

Roots & Sprouts

June 2006

News and Ideas from the Belmont Farmers' Market

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org



*Opens
June 15th!*

**Thursday afternoons
2:00 to 6:30 pm**

**BELMONT CENTER
In the municipal parking lot
behind the Leonard St. stores
off Cross St. & Channing Rd.**

In this issue . . .

**Market terms and definitions
Tips for shoppers
Vendors you will meet
A word from our State Representative
A recipe for spring**

Eat Your Words

A farmers' market lexicon

What is the difference between "naturally grown" and "organic"? What does "sustainable" mean"? And what, for goodness' sake, is "integrated pest management"? This summer and fall, at the Belmont Farmers' Market, words become food, as we benefit from the work of our local farmers and vendors. What do these words mean to farmers, and how do they guide the work they do? The following are some of the most commonly used terms at our Farmers' Market:

Naturally Grown:

"Natural" is applied to everything from granola bars to shampoo, and holds very little real meaning any more. "Naturally grown," in the context of small farming, however, means that the farmer has grown his or her produce using organic methods. The farmers tend their land in a way that builds natural nutrients in soil that fertilize plants without reliance on synthetic fertilizers. Similarly, "naturally raised" animals are typically pasture grazed and fed naturally-grown feeds. They are raised without synthetic hormones or antibiotics, and on land without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. "Naturally grown" production is at the core of "sustainable agriculture."

Sustainable Agriculture:

"Sustainable agriculture" is a method and a goal to produce abundant food without depleting the earth's resources or polluting its environment. It follows nature's own balanced and fertile system to develop procedures for raising crops and livestock that are, like nature, self-sustaining. Sustainable agriculture also signifies a set of social values that support vibrant rural communities in which small farmers are able to support their families.

Farmers' markets are a core support of sustainable practices. Not only do they

provide a market free of middlemen for small farmers, but they also raise consumers' awareness about how their food is grown and prepared. The vision of the sustainable agriculture movement is to have small to mid-size diversified farms supplying the majority of their region's food.

Integrated Pest Management:

"Integrated Pest Management" (IPM) is a system of monitoring pests and spraying only when conditions dictate. IPM uses four different techniques to prevent pest damage: modifying habitats, protecting natural predators of pests, monitoring pest levels, and selective controlled use of pesticides.

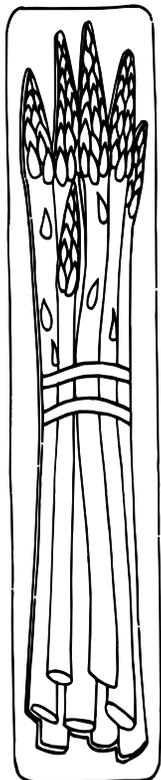
When farmers rotate their plant crops from field to field, rather than planting the same crops in the same fields, they are using a method of pest habitat modification by altering the habitat each season. Farmers reduce pest populations by making the habitat for birds, ladybugs and other pest predators as healthy and inviting as possible. They monitor pest populations with sticky traps, soil sampling, and crop inspection. If populations reach a certain level, pesticides may be used to reduce them. IPM requires that only the least hazardous pesticides and lowest effective amounts be used, and only when other methods will not work.

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Farmers' Market Shopping Tips

Parking and other facts of life at the Belmont Farmers' Market

Farmers' markets have been community gathering places for thousands of years. When you come to the Belmont Farmers' Market, you will be joining this ancient tradition. To ensure that you have a rewarding experience shopping at our farmers' market, we offer a few suggestions:



- Before you head to the market, consider how you will get there. Is it possible to walk or bike? Consider walking with a friend. If you bike, add a basket to the handlebars to carry your fresh produce.
- If driving is the only option, expect parking to be limited in the Belmont Center municipal lot. There is *no parking on Cross Street* adjacent to the Farmers' Market, although parking is available along nearby streets. Please be considerate of residents in the neighborhood. Do not block driveways, hydrants, or crosswalks. Please drive slowly -- watch for pedestrians and bikers.
- Bring your own bags or baskets to carry your purchases home. Belmont Farmers' Market canvas bags will be available for purchase for \$10.00. Be sure to move the heavy items to the bottom of your bag to avoid squashing delicate items on top.
- Bring cash for your purchases.
- Do you wish to avoid carrying heavy bags when walking or parked at a distance? Belmont Farmers' Market's free "veggie valet service" can help! Leave your bags at the Belmont Farmers' Market Committee (BFMC) booth, then return with your car to retrieve your purchases. A volunteer valet will bring your bags to the Cross Street curb and place them in your car.
- For the best selection, shop early. Vendors will sometimes bring just a few pounds of a special item, and it may be gone in the first hour.
- Plan your menu at the market. See what the vendors have brought, and compare prices and quality before making your selections.
- Buy something you haven't tried before. Cardoon? Kohlrabi? Unusual vegetables can be delicious, and the vendor can tell you how to prepare them.
- Avoid buying more than you can use in a few days. The pleasure of a farmers' market is to buy fresh food, and to eat it while it is fresh.
- Talk to the vendors. They'll be happy to tell you how and when the food you buy was produced.
- Be sure to support local businesses in Belmont Center when you visit the Farmers' Market . . . and at other times too! How about shopping on Leonard Street first or having lunch nearby before your visit to the market? Look for local merchants' special offers at the BFMC booth.

—Source: www.globalgourmet.com

The Belmont Farmers' Market needs your help!

The gifts of more than forty donors have helped bring a farmers' market to Belmont. We sincerely thank our donors for their support. Without it, we could not have paid our start-up costs. Expenses such as the cost of publishing this newsletter, maintaining the web site and market day operations will continue. The BFMC receives no monetary support from the Town of Belmont. Please send *your* gift to: **BFMC, PO Box 387, Belmont MA 02478**, and be sure to let us know if we may add your name(s) to our web site donor list.



www.belmontfarmersmarket.org

Belmont Farmers' Market Committee

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We thank our many volunteers . . . thus far!

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It's not too late to help!

Contact us at

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2006 Vendors

- **Busa Farm** produce
- **ButterBrook Organic Farm** fresh herbs, vegetables, honey, flowers, eggs, and more
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** a large selection of seasonal produce
- **Herb FARMacy** potted plants, fresh and dried herbs, herbal body, lotions, honey eggs, cut flowers, heirloom vegetables
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, pies, honey
- **Leslie Wolf Baking** rustic fruit tarts and scones made in Belmont
- **Melissa's Flower Farm** potted herbs, annuals, perennials, cut flowers, jams, dried flowers
- **Middle Earth Farms** produce
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** *beginning in July* – Apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers, and more
- **Sassy River Sauces** all natural, low-fat, healthy pestos, spreads, and sauces
- **Sweet Sue's** cookies, pies, breads, and other baked sweets
- **Thoreau Foods** organic breakfast cereals, cereal toppings, smoothie boosters
- **Underwood Greenhouse** a variety of potted annuals, perennials, herbs, and tomato plants grown in Belmont greenhouses



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617.484.0833

Food for Thought

Residents share their passion for fresh food, farmers' markets, and good living

Who could have predicted that, when a group of Belmont residents gathered to explore ways of increasing biking and walking in our town, a farmers' market would result? How do these initiatives fit together?

The Belmont Farmers' Market creates an opportunity to leave our cars at home and walk or bike to our weekly shopping. Located in the middle of our town, this new community endeavor is within a mile and a half of most of our homes. What a great opportunity to slow down our busy lives, enjoy an array of fresh foods, learn from our local farmers, and provide our families with seasonal fruits and vegetables.



Recently, Sustainable Belmont, a community group ably led by Jan Kruse and Heather Tuttle, invited residents to hear a team of Tufts students report the results of their study of the activities of Belmont residents and their impact on global warming. Their report was illuminating. While heating and lighting our homes and cooking created CO2 emissions either here in Belmont or at the source of the power, more than 50 percent of all CO2 emissions in our town can be attributed to automobile traffic.

