



HAMPDEN PARK CO-OP NEWS

APRIL/MAY 2008

Volume 19 Issue 2

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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 Monday, May 26, 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 June/July issue is May 1. 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

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.

Rhubarb: A Spring Vegetable Treat

—by Jay Dregni

Each spring I have a ritual of wandering through the garden searching for a first sign of new growth. Most often the knotted fist of green and red rhubarb is the earliest plant to emerge, poking through the surface of the frosty cold ground from its underground root. If I pulled up a chair for a vigil, it would not be long before I would see visible growth in these buds.

Our garden currently has sixteen rhubarb plants of various ages, all from original stock in the garden of our first house, bought in 1961. Numerous friends have root cuttings; the separations and the division often result in revitalization of the parent plant.

When taking a cutting from a rhubarb plant, one takes an ample section of root plus a few green leaves that will be above ground when planted. Space the plants three to four feet apart for best results. Rhubarb transplants well and though it may not take over the garden world like the prodigious hosta, it is found across the globe in climates with frozen seasons. The frigid dormant stage is necessary to the annual cycle of the plant.

Many people call rhubarb "pie plant" because this vegetable is often combined in pies with a variety of fruits, including strawberries, blueberries, apples, or peaches. My favorite story of pie making began when my wife and I joined company with a friend to make four rhubarb pies, two for each family. The rhubarb was collected from the garden while I prepared pie crusts. When the rhubarb was washed and cut for filling, we had a substantial extra amount. I made more crust and ended up with one crust extra. Back to the garden and you can guess the rest. The enjoyment of communal pie making and the expectation of eating took over and the end result was 11 pies.

Rhubarb Harvest

When picked in the spring, rhubarb is light on flavor. The taste builds as stalks mature. Some growers suggest not picking beyond midsummer, late July, so the stalks are less prone to disease and the energy can be stored in the roots for next year.

We pick until the flavor wanes, usually mid-August. During the warm fall of 2007 we had a resurgence of healthy stalks, and our last two pies were prepared and eaten in late September. Selecting only the moist stalks is important for late picking.

Watch your plants for thick round stalks that will yield a whitish blossom. This is a flowering for natural seeding. It is recommended to cut these stalks near the base, as they draw considerable energy from the plant and are not edible.

Picking involves a bit of technique. Grasp a stalk near the base and twist and tug, bringing the entire single stalk loose. Pick a few stalks from each plant. Trim off the upper leaf and bottom inch and toss these on the compost pile.



(continued on p. 9)

Membership News

—by Naomi Jackson, Membership Coordinator

Spring has sprung, and none too soon, either! Check the volunteer bulletin board for outdoor volunteer opportunities, in particular Mayfest (May 9–11). We will need plant tenders, musicians, food servers, set-up and clean-up crews, and go-fers. You can find more information on page 5 of this newsletter.

We also need a few people to keep the parking lot, picnic area, and gardens looking tidy through the warm months. If you're interested, leave me a note in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the entryway.

Our volunteer calendars continue to be full, but we've also had an unusual number of no-shows and last-minute

cancellations, probably due to a particularly nasty flu season! It's helpful for us and also for other volunteers awaiting their turn if you would record your shift in your calendar so you don't forget, and if you could give us as much notice as possible for cancellations.

A note about recording your volunteer hours: It is your responsibility at the end of each shift to bring your Rolodex card to a coordinator to have it signed. Punching your wallet card is done on the honor system—we ask that you have a cashier or any staff member punch your card for you.

Enjoy the warm weather, and we'll see you at Mayfest!



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.



Co-op Recycling

Periodically the co-op receives a recycled donation that we can't accept. Here are some guidelines for your donations:

- ✦ We can always use clean paper bags. Leave them in the entryway or at the checkout counter.
- ✦ We can use a limited number of clean egg cartons. You may leave them with your paper bag donations.
- ✦ We can't accept plastic bags or empty glass or plastic containers. You will need to recycle them on your own.
- ✦ We no longer accept used cell phones or eye glasses. You can go to the Special Olympics web site to find out about donating your old cell phone.

