



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

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2009

Volume 20 Issue 5

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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 Thursday, November 26, 2009.

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 December/January issue is November 2. 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

Moving Forward at Hampden Park Co-op

—by Nicolet Lyon

Hampden Park Co-op serves its members and community by providing delicious and wholesome food grown in an ecologically sound manner and by involving its members in the process from field to table. Our mutual mission is grounded in respect: for the growers who deserve to make a fair wage and work in safe conditions, for the earth and the limited resources available, and for the eaters who deserve clean and healthy food. This work we do together has only grown in importance since the co-op opened its doors over 30 years ago.

It's time now to make some important decisions, and the co-op's Board of Directors would like your help in deciding how the co-op will move forward sustainably.

In 2007, the board became aware that the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) intended to sell the building on Raymond. Aware that this was a fantastic opportunity to secure the future of the co-op at its current location and that if another buyer purchased the building, the co-op would likely have to move, the board considered the resources necessary to purchase the building. At the 2007 and 2008 annual meetings, the board brought up the possibility of a capital campaign to support co-op growth, and asked for member feedback about possible fundraising strategies.

As the board moved forward with purchasing the building, we spent considerable time and energy determining the cost of renovating the expansion, buying the building, and increasing staff levels to accommodate the new space. A budget was carefully configured with input from our bank and advice from lawyers, accountants, and an industry consultant. Fortunately, due to responsible fiscal planning in the past, the co-op had the money in savings to move forward with renovation, and we immediately began preparing the new space so that we could generate additional revenue as soon as possible.

While the renovation was in process, the board determined that the co-op needed to raise \$200,000 in additional funds in order to meet its new financial obligations over the next critical years. The board collectively made the decision to request donations and loans from members before looking at other alternatives.

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Hampden Park Co-op Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 15 6 – 9 p.m.

St. Anthony Park United Methodist Church

Music, nachos, annual reports, elections.

Welcome our new general manager, Matt Hass.

Join the discussion about our future.

Bring a dish to pass if you wish; child care provided.



Membership News

—by Naomi Jackson, Membership Coordinator

There have been many changes at our co-op during the past year. Our store has expanded, and everyone is enjoying the added space and the new products we are now able to carry. We bought the building that we've rented space in for so many years, which means we now have a firm control over our future, but we also have mortgage payments.

Helen DuFault has retired after many years as general manager (don't worry, you can still find her in the kitchen four days a week!). We have hired a new general manager, Matt Hass, whom many of you have met in the produce section.

With all these changes, this is an especially important time for you to increase your level of involvement in the co-op. Be sure to read the "Moving Forward" article on page one. If you are a top shopper or a 28% volunteer, you will be invited to participate in a focus group to help determine the next steps we need to take.

Much as we would like to, the board and staff can't talk in person to each of our members. But we'd still like to hear from you. You can reach me at naomi@hampdenparkcoop.com, or the Hampden Park Co-op board at board@hampdenparkcoop.com.

I also urge you to attend our annual meeting, scheduled for November 15 at 6:00 p.m. Details are on page 12. The annual meeting offers us an opportunity to talk about what has been happening at our co-op and to plan together for our future. It's also fun!

The best thing you can do for your co-op is to shop often and bring your friends. It is the mission of our co-op to serve our community by providing quality food products for our shoppers. HPC staff are always happy to hear your thoughts about how we can best fulfill this mission. Reach us at staff@hampdenparkcoop.com.



Welcome, New Members

Molly & Teague O'Meara
Tara & Adam Green
Jill Cadwell & Zachary Crosby
Jeffrey & Marcia Hanson
Annamary & Leon Boler
Joseph & Hannah Miller
Jeff & Adrienne Schucker
Joyce Lyon
Jessica Schneider & Anthony Sandberg
Clarence & Elizabeth Ooten
Kristin Anderson
Theresa Marble
Kelli Fifield
Lylee Rauch-Kacenski
Patrick Lang
Chad & Christina Koppes
Gina Bergman
Greg Corradini
Wade & Janelle Johnson
Scott Rose
Abram & Karen Shapiro
Greg & Lesley Sindberg
Katlyn Arnett

Doug Beasley
Judy Peterson
Anita & Michael Fedoruk
Peggy Pond & Mike Sodomka
Kristin Ulstad & Scott Propson
Candi Schulman
Dana Wagner & Nat Hemstad
Carole Waltzing
Juliette Keller
Kenneth Tivey & Julie Felt
Karen Johnson
Joseph & Teresa Youn
Joanna Stone & Jill Lorenzini
Sarah Pradt & Kathy & Lia Wallace
Naomi Brill
Kris Lawson
Pete & Pat Palmer
Robin Hill & Evan Heier
Nanette Echols & Jeff Grapevine
Christi & John Manthey
Andrea Christensen
Trina PaStarr & Katherine Page
Hanna Clark
Amy Borgeson

