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FOOD CALENDAR

KENAI LOCAL FOOD CONNECTION



What Do You Think?

We can solve hunger in America, as well as the world hunger shortage, if every person in the United States does one simple thing: do away with your ornamental yard and plant edible landscaping.

Guest columnist Dr. George Spady argues for "edible landscaping" to alleviate world hunger.

We are bombarded from all directions by the media touting the food shortages in the world. We hear about children and adults, right here in our local community, having to go without 1-2 meals a day

and feeling hungry at school and work. There is a real meaningful solution to the problem, and it is quite simple. That solution is to have all homes plant edible landscaping in their yards.

I hate to bore you with facts... but I have to give some data to countermeasure those naysayers who say that we can't feed the world. Here are the facts about back yards in the United States: 80% of people have a back yard with a lawn. There are 85 million households with lawns, and there are 18 million acres of lawns in the US. The average back yard is 1/6 of an acre, or 7,260 square feet, and it costs 40 billion dollars per year to maintain all these grassy lawns.

Now, let us say we take only 1/5 of that back yard, and plant it with edible landscaping for about 1,400 square feet of garden. In 2009, Rosalind Creasy, and Cathy Wilkinson Barash, planted a 100 sq. foot plot of land in California with a seasonal garden. They produced 235 pounds of produce, which if bought in the store would have cost them \$700. It took only 1.5 hours/week of labor.

Do the math for Alaska! In Alaska, we have a short growing season, but a long light season. We can produce just as much food in weight, with our cool-climate vegetables and fruits, as anyone per growing season. Take 1/5 of an average back yard (1,400 sq feet) and grow that into an edible landscape, and we have now produced 3,290 pounds of vegetables and fruits.

On average, each American consumes 1,900 pounds of food per year; 700 pounds of that is fruits and vegetables. By using 1/5 of a back yard, we now feed almost 5 people for the whole year. If we take all of one back yard and convert it into edible landscaping, we now feed 25 people for the whole year. If one person takes all of their front yard and back yard and converts them into a living, edible food biomass, they now feed 50 people for the entire year.

If Americans would be willing to convert their back and front lawns into edible landscaping, we would have the ability to feed the world twice over, each and every year. There is really no need to have anyone in the world starve!

Now that I have convinced you that we can feed ourselves, our hungry neighbors, and the world, what things grow best in an edible landscape on the Kenai Peninsula?

I have been planting edible landscaping for over 30 years, and 5 years of that is in Alaska. I tend to gravitate toward native plants, because they survive and are usually easier to maintain. Mother Nature knows best, as they always say, and I am all into survival of

Here are some foods grown in back yards of the Kenai Peninsula THIS YEAR:



What kinds of food did you grow? Share it with us on our Facebook page: [kenailocalfood](#)

SO MUCH FOOD!

the fittest. This is a list of some of the edible plants that do best in our area, plus a few that I am interested in and hope will do well.

Annual non-native plants need to be planted every year. Many will need a greenhouse or high tunnel to support their growth. These include cucumbers, peppers, basil, winter squash, summer squash, pumpkins, and tomatoes. Green globe artichoke can be grown as an annual outside, or in a greenhouse, year round.

Many annual plants can be grown outdoors. Some of these may need to be started indoors to speed up growth initially. These include beans, snap peas, beets, beet greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, chard, celery, cauliflower, carrots, kohlrabi, kale, iceberg lettuce, loose leaf lettuce, mustard greens, onions, leeks, parsley, parsnips, peas, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, spinach, turnips, and turnip greens.

I especially love plants that taste great and come back almost every year on their own. These are annual or perennial plants that will self-propagate, so you may not need to replant them.

Annual, self-seeding native plants include bedstraw, chickweed, lambs quarter, and nettles.

Perennial non-native plants include asparagus, rhubarb, haskap (honey berry), apples (certain varieties), plums, Siberian kiwi, mountain ash, cornelian cherry, quince, and black elderberry.

Perennial native plants will come back year after year. These are plants made for lazy people like me, who want to just sit back in my lawn chair, have a lemonade, and watch Mother Nature do all the work for me - survival of the fittest, I say bring them on. Plant away and sit back and reap the harvest. (Okay, I lied, there will be a little weeding.)

These include blueberry, huckleberry, cloudberry, nagoonberry, currants, high bush cranberry, cranberry, lingonberry, kinnikinnik, moss berry, raspberry, rose, saskatoon berry (serviceberry), strawberry, dandelion, plantain, red clover, wild onion, fireweed, and fiddlehead fern shoots.

We can feed the world if we look to planting our edible front and back yards, one shovel at a time!

George Spady, M.D. has planted edible landscaping for over 30 years. He harvests herbs in the wilds of Alaska, and recently formed a company called Alaskan Boreal Herbs which makes herbal supplements. He has practiced medicine for over 25 years and has practiced in Soldotna for the last 5 of those years.

This column is written to stimulate conversation - please post your comments and thoughts on our Facebook page!