Thanks for your help with this matter. Unfortunately, if you leave materials we can't use, they often end up in the trash.



They're Not Born "Green"

—by Anne Holzman

We were slipping already, but the third baby's arrival really pushed us over the cliff: paper plates, clothes in the dryer, vegetable peelings mixed with foil-printed wrapping paper (used only once) and dispatched to the refuse burner.

Cloth diapers? Not with two kids using them. Homemade baby food? Only if baby is willing to eat a ground-up version of one of the three entirely discrete meals I'm already preparing for the toddler, the preschooler, and myself.

Worst of all, we no longer fit in a plain old car, hybrid or otherwise. Nope, we signed the papers for a used minivan right around the time that last round of adoption papers got under way.

Not only have we been polluting the planet our children will inherit, but we've also been setting a lousy example. We value a "green" lifestyle, but it would be hard to tell that from a casual look around our home.

I worked out a highfalutin excuse: Children construct their own knowledge, therefore it will be good for them to discover that they're living in a brownfield and teach their parents how to go green. I figured I had at least until the first one hit third grade before I'd get nagged into reforming my ways.

But as they grow (and as I occasionally find myself waking up rested in the morning), it's getting easier to teach by example. They can reach the switch in order to turn out the light.



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.

They can twist the faucet far enough—and in the correct direction—to shut off the water. They eat something other than macaroni and cheese out of a box.



And mainly, they spend time around adults with more energy and commitment than their dad and I can muster. Our synagogue, their schools, and the neighborhood spots we visit are all weighing in with encouragement to do the right thing.

As a general principle, I avoid shopping with my kids. But they need to know where their food is coming from, and even though we're devoted CSA members and farmers' market visitors, shopping at stores is an important link.

I bless every fellow Hampden Park Co-op shopper who has handed my fussy kid an apple, waited while the oatmeal was scooped one grain at a time, or looked the other way when more shampoo wound up outside the bottle than inside. Unaccountably, people actually smile when they can't get past us in the aisles.

I've had a cashier cleverly weigh an avocado in place of the half-eaten plum clutched in a one-year-old's hand, been treated to the most amazing comedy routines from strangers who just can't stand to see her cry, and had doors held for me and shopping carts returned for me by more people than I could ever thank.

And there are no cartoony cereals or candy aisles to get past on the way out the door; even the treats are good for them.

My kids won't learn about the importance of organic farming and whole foods just by walking through the aisles, but at least they'll start out associating those things with kindness and good humor. And as they begin to construct their knowledge about food, who could ask for better building blocks?

[HPC member Anne Holzman is an at-home mom of three as well as a freelance writer and editor.]

The Anti-Dead Foods Movement

An interview with Judith Sims

—by Heidi Goar

My funny friend, HPC member Judith Sims, knows a lot about so many things. She's an herbalist, is learning German, and has been involved with the raw foods movement for as long as it's been in the Twin Cities, about ten years. I interviewed her while we had breakfast at the Minneapolis mecca of raw foods, Ecopolitan.

Forgive me, though, as I digress. A couple months ago, I was at a classically Midwestern holiday party (in the middle of the day and no alcohol!) and as I grazed at the snack table, I was joined by a lovely man who actually started talking to me. He is not a native; he is originally from New York, which explains why he started talking to me.

I was eating potato chips and dip, my favorite snack food, and he was eating something with wheat. I said I wished I could try it, but I couldn't because wheat upsets my stomach, blah, blah. It turned out that he had in the recent past eaten only raw foods for two years straight. He said he felt fabulous. He lost all kinds of weight, his skin looked ten years younger, he had mountains of energy; it was amazing.