While a percentage of these emissions are due to cut-through traffic, most can be attributed to local traffic as we whiz along in our cars to shop, pick up and deliver children, attend church or meetings or visit neighbors. Without ever leaving town, we contribute heavily to the cause of global warming. Purchasing food grown in other parts of the world and shipped to our supermarkets increases our contribution of CO2 emissions.

This summer, however, we have the opportunity to think globally and act locally, and reduce our overall CO2 emissions. At the Belmont Farmers' Market, we will buy local products and fresh produce grown within a few miles of our town. If we walk or bike to the market, not only will the exercise raise our appetites, we will also cut down on traffic and emissions.

I thank all the volunteers who labored diligently to make the Belmont Farmers' Market a reality.

–Anne Paulsen, State Representative



Did you know...?

- Belmont was once a vital farming community of prosperous, innovative farms and market gardens, with many acres of greenhouses. Produce from Belmont farms was sold at Faneuil Hall market and other large markets. Specialties included celery, tomatoes, cucumbers, berries, and small fruits. In fact, "Belmont" became a term of distinction indicating quality.
- Belmont is still the home to a working farm. Located on the Richardson Farm, Sergi's Farm has been in continuous operation since 1945, and is known for its sweet summer corn and fresh flowers. The Richardson Farm has been in existence since 1632.

–from the Town of Belmont website courtesy of Richard Betts

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According to former Massachusetts Commissioner of Food and Agriculture Jay Healy, "a great majority of Massachusetts growers are strong proponents and users of IPM." Since its adoption by our state's farmers, the use of pesticides has decreased by 50 percent from historic levels.

Organic:

Today the word "organic" has become diluted and distant from the original intentions of the organic movement. One of the goals of the movement was to encourage consumption of locally grown food, promoted through slogans such as "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food." Today, most organic products are far from local, having been grown and shipped by large farming corporations in California.

The original goal of food grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or soil fumigants, and free of genetic engineering organisms, has been complicated by government regulations that favor large farms over small, local growers. The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 established national standards governing the marketing of organically produced products. The Act complicated the process of receiving USDA "organic" certification so much that it became too time consuming and expensive for many small farmers. Most have therefore dropped the word altogether from their labeling, although their practices remain organic in its most original meaning.

Those farmers who do receive USDA organic certification may not be organic in the original sense of the word at all. In 2000,

the USDA issued the National Standards on Organic Agriculture Production and Handling Act, creating a list of synthetic and previously prohibited non-synthetic substances allowed for producers requesting the USDA certification of organic. In 2005, a new law extended that list, including many previously outlawed synthetic products, and allowing the Secretary of Agriculture to "expedite" the addition of new synthetic substances at any time.

What is a consumer who wishes to buy truly organic food to do, then? "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food."

--Cartha Vickers



What's Fresh?

In June . . . Look for these seasonal crops at the Belmont Farmers' Market:

- arugula
- asparagus
- escarole
- flowers
- green onions
- honey
- kale
- lettuces
- (butterhead, frisee, leaf, romaine, cos)
- herbs
- radishes
- raspberries
- rhubarb
- spinach
- sugarsnap peas
- strawberries
- baby summer squash

Also coming to the Belmont Farmers' Market this spring:

- potted plants, fresh eggs, pestos, spreads,
- sauces, breads, pies, jams,
- and much more!

It's Strawberry Season!

Enjoy local strawberries at their best with this simple summer dessert.

Chilled Strawberry Soup

- 1 cup apple juice
- 1 cup water, divided
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 cups fresh strawberries
- 16 ounces premium strawberry yogurt
- Additional strawberry slices

In a saucepan, combine the apple juice, 3/4 cup water, sugar, cinnamon, and cloves. Bring to a boil over medium heat and then cool. Place cleaned strawberries and remaining water in a blender or food processor. Cover and blend until smooth. Pour into a large bowl. Add apple juice and yogurt. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate, preferably for 24 hours. Garnish with additional strawberries and whipped cream.

Serves 6 to 8

*— from the Ivory Creek Bed and Breakfast,
Hadley, Massachusetts*