COMING THIS FALL:

Growing Local Food Systems: Tales from the Front-lines

with Guest Speaker
Severine von Tscharner Fleming
 of the Greenhorns (www.thegreenhorns.net)



Friday, September 18, 7 pm
at the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building

Severine is a farmer, activist, and organizer based in the Champlain Valley of New York. She is director of Greenhorns, a grassroots organization with the mission to recruit, promote and support the rising generation of new farmers in America.

Severine has spent the last seven years gathering, bundling and broadcasting the voices and vision of young agrarians. Greenhorns runs a weekly radio show on Heritage Radio Network and a popular blog. They produce many kinds of media, from documentary films to almanacs, anthologies, mix-tapes, posters, guidebooks and digital maps. They are best known for the documentary film “The Greenhorns” and for the raucous young farmer mixers they’ve thrown in 37 states and 14 grange halls.

Severine is co-founder and board secretary of Farm Hack, an online, open-source platform for appropriate and affordable farm tools and technologies, as well as National Young Farmers Coalition, which now boasts 23 state and regional coalitions. She serves on the board of the Schumacher Center for New Economics, which hosts Agrarian Trust, her latest startup, focused on land access for beginning farmers, and permanent protection of affordable organic farmland. Severine attended Pomona College and University of California at Berkeley, where she graduated with a B.S. in Conservation Agro-ecology.

Severine’s Alaska speaking tour is sponsored by the Alaska Food Policy Council and the Alaska Marine Conservation Council. Local sponsors are Kenai Local Food Connection and Central Peninsula Garden Club.

AND
Introduction to Macrobiotics
a biological approach to world peace
through diet and lifestyle

with Kenai Local Food Connection's

Eliza and Connor Eller
of IONIA (www.ionia.org)



Thursday, October 1, 6 pm
at the Soldotna Public Library

Eliza and Connor Eller are a mother-and-son team who helped to found Ionia, a peer support eco-village in Kasilof. Eliza and Connor's way of life at Ionia includes wholesome foods, daily morning meetings, close family and peer support, and simple seasonal activities such as gardening, cooking, fermenting, and wild foods harvesting.

Macrobiotics is a compound word adapted from Greek, from the words large (macro) and life (bios). As a dynamic, flexible philosophy of living and a comprehensive, yet evolving, way of life, macrobiotics offers principles to guide and educate us, along with practical tools to strengthen body, mind, and spirit. Recognizing that we are composed of many bodies - physical, emotional, creative and social - the macrobiotic way of life offers varied kinds of nourishment to sustain our collective growth. The ultimate goal of the macrobiotic philosophy is to create freedom: from fear, from sickness, from cultural limitations, and from living lives of apathy. To practice 'macrobiotics' is to have a personal goal of living and sustaining a large life.

Sponsored by the Kenai Local Food Connection and Soldotna Public Library.



Peninsula Resident: WINTER SQUASH

by Eliza Eller

Winter Squash is super nutritious, deliciously rich, and wonderfully high in vitamins A, E, C, B-complex, and beta carotene, iron, zinc, copper, calcium, and potassium, which are vital for a healthy and strong immune and nervous system. There are many varieties, including Butternut, Buttercup, Acorn, Delicata, Kabocha, Kuri, Spaghetti, Hubbard, Golden Nugget, and Sweet Dumpling. Try every one, because one is better than the next, so you may have trouble picking out your favorite! Winter Squash is easy to digest and its creamy, comforting qualities can help satisfy a variety of cravings while nourishing the body and soul.

To cook winter squash:

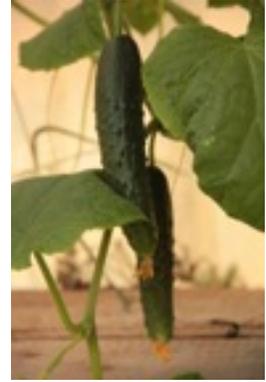
- ~ Steam, bake, roast, or mash like potatoes, blend into a soup, or bake into a pie.
- ~ It can be eaten plain and sweet with a little salt; savory with spices such as black pepper, curry powder, or chili pepper; or sweetened even more with a touch of maple syrup or honey, and with spices such as cinnamon and nutmeg, for a delicious treat.

To grow winter squash:

- ~ Plant the seeds in 4" pots under lights inside in the early spring.
- ~ Once the soil has warmed up outside, with no more chance of frosty nights, transplant with care into a greenhouse or high tunnel. The plants do not like much handling and do enjoy a little hill or raised bed to dig their roots deep into.
- ~ Create a trellis to climb up, or provide plenty of space for bush varieties.
- ~ Feed, water, pollinate when the flowers appear, and expect 2-4 squashes per plant to start growing. Don't touch the squashes or stems until they are ripe and dry.
- ~ When the squash stem is dry, it is ready. Harvest and allow to sweeten up in a dry, warm spot in the house for 3-4 weeks, before enjoying.

To find winter squash:

- ~ Winter squashes live in high tunnels around the Peninsula, and hang out at a few of the farmers markets this time of year.
- ~ Winter squashes also live at several markets around town; however, these squashes are imported from far away, so they don't offer quite as much nutrition and flavor as locally grown. (Sorry about that, but the truth must be told.)