So, why did he stop? He said that one night he was at home and just wanted a pizza, he just had to have one, so he had one delivered. Just like that, tumbled off the wagon. He got violently ill after the pizza, but he did not go back to raw foods. Why? Well, I think Judith Sims can help us understand this.

Back at the Ecopolitan, we have just ordered our meal. We are going to share two breakfasts, the Flaxjacks and the Rawmlette, and we'll order Green Burritos to take home.

Heidi: Can you give us a general definition of the "raw foods movement"?

Judith: First, I would call it the "raw and living foods movement." When you say "raw foods," people think you're just eating salads, or eating raw fish. People don't think of it as a movement tied to the 20th century that looks at a vegan and uncooked way of eating and draws on ancient methods of making and preserving foods. "Raw foods" really encompasses a number of food preparation and preserving techniques like dehydrating—having dried fruits and dried vegetables or dried grains that you might make into crackers. It includes sprouting. You wouldn't eat unsprouted grains or ungerminated nuts. You sprout your quinoa, you soak your nuts, you sprout your wheat berries, ...and then you might ferment the wheat berry into what is called "rejuvelac," a hallmark product of raw foods, an enzyme-rich, fizzy beverage that is one of the foundations of the original raw foods diet.

Heidi: And those processes are an attempt to draw out the greater nutritional value of the foods? I mean, you said you would never eat quinoa, for instance, without sprouting it, because the sprouting of it releases the nutritional value?

Judith: Yeah, exactly. When you germinate a nut or a seed, you're telling the embryo to start growing and access the nutrients that have been locked up. So when you soak your nut, you are changing the starch into simple sugars, you're changing the fats into fatty acids, and changing proteins into amino acids. It makes it all bio-available, it's easier to digest, and it's more nutritious, and it changes the products, from a starch or a fatty nut into something much more vegetable-like.

So, there are two reasons for drying, fermenting, sprouting, juicing, or otherwise concentrating things. One is to make a higher level of nutrients available; and two is just to preserve things, because fermentation and drying are ways of discouraging bad bacteria which date back to the dawn of agriculture.

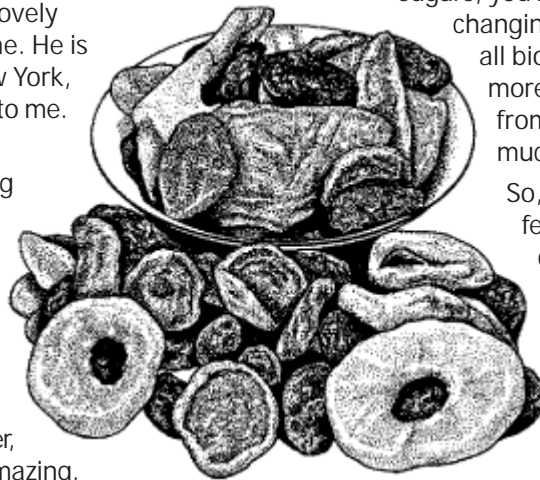
But, very few people eat 100% raw foods. A lot of people say they are 100% raw foods, but it's very hard to do long term. The low protein thing is part of it; the lack of variety is, too. You sometimes hear of raw fooders bingeing on cookies or something—you fall off the wagon, like your friend with the pizza. But even having 50–80% raw foods in your diet can be a big improvement.

Heidi: And where does this come from, this movement?

Judith: The original founder, a lot of people say, and I agree, is Ann Wigmore. She was the founder of raw foods in the first wave, she developed the original rejuvelac, and the juicing of wheatgrass and methods of sprouting food. She began her work in the mid '20s, opened her Institute in '58, and started publishing in the '60s. There were other adherents in the late '70s and '80s, but I'd say the movement really took off ten or 12 years ago. That is the current wave.