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

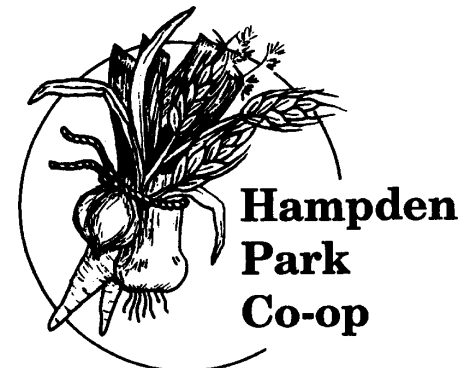
All seniors receive a 15% discount on the first Wednesday of the month. Senior members always receive a 15% discount. Your membership includes you and your spouse or significant other. If you are 65+ and would like a senior card, talk to any coordinator. Senior volunteers start with a 15% base, plus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



(Moving Forward continued from page 1)

In early 2009, board members personally contacted all active co-op members to impress the importance of our fund-raising goal. Co-op membership responded enthusiastically and donated or loaned a total of \$132,000. The board was able to obtain the bank loan with these generous pledges, but knew the bank would expect further fundraising.

Revenue from the newly opened additional space helped cover cost increases. However, the expansion was ready later than expected due to construction delays. This past summer, co-op sales were less than expected, as food costs continued to rise, recession pressures increased, and construction in the neighborhood decreased customer traffic.

Construction on the Raymond railroad bridge has caused further street closings in September and October. Our total income for the 2008–2009 fiscal year was \$2.14 million, an increase from \$2.01 million in 2007–2008, but short of the board's budgeted \$2.4 million.

The combination of revenue and fundraising shortfalls means that the co-op must look to other options to generate the funds needed to secure our future. Over the past few months, the board has been discussing additional fundraising measures and narrowed the focus to two areas: the volunteer member discount structure and share price.

Most Minnesota food co-ops, both volunteer and non-volunteer, have substantially lower member discounts than ours. Possibilities for addressing this include reducing volunteer member discounts by a few percentage points, or limiting the number of volunteers in each discount category.

The board's research has indicated that Hampden Park Co-op's \$30 share price is by far the lowest amongst Minnesota co-ops; other share prices range from \$75 to \$125. Changes might include raising the share price (which would affect current shareholders as well as new members by law) or requiring the purchase of another share within a specified period of time in order to remain an active co-op member.

Co-op discounts and share price have been constant for many years, but inflation and the economy have not. A few changes could raise the revenue we need.

The board now needs feedback about how the co-op membership would prefer to move forward. To that end, we are arranging focus group meetings with target constituents within the co-op: volunteering members in the 28% discount bracket, the top 100

carrot logo

shoppers (by revenue), and the top 30 building fund contributors. These folks should receive invitations shortly.

Unfortunately, a group of nine volunteer directors can meet with only so many people, but we would very much like to hear from those members not participating in focus groups as well. We request and encourage members and the co-op community to contribute written comments via email at board@hampdenparkcoop.com or by dropping them off at the store. There will be a feedback envelope by the Board of Directors information in the co-op entryway. **Please note that co-op employees, volunteers, and cashiers are not equipped to receive or convey verbal feedback.**

The board fully anticipates that the co-op membership will help choose an equitable and practical way to raise the funds we need to sustainably support the co-op. We may present changes to the by-laws on the ballot at the 2009 annual meeting in order to implement fundraising measures; it's more important than ever that our membership attend and participate in our democratic co-op system. We look forward to hearing from the co-op membership and community about how we can support our mission together.

[Nicolet Lyon is a law student and a member of the HPC Board of Directors.]

News & Events

Did you know....? If you are a member of Hampden Park Co-op, and are 65 or older, you qualify for a 15% senior discount. If you would like a senior discount card, fill out the New Card Request on page 12 and put it in the Membership Coordinator envelope in the co-op entryway.



It's easy to donate to Midway Food Shelf

All Hampden Park Co-op shoppers can donate to Midway Food Shelf, which is operated by Keystone Community Services. It doesn't matter if you are a member or not. Anyone may purchase items from the co-op at a 28% discount and donate them to the food shelf. Leave your donations with the cashier, and volunteer Deb Ahlberg will deliver them to the food shelf. Questions? Talk with any floor manager.

Find Hampden Park Co-op online

Check out our new Web site at www.hampdenparkcoop.com, and look for us on Facebook.

Ad rates:

\$15 per issue for a camera-ready, 2½" by 3½" ad. Ads may be either horizontal or vertical, and may be delivered either electronically or as hard copy. Contact the editor.

Budget-Friendly Dried Beans

—by Caroline Daykin



The current economic recession that followed close on the heels of a global increase in food prices has been enough to discourage even the most ardent supporter of the organic movement. With organically produced chicken as high as \$9 per pound, and certified organic skim milk at around \$3.50 for a half gallon, budget-focused organic consumers face a challenge in procuring their protein.

Fortunately, nutrient-rich plant seeds, otherwise known as beans, are still available for next to nothing. Ranging from \$1.75 to \$2.29 per pound, dried beans are one of the most affordable ways to eat organically.

It's not hard to cook beans

The word "dried" may strike fear into the hearts of many readers. While even a novice cook is capable of opening a can of beans, draining the liquid from them, and adding them to a recipe, the ability to prepare beans from scratch is much rarer. Considering the simplicity of the bean-cooking process, this fear strikes me as unnecessary.