HOW IT'S DONE by Alasha Brito

In the last issue, we discussed farmers markets as a way to support local farmers and get more local food on the table. Another way to achieve those goals is to join a CSA, which stands for Community Supported Agriculture. CSAs are a system where individuals, families, or groups of people pledge to support a local farm or farms, thereby becoming, in a sense, a “shareholder” of that farm. That support is usually in the form of finances, but in some situations it can also be physical labor. In return for that support, the individual or group is given a portion of what is grown or raised on the farm. Often times, this is a weekly box of produce, or other products produced by the farm. There are many benefits to this system, for both the farmers and the shareholders. The farmers have someone to share the financial burden and worries of the farm, and they usually have to spend less time marketing once the CSA is established. The shareholders enjoy the benefits of fresh local food at a great price.

At this time, we have one farm in the Central Peninsula that has a CSA program: Ridgeway Farms, owned by Abby and Harry Ala. You may have seen their sign on the Spur Highway, between Kenai and Soldotna. You can check out their Facebook Page by searching Ridgeway Farms Facebook, or give Abby a call at 394-3181. If you would like more information on CSAs please check out <http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/community-supported-agriculture-3>, or watch the movie *The Real Dirt On Farmer John*, a great example of how a CSA program helped to save a farm.

The Kenai Local Food Connection's

MISSION IS TO SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD BY FOSTERING HEALTHY EATING

contact us on E-MAIL: [**kenailocalfood@gmail.com**](mailto:kenailocalfood@gmail.com)

find out more: [**www.kenailocalfood.org**](http://www.kenailocalfood.org)

learn more about our events on Facebook: [**kenailocalfood**](#)

Local Wild Food Calendar: FALL

by Eliza Eller

As everyone knows, there are some amazing wild berries available now. The Kenai Local Food Connection’s own poster girl, Rosalie, is famous for her love of wild berry jams, and she has lots of company.

Eat dandelion roots this time of year for their healing qualities. The traditionally known quality of dandelion plants is to let go, to release, so it’s good for addiction, as well as the liver.

Blueberries can be found everywhere now, growing in bogs and woodlands all over the Peninsula, but most especially up the trails in the Chugach Mountains. There are the high bush varieties, which resemble their domestic cousins, and the low bush variety, which is growing under your feet, between the muskeg mosses, bright blue and so sweet. Eat blueberries raw, right there in the sunshine, or see how many you can pick at one sitting to bring home for pie, dessert, jelly and jam.

Cranberries: In September and early October, these berries can be found in amongst the muskeg, in meadows near edges of woods. They are tart and delicious! Eat them raw and use to make cranberry sauce, juice, jam and dessert.

Rosehips: These unusual edibles make amazing marmalade and can be found on sunny slopes, or in wooded areas in the mountains. Eat them raw, or make jelly, jam, marmalade, wine and teas.



Dandelion Roots are best harvested with a little hand-held shovel. Dig down, loosening the plant, then pull! To prepare, simply wash well then sauté with a bit of sesame oil, shoyu (soy sauce) and a dash of sweet mirin or local honey, or other sweetener. You can add other sweet roots if you like, such as onions, carrots, or burdock. This dish is helpful for letting go of any sort of addiction, especially coffee and alcohol.



SPECIAL REPORT: 3RD ANNUAL
**HARVEST MOON
 LOCAL FOOD FESTIVAL**

All of us at the Kenai Local Food Connection would like to express our thanks to everyone who participated in this year’s Harvest Moon Local Food Festival. It was a huge success, with over 600 attendees at various events! The festivities began with two days of talks by Sandor Katz, a renowned author and expert on fermentation. Throughout the following week, we held workshops at the Dena’ina Wellness Center, including how to make miso, shoyu, kimchee, sauerkraut, pickled fish, sourdough bread, pickles, and tempeh. The workshops were taught by the talented Connor Eller, Brandy Nelson, Susie Jenkins-Brito, and Ally Bril. We were also very excited to have Dr. Gary Ferguson from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium speak brilliantly about Human Health and the Microbiome.

Several other events throughout the week included tours of Ridgeway Farm, Jackson Gardens, and Lancashire Farm, chef at the market events, a local berry walk, wine tastings at Alaska Berries, and a showing of Seeds of Change at the Orca Theater. Also, fun events at the Wednesday Market included the Alaska Marine Conservation Council’s Alaska Seafood Mobile and free samples from Snug Harbor Seafoods. Several restaurants offered local food specials, including Odie’s Café, The Flats Bistro, Mykel’s Restaurant, Fine Thyme Café, and Where It’s At.

We all hope that you enjoyed the festival as much as we did. We will be sending out a survey in the next few months to find out how your life habits changed as a result of this festival. If you were unable to join us but you would like to know more about fermentation, please check out Sandor Katz’s website: www.wildfermentation.org. Also, look for his books at your local library, or at River City Books. You can check out all the photos on the Kenai Local Food Connection’s Facebook page or visit our website at www.kenailocalfood.org.

We would also like to thank all of our groovy generous sponsors that helped to make this event possible:



- plus the Orca Theater, local growers and restaurants -