It used to be that you could not eat a raw foods diet without drinking wheatgrass, you had to have a wheatgrass juicer, that was just part of the protocol—to detox. And then, you could have nuts, and vegetables, avocados, smoothies, green drinks, and green soups. And that was the basis for the original raw foods diet, plus the rejuvelac, juices, wheatgrass, coconut. So, it's really evolved since then. Even if you don't do it 100%—because no one does—you can adapt certain parts of it to your own diet. There are great desserts. It is the one diet

(continued on p. 7)



Mayfest Plant Sale

May 9, 10, & 11, 2008

Vegetables, Annuals, & Perennials
Herbs & Hanging Baskets

Mayfest Mini-fair

Saturday, May 10, 2008

After you've chosen your plants, wander around the parking lot and enjoy the music, snack on free food samples, browse the booths, and chat with our board of directors.

Local Vendors & Craftspeople:

Booth space is available at the Mini-fair. It is free to Hampden Park Co-op members and vendors; otherwise there is a space fee of \$15. A limited number of tables is available; bring your own chairs. If you would like booth space, contact Helen DuFault or Naomi Jackson at the co-op.

Volunteer for Mayfest! Sign up in the co-op entryway to help with:

Tending plants	Setting up/taking down tents and tables
Running a children's booth	Serving food samples
Cashiering	Lending tables or tents for the event
Providing live music	



Passover treat: Haroset

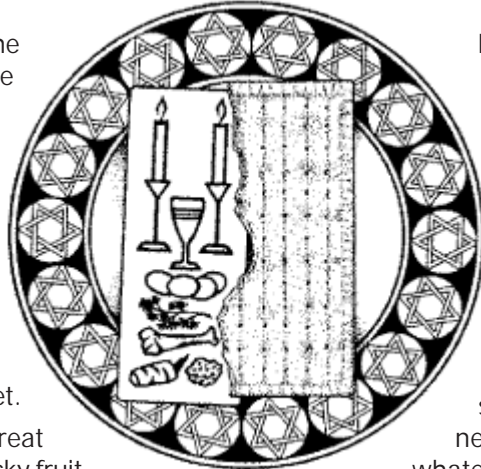
—by Anne Holzman

After the stories of the escape from Egypt, the songs (louder with each glass of wine, it seems), the recitations of questions and answers and plagues... after all this comes the harbinger of a very late dinner, the haroset.

I always wolf down great piles of the sweet, sticky fruit-nut relish. I've learned to enjoy a few shreds of horseradish balanced on top, although I can't compete with the really diehard heat-swallowers at the table. A shard of matzoh makes a convenient vehicle for getting it all from plate to mouth.

Growing up Christian, I always thought Passover was about deprivation. Since joining a Jewish family, I've discovered it's more of a friendly challenge: how to turn fast into feast, disaster into legend... and cement into a delicious appetizer.

Haroset (accent on the long O in the middle, and the T nearly swallowed as a soft S—at least in the Eastern European tradition we follow) is one of the required foods for a seder, symbolizing the mortar used by Jewish slaves to build for their Egyptian masters. It's the last item to be passed, following wine, matzoh, parsley dipped in saltwater, and



horseradish that gets eaten by itself before being cooled off by haroset.

It's therefore not only the tastiest of the required foods; it also means the matzoh ball soup is coming next, followed by whatever main dish the chief cook has decided to wow us with this year.

We make so much haroset, in so many different flavors, that it's available in the fridge for days afterward. (We even make a nut-free mix of fruit and wine for one nut-averse family member.) It makes a delicious salad (if chunky) or matzoh spread (if ground to a pasty consistency). Maybe it helps keep the digestive system moving all those eggs and wads of matzoh along, too, during the breadless week that follows.

Haroset normally contains red wine, and anything other than honey-sweet Manischewitz can taste too tart. Grape juice (or maybe pomegranate? blueberry?) would be better than a dry red.

The basic Eastern European (Ashkenazic) haroset is adapted from Joan Nathan's *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen*. In our family, it wouldn't quite feel like Passover without a few bites of this.