While the process for preparing different kinds of beans varies, there are several basic instructions to follow. Before dried beans can be cooked, they must be soaked, a process that softens and rehydrates them and dissolves enzymes that are difficult to digest.

Place the beans in a pan large enough to accommodate the legumes as well as their required water. Add enough water to exceed the height of the beans by two inches, and soak for at least two hours. (If you are using black beans, take time to enjoy the luminescent purple color the beans lend to the water after they have soaked for awhile.) If you're pressed for time, use the quick-soak method: Bring the beans and water to a boil, cook for two minutes, turn off the heat, and allow them to soak for an hour.

When it comes time to cook the beans, add several more inches of water to the pan, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to

medium low, and cook for one hour or until the beans are tender. You can sample a few beans to assure yourself of their tenderness by removing a few from the pan with a spoon and letting them cool for about 30 seconds. Drain the beans, and add them to dishes that call for cooked or canned beans.

The "Vegetarians in Paradise" Web site features a chart with more bean variety-specific information about cooking times. Something to keep in mind when working with lima beans is the importance of adequate cooking time, as these beans contain a potentially toxic substance that is destroyed by cooking.

If, alas, you have cooked more beans than your recipe calls for, prepare them for storage by placing them in a container with some of the water they cooked in. Cooked beans will keep for four to five days in the fridge or up to six months in the freezer.

They're good for you!

While the above argument may very well have convinced the reader of beans' economic virtues, it neglected the fact that beans also have an impressive nutritional profile. Most varieties provide eight of the nine essential amino acids that must be obtained through food (soybeans are the only known vegetable that provide all nine essential amino acids), and are thus a good source of protein.

Beans contain fatty acids, B vitamins, iron, calcium, potassium, and vitamins A and C. They are also high in fiber, a nutrient that helps to lower cholesterol levels, keep blood sugar in check, prevent colon cancer, and control weight by providing a feeling of fullness.

While the nutrients beans contain are certainly nothing to scoff at, in order to consume a balanced diet it's important to remember that, unless they are soybeans, beans do not contain all of the essential amino acids. This problem can easily be overcome by supplementing your diet with grains, which make up for what beans lack in terms of amino acids.

(Legumes and grains do not, however, need to be eaten at the same meal.)

Another bean caveat is the relative difficulty the body has in absorbing iron from plant sources as compared to animal sources. However, consuming iron from plant sources along with vitamin C aids in iron absorption.

Entire books have been written on the controversy over the health properties of soybeans. While much has been made (mostly by manufacturers of soy products) of their ability to fight heart disease and cancer, recent research has called these claims into question. One study even found that eating one serving of tofu a day increases the risk of dementia. However, the study involved only elderly people, and there is other evidence that the phytoestrogens in soy products may protect the brains of younger people.

Some commentators have suggested that the possible health risks associated with soy products result from the consumption of highly processed versions of soy, such as tofu, rather than in an innate defect in soybeans themselves.

Beans from the dawn of time

People have eaten beans since the Stone Age, and beans went with them when they dispensed with hunting and gathering and settled down to farm during the Neolithic period. A look at crop rotation's earliest appearance in recorded history (765 C.E.) reveals that beans or other legumes were grown on one field, grain was grown on a second, and a third was left fallow.

In Europe, the variety of bean that was consumed for most of history was fava beans, which can be eaten either fresh or dried, and can be ground into meal to make bread. During Middle Ages winters, dried favas and lentils were among the few vegetables most people had access to.

Despite their important role in European history, fava beans are labor-intensive. They must be shelled, boiled for 30 seconds, and then

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peeled. Perhaps for this reason, in the Age of Discovery fava beans were replaced by New World haricot beans, a large family that includes cannellini, great northern, red kidney, navy, and black beans. Haricots are the mature seeds of the green bean plant.

The following recipes call for black or cannellini beans. If you are feeling adventurous or are unable to procure the requisite variety of bean, feel free to experiment with other haricots.

Cuban Style Black Beans

½ cup chopped green/red bell pepper
2 tablespoons orange juice
2 large garlic cloves, chopped
3 cups cooked or canned black beans
3 tablespoons vinegar
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Combine peppers, orange juice, and garlic in a medium skillet or saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring continuously, for 5 minutes. Add the beans, vinegar, and oregano to the skillet, and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes.

Source: Unknown

**White Bean Soup with Rosemary, Basil, and Garlic Croutons****Soup**

4 cups white beans, such as cannellini, drained
2 cups vegetable broth
1 cup marinara sauce
2 large garlic cloves, minced
¼ cup packed fresh basil, or 1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

Puree all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour into a large saucepan or Dutch oven, and bring to a simmer. Simmer, partially covered and stirring frequently, 4–5 minutes.

Croutons

1 cup of ½-inch bread cubes from French or Italian loaf
2 teaspoons olive oil
⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
pinch of salt

Heat an 8-inch skillet over low heat while preparing bread. A minute before you are ready to cook, increase heat to medium. Toss bread in a bowl with oil, garlic powder, and salt. Pour into skillet and cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown and crisp (about 7 minutes).

