by Judith Levine

The book will be available for a discount at Micawber's Books in St. Anthony Park. Mention that you are part of the Hampden Park Co-op Book Club.

Note: We hope to have a cheese-making demonstrating in the near future. Watch for additional information on all HPC events; posters and flyers will be placed around the store.



Herring and Feta Appetizers

Carr's cracked pepper table water crackers (The Tree of Life brand will work as a substitute.)

mayonnaise

Olsen's Herring Cutlets in wine sauce
Valbreso feta cheese

Take a cracker, add a small dab of mayonnaise, top with one small herring cutlet, and crumble a little feta cheese over all.

Under My Hat

—by Helen DuFault

It seems hardly possible, but spring is beckoning. The seed packets announce it. The bedding plant order has been placed; seedlings will arrive at the end of April. We are always looking forward!

Return of a Favorite

Often when an item is discontinued, it's gone for good. But that's not the case with Curt's Salsa. It's back in production, and we have it! The company was bought by Montero Distributing of Stillwater. Curt's Salsa is one of the few local salsas available. Many of you have missed it, so we are glad to have it for you again.

Production Problems

Our winter growing areas have been cold this year: Mexico, Florida, California, and Arizona. We are being warned that prices are up and some items are in short supply. Not only that, but the transportation costs are all up. I'm really looking forward to being able to buy produce locally this spring and summer.

You may have noticed we've had trouble getting organic oatmeal. The reasons are complicated. The Canadian

processor that supplies our oats is operating at capacity. Even though the demand for organic oats is at an all-time high, the company only processes them for one week each month. Also, the trains that carry the organic oats to the plant haven't been operating in a timely fashion; they arrive at a time when conventional oats are being processed. Fortunately, organic oatmeal is back in stock now. But this gives you an idea of how complicated food production can be!

Not a Slave to Fashion

Hampden Park Co-op seems so often to run the opposite of trends. Our suppliers often discontinue items because of low sales, yet these are items that sell well in our store. This winter, newspapers have been reporting poor sales at many businesses, especially during the past holiday season. Again, we proved to be different. Our sales were up about 11% over the previous November and December.

Thank you for your patronage. Your presence makes us a stronger store. Tell your friends and neighbors about us!



**Hampden
Park
Co-op**

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Name and Address Correction/New Card Request

Have you moved recently? Did you change your name? Did the number of adults in your household change? Please let us know so we can keep our records up to date. You may also use this form if you need a new membership card. Place the completed form in the membership coordinator's envelope in the entryway.

Member Number _____ Date _____

Name(s) _____

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