Ashkenazic Apple-Nut Haroset (makes about 3 cups)

6 apples, peeled and coarsely chopped
2/3 cup chopped almonds
3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
grated rind of 1 lemon
4 tablespoons sweet red wine

Combine all ingredients, mincing thoroughly and adding wine as needed. It can be left chunky, or blended to the desired consistency. Serve chilled.

The Jews from all around the Mediterranean are called Sephardim, and the haroset recipes use ingredients typical of the region. This quick and easy one, based on Copeland Marks's *Sephardic Cooking*, is from Morocco:

Sephardic Haroset

1 pound dates, pitted
1/2 pound walnuts, chopped
1 tablespoon dark raisins
1/2 cup sweet red wine

Grind the dates and raisins together in a processor. Add the chopped walnuts and the wine; mix well. Refrigerate until ready to use at the seder.

Other fruits that show up in haroset include oranges, pomegranates, and grapes; every kind of nut and seed enters the recipes, as well.

The only question now is, why wait until Passover?



(Raw Foods continued from p. 4)

where you are certain of getting the correct amount of vegetables, which have a cancer-preventing effect, eight to ten servings per day.

People come to raw foods because they are ill. And Ann Wigmore did too. She grew up in Lithuania pre-WWI. She came to the U.S. as a teen, and within two years she broke two legs in an accident involving a horse and a cart, and gangrene set in in one

leg. She refused to have an amputation and nothing was working to cure her, so she sat on her lawn and began to eat grass, because her grandmother had used grass in treating the soldiers and the wounded in their village. So, Ann Wigmore began to cure herself by eating grass.

I'd say raw foods is promoted and followed mostly by people with serious and chronic illnesses. If you go to the raw foods potluck, you will find people with chronic illnesses, cancer and so on. It can give your body a tremendous break, a body cleanse. The enzyme lift it gives your body lets your body get things done that maybe you wouldn't get done with cooked foods.

A raw foodist does not want to eat "dead" food. They want vital, living food. They want to eat stuff out of the back yard. It's not just organic. Olives for olive oil, for example, are handpicked, handcrushed.

(Our meal arrives. Here are the ingredients:

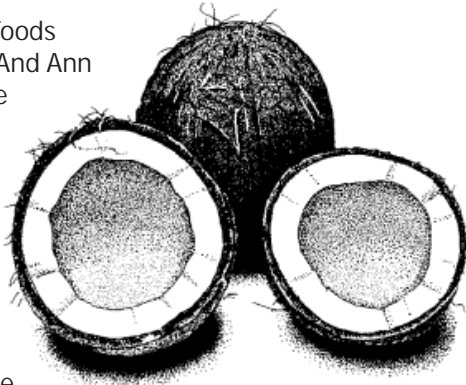
Flaxjacks: Dehydrated apple-walnut flaxseed pancakes served with tahini, fresh fruit, date syrup and cinnamon.

Green Burrito: Curried sprouted-garbanzo pate, sunflower seeds and sprouts, fresh seasonal vegetables, spiced lentil mix, wrapped in a collard leaf, served with salsa and guacamole.

Rawmlette: The "eggs": dehydrated banana, coconut milk and flakes, and flaxseed; the "cheese": macadamia nuts, cashews, jalapenos, nutritional yeast, apple cider vinegar, lemon, garlic, and sea salt; the rest of the filling: diced avocado, shaved carrot, onion, and cilantro.)

Heidi: So, all this food we are eating right now is cold. Is everything always cold in the raw foods diet?

Judith: There are two ways you can handle heat. One, you can add a lot of cayenne pepper, so you can have room temperature soup full of cayenne pepper and you can heat things up that way. You can have warm foods... there's a little controversy about it. Some people say that all enzymes are destroyed above 115 degrees. Although I have heard that some foods can be dehydrated above 140 degrees and the enzymes will still be intact.



Heidi: Who's doing this?

Judith: It hasn't hit the mainstream, but it's on its way. People in other fields are getting interested—Charlie Trotter, the famous Chicago chef, for example. I think they see the market potential.