Source: USA Weekend

**Caribbean Beans and Greens Wraps**

1 garlic clove, minced or pressed
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
½ teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon ground allspice
4 cups lightly packed chopped greens
1 jar of peach salsa
1 tablespoon water
2 cups cooked black beans
3 tablespoons orange juice
4 tortillas

Sauté garlic with oil for about 10 minutes, stirring often. Add thyme, allspice, greens, and water. Cover and cook on medium heat until greens are tender (5–10 minutes). Push the greens to the side of the pan, add the beans to the center, and mash them well with a potato masher. Add the orange juice, stir everything together, and remove from heat. Warm the tortillas. Place ½ cup filling on the bottom of each, roll up, and serve immediately.

Source: Moosewood Restaurant New Classics

**References**

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- "Tofu 'May Raise Risk of Dementia.'" July 4, 2008. news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7490202.stm.
- Wolf, Bonny (2007). "Fava Beans: A Little Spring on Your Plate." www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9163283.

Food Deserts and Food Insecurity: Even in Minnesota

—by Rachel Fang

What are food deserts?

Imagine not being able to walk or drive to a grocery store for fresh milk or produce; imagine taking two bus rides to get the fruit, bread, or eggs you need for your family. When I first heard the term “food desert” I thought someone had misspelled the final course of a meal. You know, where cake and pies and ice cream are served. But a food desert is an area, sometimes urban sometimes rural, where good quality, affordable, and healthful food is not available. Areas where people are forced to travel long distances to find grocery stores or farmers’ markets and pay high prices at small convenience stores where fresh fruits and vegetables are of marginal quality are all too common, even in Minnesota.

Not surprisingly, urban food deserts tend to be located in poor inner-city neighborhoods. In these communities, large grocery stores and supermarkets have closed and

smaller convenience stores and fast food restaurants often have taken their places. Food in convenience stores tends to be highly processed: frozen burritos, pizza, salty snacks and candy. Fresh produce and meat are rarely available and when they are, are likely to be expensive and of low quality. The lack of availability of culturally specific food items also prevents some poor families from accessing healthful, affordable food.

Rural areas can be food deserts as well. An example is the Red River Valley of Minnesota and North Dakota, home to some of the most fertile farmland in the United States. According to Dr. Abby Gold, Extension Specialist at the University of Minnesota and North Dakota State University, farmland in the Red River Valley is largely owned by large-scale farming operations that grow soybeans, sugar beets, and corn, which are often shipped to other

states for processing. Foods that can be readily eaten are not produced on these large farms. Instead, backyard gardens supply rural families with fruits and vegetables, but only enough for their own families. So, what if you don’t have the land or the skills to grow your own food? Then you have to rely on grocery stores that can be 20 miles away and may not have the freshest foods at affordable prices.

Why do food deserts exist?

In urban environments, food security activists say that food deserts are largely the result of redlining. Decades of racist lending practices have created areas of concentrated poverty



primarily populated by people of color. The National Black Economic Justice network reports half of all black neighborhoods in the United States don’t have full service grocery stores or supermarkets. In poor neighborhoods, grocery stores and supermarkets have

had difficulty developing and sustaining their businesses. Instead, snack foods and highly processed meals at convenience and fast food restaurants are frequently all that are available.

Poor families are most at risk in food deserts and, while community food assistance such as food shelves and other emergency food programs exist, they often have limited resources and are able to help only a limited number of families. In rural areas where income and transportation are limited, seniors and low-income families are the most affected by lack of access to affordable, high quality food. Grocery stores and supermarkets are located in urban centers, often many miles away, and while there are food shelves in rural areas, they are also located primarily in larger towns, and, like their urban counterparts, suffer from lack of resources. The high cost

of gas is also a significant barrier for poor rural residents in accessing affordable, high quality food.

Health concerns

Residents of poor neighborhoods have a higher incidence of diet-related health problems such as obesity and diabetes. Heart disease and high blood pressure are also related to lack of access to healthful foods. It is generally accepted that a healthy diet is critical for children to grow and succeed in school. Without adequate resources, poor families experience significant difficulties in providing healthful food for their children.

Addressing the problem of food deserts

Lack of resources is a significant barrier to accessing high quality food. The Food Support Program (the new name of Minnesota’s version of the federal food assistance program, formerly called “Food Stamps”) provides an average of only 78¢ per person for each meal.

According to the USDA, only 12 percent of low income households that receive federal food support are able to get their recommended dietary allowances for 11 key nutrients. Most recipients must supplement their benefits with other resources throughout the month. In addition, purchasing foods for a nutritious diet requires adequate food preparation facilities, extensive time for food preparation, and knowledge about cooking food from scratch.

Improving access to healthy, affordable food is not just a matter of addressing poverty, though this is a worthy goal. A number of methods of providing healthy food options exist but it is important to recognize that what works for some people may not work for many others. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farmers’ markets are two strategies that are often touted as solutions to the problem of food deserts. But with CSA memberships costing hundreds of

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dollars, this is not an option for most poor families. The Twin Cities has a number of farmers' markets, but most are not open daily and are not sited in the poorest neighborhoods. Community gardens are also a popular option, but again, there are a limited number of gardens and many poor families aren't able to access them.

Education can help families learn about healthful food options and preparing locally-produced food. Public education that is culturally appropriate could go a long way towards addressing some of the barriers to accessing healthful food, but many local food programs are under-funded and located in predominantly affluent areas.

But all is not lost. We can work together to improve access to high quality, affordable food for all by supporting our local economy and by eating locally-produced food. We can donate to food shelves and other programs that build connections in our communities and in all communities. And we can advocate for improved food programs that teach children and families how food is produced and provide access to a wide variety of healthful, affordable food.

To read more about food deserts:

Raja, Samina, Changxing Ma, & Pavan Yadav. "Beyond Food Deserts: Measuring and Mapping Racial Disparities in Neighborhood Food Environments." *Journal of Planning Education Research*, 2008.

Smith, Chery, and Lois W. Morton. "Rural Food Deserts: Low-income Perspectives on Food Access in Minnesota and Iowa." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 2009.

For more about food activism:

Guthman, Julie. "Bringing Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice." *Cultural Geographies*, 2008.

[Rachel Fang is a long-time co-op member, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, and an avid gardener.]

The Other Plantain

—by Judith Sims

In the last issue of this newsletter you were introduced to the fruit called plantain, a crop of which there are some 40 species in the *Musa* genus, including bananas. But there is a small herb that grows well in compacted soil and can often be found along footpaths and roads that is also called plantain. Some 200 species of the *Plantago* genus are found around the world. If you have ever used psyllium seed as a fiber supplement or stool bulking agent, you have probably used the seeds of *Plantago ovata*, a species cultivated in India for sale to the U.S. market.

Look for *Plantago major* on the boulevard outside the co-op. You can see the seeds in late summer and fall. They are set on long, greenish spikes rising up from a basal rosette of leaves. Each oval leaf has three to five parallel veins, which are sinewy enough to be made into cordage. That's one reason I don't recommend eating them. People do batter and deep fry them, but it's easier to let a handful of leaves wilt and dry for a day or two and then make a tea.

Why would you want to make a tea? Because it tastes better than a tincture. But tinctures can be active for years and alcohol is good at extracting medicinal compounds. Make a plantain tincture by sterilizing a jar (15 minutes in boiling water or 20 minutes in a 200° oven), stuffing it fairly full with leaves, filling it with vodka and/or brandy, labeling it, and letting it sit someplace dark for six weeks.

There could be a second crop of plantain before winter, and if so, collecting young leaves for your tincture would be ideal. In the meantime, plantain is abundant and available to make tea, a great extraction method. And tea doesn't sting when you put it on gauze to apply to wounds.

Plantain is a good wound-healer. One of its names is "Soldier's Herb," although I like the moniker "Nature's Band-Aid." It can be handy as a first aid treatment for little wounds or bugbites when you're outdoors. Pick and macerate a leaf by chomping on it



but not *through* it, starting at the tip and putting one layer of bites through to the end. Then plant it on the injured site.

Or, chomp up a leaf of plantain and put the resulting coarse pesto on the cut. The plant's astringent qualities — drawing foreign matter out of tissue — work best if you secure an actual bandage over the plantain poultice. Additionally, plantain contains soothing mucilage, encourages quick cell growth, and is mildly anti-microbial. Of course, get professional help if you have a serious wound!

Plantain can help decongest the respiratory system. According to Welsh herbalist Chanchal Cabrera, plantain will take thick, globe-shaped mucous polysaccharides (sugar structures, loved by bacteria) and flatten them out, releasing water and sugars and resulting in some decongestion. This is helpful when you've got a cold. As with any herb, which will be milder than a refined pharmaceutical product, you need to take doses throughout the day to feel an effect. For example, drink three to four cups of tea per day or take one-half to one teaspoon of tincture three times per day.

Another name for plantain is "white man's footprint," presumably because this Old World plant colonized North America along with Europeans. But the co-op's copy of "Fifty Years of the Herbalist Almanac" suggests that settlers put plantain leaves in their shoes to soothe and protect their feet. You can find more uses for this healer in the Herbal Almanac on the top shelf of the herbs and spices section of the co-op. It's just a couple shelves above the powdered psyllium seed.

[Judith Sims is an award-winning researcher and herbalist.]

A Year in Produce

—by Annie Van Cleve

As we draw to the end of yet another harvest season, it is time to review what we have learned before winter numbs our memories. Below is a list of the bounty grown in Minnesota between the months of May and November.

Minnesota Growing Season*

Late Spring

Asparagus: May – July
Green Onions: May – September
Radishes: May – October
Spinach: May – June
Rhubarb: May – June

Early Summer

Broccoli: June – October
Cabbage: June – October
Green Beans: June – September
Kohlrabi: June – September
Peas: June – July
Strawberries: June – July

Mid Summer

Beets: July – October
Blueberries: July – August
Carrots: July – November
Cauliflower: July – November
Cucumbers: July – September
Herbs: July – September
Potatoes: July – November
Raspberries: July and September
Summer Squash: July – September
Sweet Corn: July – September
Tomatoes: July – September

Late Summer

Apples: August – November
Eggplant: August – September
Melons: August – September
Onions: August – November

Autumn

Raspberries: July and September
Spinach: September – October
Brussel Sprouts: September – November
Parsnips: September – November
Turnips: September – November
Winter Squash: September – November
Pumpkins: October – November

*Information from Minnesota Grown, <www3.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown>.