Part of the reason that raw food is not more popular is that it requires an investment in equipment. It's kind of ironic that here is this natural diet with unprocessed foods, unadulterated, but you need at the least a Vitamix or a very powerful blender; you can hear it in the background. [The Vitamix was going most of the time we were at the restaurant.]

You need a dehydrator, a juicer, and you may have a separate wheatgrass juicer. And, it's kind of labor intensive, although there are more and more raw products available, like frozen sprouted breads and nutrition bars. And you can do raw foods without equipment. You can ferment stuff and you can sun-dry things. You can do some things without equipment, but if you are serious about raw foods, you need equipment.

Heidi: So, after your original investment, it'll be about \$1000?

Judith: Yes, about \$1000 in equipment. But the real problem with raw foods for people is that it is so labor-intensive and it's so low protein. I used to have extended arguments with people in raw foods about how much protein is in, for example, sprouts.

Heidi: What about nuts?

Judith: Yes, you can eat nuts. But the fat and caloric content is quite high in nuts to get all your protein from nuts. Cashew cream is sensational, though.

Winter Salad

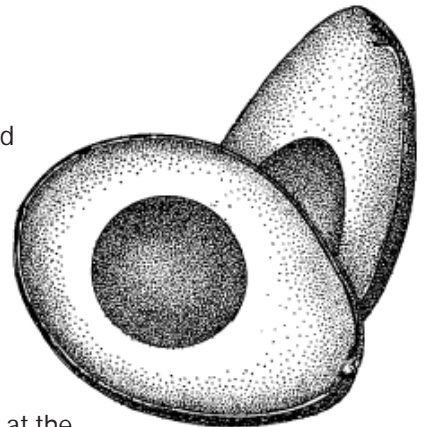
Mix together:

2 apples, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 cucumber, diced
½ cup shredded beets
½ cup soaked raisins

Would you like to learn more?

A Raw Food Potluck is held every second Saturday of the month at the Friends Meeting at 1725 Grand Ave. in St. Paul. Speakers on health topics start around 5 p.m.; the potluck commences between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m.

[Heidi Goar, a devoted HPC member, loves to pick on "the establishment," is a pro-organic food snob, and prefers cognac over scotch.]



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 sweet talk on a few:

Shady Maple Farm Clearly Maple "You Spread It"

Based in Canada, Shady Maple Farm makes all sorts of maple syrup products, organic and regular. Clearly Maple is an organic spreadable maple syrup that is tasty on toast or bagels. It would make an excellent pastry filling or cake layer. You'll find Clearly Maple on the baking supplies shelves opposite the bulk coffee and tea.

For maple syrup recipes, visit www.shadymaple.ca:



Perky's Nutty Flax Whole Grain Crunchy Cereal

Despite the name, Perky's Nutty Flax is nut-free. It's also gluten-free. The ingredients are simple: whole sorghum flour, ground flax seed, honey, raisin juice concentrate, and salt. I think Perky's tastes best with some fresh fruit added for a little texture change. For variety on a rainy and cold morning, zap your bowl of cereal in the microwave for a minute or two and top with some flavored syrup. For recipes, visit www.enjoylifefn.com.

Meat

On any given day, in the meat and fish freezer, you may find free-range chicken, conventional chicken, elk, bison, beef, sausage, ham, turkey, lamb, and good old cold cuts. Selection

varies. Don't be afraid to put your basket down and rummage around in the freezer case; the packages can get a little jumbled in there.

Frontier Bulk Spices—Marjoram

Marjoram, cousin to oregano, is an aromatic herb used in many cuisines. Traditionally, marjoram has been used in tonics as a stimulant and in first-aid tinctures for its supposed anti-fungal qualities. The plant itself is ornamental in a garden or window box. You'll find dried marjoram in the bulk spice area.