The Vegetannual illustration found in Barbara Kingsolver's 2007 book, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, translates the growing season visually into an imaginary plant. Near the roots of the plant are the greens of May and at the



top is October's pumpkin. For the curious, The Vegetannual is posted on www.animalvegetablemiracle.com. By the way, the book is worth reading for more than just this handy image.

What about the cold months?

Some seized the day and canned Minnesota fruits and vegetables as they were coming into their own. Others of us will rely on the co-op to provide us with the frozen and canned fruits and vegetables that we need this winter. For fresh produce, we must turn to California, where much of the produce available to us during the colder months is grown.

In California, fruits and vegetables generally mature in the same sequence as in Minnesota, but the growing season begins around January instead of May. Of course, California also has a climate and growing season in which avocados, citrus fruit, dates, nuts, and other produce that would never make it in Minnesota, can flourish.

Below is a short list detailing when some California-grown fruits and nuts come into season. The information comes from the Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA) website. For complete seasonality charts, visit www.cuesa.org/seasonality/charts/vegetable.php.

California-grown nuts and fruit

Almonds: August – November
Avocados: Year round
Dates: September – December
Figs: June – November
Grapefruit: September – April
Grapes: July – December
Oranges: Year round
Pomegranates: August – December
Walnuts: November – June

Sweet autumn

Although summer's bounty is fading there are still some local vegetables available, including butternut squash. One warming, relatively quick and inexpensive dish perfect for using up those kitchen counter hogs comes from *The Splendid Table's How to Eat Supper* by Lynne Rossetto Kasper and Sally Swift (Clarkson Potter/Publishers, 2008). (See next column.)

Roasted Vegetables:

Squash mixture:

3 to 3½ pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into bite-sized chunks
1 medium to large onion, cut into 1-inch chunks
2 big handfuls escarole or curly endive that has been washed, dried, and torn into small pieces, or spring mix
⅓ tight-packed cup fresh basil leaves, torn up
16 large fresh sage leaves, torn up
5 large garlic cloves, coarse chopped
⅓ cup good-tasting extra-virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 tight-packed tablespoon brown sugar (light or dark)
Salt and fresh-ground black pepper

Pasta:

1 pound imported bow-tie pasta
½ cup half-and-half
1 to 1½ cups (about 6 ounces) shredded Asiago cheese

Slip one large or two smaller shallow sheet pans into the oven. Preheat the oven to 450°.

Place 5 quarts salted water in a 6-quart pot. Bring to a boil on the stovetop.

In a big bowl, toss together all the ingredients for the roasted vegetables. Be generous with the salt and pepper.

Pull out the oven rack holding the sheet pan(s). Taking care not to burn yourself, turn the squash blend onto the hot sheet pan(s) and spread it out. Bake for 25 minutes, or until the squash is tender, turning the vegetables two or three times during roasting.

As the squash becomes tender, drop the pasta into the boiling water and cook it until tender, but with some firmness to the bite. Drain in a colander.

Once the squash is tender, turn on the broiler to caramelize it. Watch the vegetables closely, turning the pieces often. Anticipate about 5 minutes under the broiler. You want crusty brown edges on the squash and wilted, almost crisp greens.

Scrape everything into a serving bowl. Add the half-and-half, hot pasta, and 1 cup of the cheese. Toss to blend, tasting for salt and pepper. Add more cheese if desired. Serve hot. Serves 4–6.

It's Time for Hot Cereal

—by Jill Cadwell

As the temperatures cool, Zach (my partner) is once again asking for his favorite Red River hot cereal for breakfast. An alternative to Cream of Wheat or Malt-O-Meal, Red River cereal has a hearty nutty flavor, soothing texture, whole grains, and omega-3 fatty acids. But Zach just likes the taste.

It gets me thinking about my favorite warm cereal, Muesli. Simmering in milk for about four minutes makes the almond slivers, oats, sunflower seeds, and raisins soft and warm; but it doesn't zap the cereal of its rich, varied textures! I like a cereal I can sink my teeth into, and hot Muesli is just right.

Hampden Park Co-op carries both of these great cereals, so Zach and I are never left wanting. But for those of you who are ready for more variety in your hot cereal, here are some hot ideas.

Most American hot cereals are made from grains such as barley, wheat, corn, or rice, and carry that wholesome taste and texture we love but that can sometimes seem too bland. So spice it up — literally! Cinnamon, nutmeg, or ground cardamom can bring new life to those old flavors. If the cardamom is a little too pungent when sprinkled on, consider throwing in two to four whole cardamom pods while you simmer the grains. This is especially tasty for Indian kheer, made by simmering rice in milk for many hours. (Although kheer is technically a dessert, I think it passes for a good morning cereal, too; my sweet tooth needs tending to, after all.)