JĀSŌN Temptations Moisturizing Lip Tint

Over in the health and beauty corner, you will find tubes of JĀSŌN lip tints. They come in several fashionable colors and contain no mineral oil or petrolatum. 100% vegetarian.

Nature's Gate Toothpaste

Also in the health and beauty corner is Nature's Gate toothpaste. It contains no artificial flavors, colors, or sweeteners and is preservative-free. Nature's Gate makes both fluoride and fluoride-free formulas and comes in a variety of flavors such as anise oil, cherry, and mint.

Queen Helene Moisturizer

Another beauty item is Queen Helene's 100% cocoa butter moisturizer. It comes in a small roll-on tube that's handy for those times when you're out and about and suddenly notice that your elbows are like the Gobi Desert in August.



Renaissance Farms Sweet Basil Pesto

Produced in Spring Green, Wisconsin, this sweet basil pesto is dairy-free. There are no strange fillers in this product—just basil, olive oil, organic miso, pine nuts, garlic, and spices. These tiny jars are meant to be kept frozen and then warmed to room temperature in a saucepan of hot water. Pesto is wonderful over pasta and on buttered French bread. Check the freezer cases near the frozen fruit for this delicious item. For recipes, visit www.renfarm.com.

Holden's Noodle Recipe #142

Two servings of any kind of pasta
A touch of butter

Two teaspoons of Renaissance Farms
Sweet Basil Pesto

Cook the pasta according to directions. Don't rinse. Add butter and mix. Add pesto and mix. Serve immediately to self and loved one. If alone, save other portion for breakfast; it tastes good cold, too.

[Katharine Holden is an HPC member. She's still looking for that person who will say, "Yes, you are our new marketing communications manager!" Katharine can be reached at holdenltd@msn.com.]

Upcoming Events

HPC Book Club

Date/Time: Tuesday, April 15, 2008
6:45 gathering/get acquainted
7:00 discussion

Location: St. Anthony
Park Library
meeting room



Book selection:

Not Buying It: My Year Without Shopping by Judith Levine

The book is available for a discount at Micawber's Books, located at 2238 Carter Ave in St. Anthony Park. Let them know you are part of the Hampden Park Co-op Book Club.

The Great Zucchini Contest

Giant pumpkins are old news. Try your hand at growing the world's largest zucchini! Sponsored by Wisconsin Growers and the Aamot family of Turtle Creek Farm, the Great Zucchini Contest is open to all co-op shoppers.

To register and get your seeds:

Sign up at Mayfest (May 10) and pay your \$1.00 entry fee. Each participant will receive a packet of untreated zucchini seeds. If you aren't able to come to Mayfest, you may sign up at any time during the following week.

There will be several categories to choose from, including Back Yard Gardener, Beat the Farmers, and 12-and-Under. Zucchini must be grown using organic methods...no Miracle Gro! Details about categories, judging, and prizes will be announced at Mayfest.



How to Make Berry Pies

Date/Location: To be announced.

Transform your summer berry crop into tasty treats. At the height of berry season, probably in late June, you will have a chance to learn both the basics and the finer points of berry pie-making. Watch for details!

(*Rhubarb* continued from p. 1)

Caring for Rhubarb

Rhubarb is low maintenance, but it is a heavy feeder. For best results, top-dress the soil around the plant each year with well-rotted manure and compost, and water frequently, about three times per week. Preferred soil is well drained and fertile with a pH slightly acid, 5.5 to 6.5. Rhubarb plants are not too choosy and sandy soil is okay provided that there is ample manure, compost, water, and sun. Piling leaves over the plants in winter also has a beneficial effect.

A witness to durability can be viewed when wandering old farmsteads. I have often come across three telltale markings: a windbreak of trees, lilac groves, and robust rhubarb.

Best with Sugar

There is mixed response regarding eating rhubarb; many people do not like the tart flavor. As a child I ate the pie plant stalks sprinkled with salt. Later I discovered sugar and that was then preferred. The wild variety found in our woodlands is usually too tart and stringy for my taste. Also, the large leaves are toxic due to oxalic acid.