Another simple approach is to get nutty and fruity! Go beyond the typical blueberries or strawberries: remember dates, prunes, figs, apples, cherries, and cranberries. To soften before eating, simmer the fruit with your cereal rather than adding the fruit on the top at the end. Sprinkle walnuts, crushed almonds, or pecans on top. (If you love decadence like I do, add fresh whipped cream!)

Consider stewing your spices and fruits together for sauce to add to your hot cereals. Recipes for charoseth (a Passover dish), stewed fruits (dried or fresh), and fruit compotes can be found online, and many can even be made in the crock pot. Imagine warm, stewed plums with a touch of cinnamon and lemon to accompany your oatmeal!

Besides dressing up old favorites, it might be time to try traditional hot cereals from other regions: grits and porridge. The great thing about grits and porridge is that both can be plain, sweet, or salty, depending on what you complement them with.

Southern grits are made from corn — with or without the germ of the corn intact. Most grits contain some fine bran that doesn't soften when cooked, which can give this otherwise smooth food a little "grit" to it. Because of their versatility, grits can be made with everything from provolone, blue cheese, or cream cheese to jalepeño peppers, mushrooms, onions, or garlic to shrimp, tuna, or sausage!



Porridge has been eaten around the world for centuries and can be made by boiling nearly any legume or grain in milk or water. Congee (and variations of it) is a popular Asian porridge made from rice. It can be cooked with things like eggs, meat, onion, and ginger (China), or it can be served with coconut chutney or Indian pickles (Indian ganji). Salmon, miso, or chicken can flavor Japanese porridge (Okayu).

Much like oatmeal, Scottish porridge is made from oats. Originally made with water and salt, the porridge would be like a paste. Today a touch of maple syrup or jam can sweeten it up. Other sweet porridges can be achieved with yogurt, honey, or fruit.

Oats, grits, and porridges can all be purchased in "instant" varieties, or you can make them the long way (simmering in milk or water for 15 minutes to hours) for the full-bodied taste and hearty texture so perfect for cold fall and winter mornings. If you're in a pinch for time, however, don't forget the potential of leftovers. Rice or couscous reheated with milk can taste wonderful with a sprinkle of brown sugar or cinnamon and sugar.

As temperatures continue to drop, don't wait for the evening cup of hot cocoa to warm up and de-stress. Start your day with a hot cereal: there are so many variations to try!

[Jill Cadwell recently moved into the neighborhood and lives with her partner, Zachary Crosby, whose family has shopped at HPC for many years! She is a teacher of English and loves to write essays on a range of topics.]

Holly House

Have You Tried...? The HPC Aisles Revealed

—by Katharine Holden

Hampden Park Co-op is stuffed to the brim with good things. Let me tell you about a few products you and your family might enjoy.

Bhutanese Red Rice Bread

This Food For Life gluten-free, wheat-free product is sweetened with fruit juice. It's the second year of my quest to find good-tasting, good texture gluten-free bread. I wish I could tell you that Bhutanese Red Rice Bread completes my quest. I *can* say that it's better tasting than all of the other commercial gluten-free breads that I've tried so far. However, that's not saying much because all the other gluten-free breads I've tried have tasted like compressed pocket lint, except when I toasted them and then they tasted like toasted compressed pocket lint. I. you're on the same quest, give Bhutanese Red Rice Bread a try; it's in the freezer case.



Kimono Microthin Latex Condoms

For those people who think of the co-op as a good place to buy vegetables, fruits, and bulk rice, but don't think the co-op carries the other items they need, I will point out that we have tall shelves full of "health and beauty" basics, including a brand of condoms. I prefer to try products before I mention them to you, but I haven't tried these. They're distributed by a U.S company, but made in Japan.

Three Crabs Brand Fish Sauce

Serious fish sauce users (it's a 24-ounce bottle) rate this fish sauce highly. Made by the Viet Huong Fish Sauce Company in Thailand, its ingredients are anchovy extract, water, salt, fructose, and hydrolyzed vegetable protein. The empty bottle with its Asian writing and pretty design makes an interesting bud vase.

Scharffen Berger Chocolate Covered Cacao Nibs

When you're putting out your pickle dishes at your next party, fill one with these little semisweet cuties. Or sprinkle them on top of cakes, custards, puddings or coffee drinks. A bonus: they come in tiny plastic canisters just right for hiding among the spices — put them in between the onion flakes and the cream of tartar and no one but you will snack on them.

Le Chevre Noir Vieilli

My three favorite cheeses are Dubliner cheddar, Brillat Savarin, and Le Chevre Noir goat cheese. There's no wrong way to serve this aged cheese from Québec. The simplest is my favorite: Le Chevre Noir on a fresh baguette accompanied by a glass of red wine.

Marich Espresso Caramels

I gifted a friend last year with a bag of these delights. When I met up with her later, she said, "You know, those chocolate things you gave me?" I said, "Yes." And then she made a sound somewhere between a moan and a sigh. You'll find them in the small bulk bins, currently located near the chips and pretzels in the "new" half of the co-op.

Bob's Red Mill Stoneground Cornbread Mix

I love cornbread and cornmeal muffins, especially when they accompany a big bowl of my friend Galynn Nordstrom's secret-recipe chili. Bob's Red Mill is not one of your dry-as-the-box-it-comes-in bread mixes. Like all their mix products, Bob's Red Mill Cornbread Mix contains the same high-quality dry ingredients you would choose to use if you were going to make cornbread from scratch. They're just pre-mixed for you.

Purple Chopsticks

New items in the ticky-tacky knicky-knacky category have arrived in the co-op. Candles, incense, jewelry, etc. Large bangles are everywhere. There's an upsurge in kitchen linens and potholders. A great many wooden fork and spoon sets. An army of new teapots. I was stopped in my tracks when the sunlight streamed through the little window on the far side of the co-op and highlighted a pair of bright purple chopsticks. How I've lived this long on Planet Earth without a pair of bright purple chopsticks, I'll never understand.

[Katharine Holden might be the HPC member who shopped at the co-op with an 8-pound Shih Tzu named Lily in the crook of her arm. It could be that she's taken up dog sitting because there are NO marketing communications jobs in the Twin Cities. Katharine can be reached at holdentd@msn.com]

All dried up: Adventures in food dehydration

—by Anne Holzman

A friend with a bumper crop of tiny, imperfect pears got me started last summer. They'd be perfect for drying, I said, then persuaded my husband to set up the food dryer we hadn't used in years.

The dried pears were treats. I decided this summer I'd get an earlier start.

As with most projects, I began by hitting the books. Our copy of Deanna DeLong's *How to Dry Foods* is even older than our dehydrator. It has served me well all summer, with handy charts and concise text.

At first there seemed to be too many steps — cleaning, chopping, blanching, blending, taping plastic sheets onto the food dryer. But as with so many food projects, there's enough pleasure in the sensory experience to keep me going. (Also, my husband does the dishes, which really helps.) It's surprisingly easy to do with kids around, too, because there's no hot grease and not even much reason to turn on the stove. I can break up a lot of fights while the veggies sit on their trays for hours on end.

And the kids eat the results. I had a blueberry hater eating dried blueberries, and a kid who bites every peach once

and declares it "mushy" ripping peach leather out of my hand. I thought food drying was all about preservation, but it's preparation too; and even with some nutritional loss, the kids try new flavors and I claim victory before the fruit's even gone out of season.

I borrowed Mary T. Bell's *Food Drying with an Attitude* and liked it so much, I bought a copy. A Lanesboro local, Bell has written several books about food drying, and her peppy prose turns a chore into an adventure. For a more sober approach, I also dabbled in *The Dehydrator Bible*, by Jennifer MacKenzie, Jay Nutt, and Don Mercer. Both books offer tips and refinements worth trying, but it's the plain old how-to book that has acquired the smudges and dog-ears of a season's honorable service in the kitchen.

Nevertheless, I've got to hand it to Bell. She's got one of my kids hooked on kale. Kale!

There is also, of course, a great deal of information online, although the results from search terms "dry," "food," and "dehydrate" require some patience to sort through. I like the University of Georgia's National Center for Home Food Preservation.

HPC member Anita Doyle gave me a backyard tour midway through all this experimentation. She's the proud builder and operator of a solar food dryer, which sounds very grand but amounts to plastic, cardboard, and a couple of trays that look like refugees from a toaster oven. She was drying some berries in her backyard and said the rig is mainly good for herbs, but at least squirrels haven't come after the berries. She uses electricity for most of her fruits and vegetables. (For directions to build your own solar dehydrator, go to www.jrwhipple.com/sr/soldehydrate.html.)

At left, Joey Holzman, 8, watches berries dry.



My two favorite projects:

Fruit leather

Buy fruit in season; check your favorite chart for recommendations about peeling, blanching, straining, and other preparations. I asked HPC's produce manager, Matt Hass, for a deal on some past-perfect fruit and used whatever he had. You don't need a lot; two apricots and two pears made a pretty good blender load and a sheet of leather roughly a foot long by half a foot wide. (My dryer is a big box; for the small, circular countertop ones, you could do even less and it wouldn't look lost on the tray.)

It takes some practice to get the slurry evenly poured, and please don't try to turn it over when it's not quite dry! Plastic wrap taped to the dryer trays worked fine, but I don't care for all that plastic, so we plan to invest in some better leather trays for next summer. The leather has made a great take-along snack on summer outings. What we haven't eaten already, I'm storing in the fridge or freezer in glass and plastic containers.

Vegetable soup mix

Chop up whatever vegetables you like, which is the best thing about making this yourself — I have a hard time digesting onions, which rules out most soup mixes for me. Working from garden and CSA piles, I chose carrots, bell peppers, and green beans, plus a selection of herbs. (Potatoes were knocked off the list after Anita, she of the solar dryer, told me they weren't worth the trouble.)

I prepared and dried the vegetables separately, one crop per tray, and I was surprised at how little time it took — a little over half an hour to clean, chop, blanch, and arrange carrots, herbs, and pepper, plus a quarter-hour the day before to chop, blanch, and pre-freeze the beans. I'll store them all together and have them ready to toss into soup in the middle of winter. If I can wait that long.

[Anne Holzman is a freelance writer and at-home mother of three children and one food dehydrator.]