A favorite way to eat rhubarb is as morning fruit compote. To make, use a standard 2-quart sauce pan with half cup of water and four cups of rhubarb cut into one-inch pieces. Cook carefully, watching the process and stirring until the pieces become soft. Depending on your preference, even mushy is okay. Remove from the heat and add sugar to your taste to balance the acidity, usually about one-third to one-half cup. Cinnamon or a dash of molasses, honey, or brown sugar will enhance flavor.

Serve the rhubarb compote on hot or cold cereal, French toast, pancakes, or waffles. It is also eaten warm or cold as a topping on ice cream, bundt cake, or on toast as a jam spread. Rhubarb also makes an excellent ingredient in Brown Betty or cobbler.

Rhubarb can be preserved in a couple of forms. Canning rhubarb sauce in Mason jars was the standard of my mother's generation. Today, freezing is easier and safer. Freezing freshly cut

up pieces in plastic containers provides ingredients for late season pies. Or freeze compote for mid-winter thawing. Jellies, syrups, and wine are other popular uses for rhubarb.

Rhubarb as Medicine

The claims to rhubarb's medicinal qualities are incredibly numerous and are recorded going back to 2700 BC. The main claim is its purgative effects. Author Patrick O'Brian in his many sailing books on the English navy notes that no ship sailed before casks of rhubarb were brought aboard to help maintain a healthy seagoing crew. Scurvy might be a major problem, but a balanced diet also ranked in importance.

Nutritionally rhubarb is a good source of dietary fiber, vitamins C and K, potassium, magnesium, and manganese. It is low in saturated fat and sodium. These nutritional characteristics lead to claims that it can extinguish heartburn, reduce cholesterol, protect against infection, and decrease hot flashes in menopausal women.

Lastly, it is considered good for weight loss, has an astringent effect on the mucous membranes of the mouth and nasal passages, and is currently being researched for its anti-tumor properties. It is no wonder that radio host Garrison Keillor reminds us weekly that "most any time is a good time for Be Bop A Re Bop Rhubarb Pie."



Sources

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[HPC member Jay Dregni is a lazy gardener, choosing only plants that tend themselves. He claims descent from generations of Norwegian rhubarb and raspberry growers.]

Under My Hat

—by Helen DuFault

I expect the snow will be gone by the time you read this. We will all have a strong hankering to turn over the soil, trim perennials, plant early bulbs and seeds, and do all those other spring tasks. Once those are done, we can sit back and enjoy the early blooms of our efforts from last fall. The awakening of spring is wonderful. Our juices really start to flow again.

Plant Sale

As soon as the air begins to warm, people ask: "When are the early plants arriving?" We will have many perennials and cool-loving plants by the end of April (unless we get hit by a late storm, which has happened).

Don't expect to find tomatoes, basil, peppers, or impatiens that early. The warm-loving plants will arrive just before Mother's Day weekend (which is also Mayfest weekend). Then, you can expect lots of baskets and a wide array of new annuals and perennials. Also, I have ordered virtually all tomato varieties available.



The first plant order will come from Glacial Ridge. The Gene Stark family has been in the business for about 35 years. Their plants are grown without growth stimulants and harsh chemicals.

The later plant orders will come from Glacial Ridge and Rush Creek Growers. Rush Creek offers specialty plants and many new varieties. They will also bring some of those beautiful, very large hanging fiber baskets. There will be baskets for both sunny and shady areas. We will also have smaller baskets from Glacial Ridge. Your choices will be many.

A bit of trivia for you: The owner of Rush Creek Growers is a former employee of Greenfingers, which is now known as Glacial Ridge.

Mayfest

For Mayfest we are planning to have music, food sampling, children's activities, sales, and more. Plan to spend time with us that weekend. You can find more information about Mayfest on page 5.



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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.

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