

Roots & Sprouts

summer 2012

News and Ideas from the Belmont Food Collaborative

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org



*June 14th to
October 25th -
rain or shine!*

**Thursday afternoons
2:00 to 6:30 pm
Belmont Center parking lot**

in this issue . . .

Make the most of your fresh produce
Biointensive gardening in Belmont
Looking forward to market season
Many ways to volunteer

Welcome to Season Seven! Please take note of our new hours, based on shopper and vendor feedback from last year. The Market will be open each Thursday, from 2:00 to 6:30 PM until Labor Day, and from 2:00 until 6:00 after Labor Day. Opening day is June 14th.

Don't Toss Your Salad Just Yet

Get the most out of your veggies by cooking creatively

Between \$500 and \$2000 a year. That's what *The Wall Street Journal* recently claimed the average family of four throws out in uneaten food. Even worse: a big chunk of it—about 18%—is produce, which may include some of the nutritious food you bought from dedicated local farmers at the Belmont Farmers' Market.

Once upon a time, making compost was good enough. Nothing takes away guilt like a compost bin. Belmont residents can get one for only \$25 from the Highway Department on the first floor of the Homer Building. I used to think the aging produce lurking in the fridge wasn't really wasted food. It was just pre-compost, saved from the landfill and great for the garden. But now, at hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year in discarded produce, the honeymoon is over.

A Race Against Time

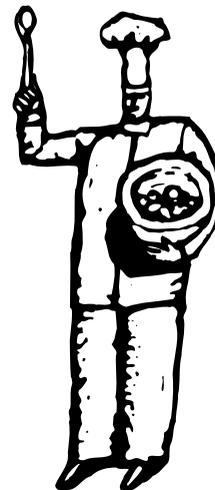
Each trip to the farmers' market is the starting gun of a race between us, the consumers, and them, the forces of decay and putrefaction.

Smart shoppers never worry about this. At the end of the shopping week, their barren refrigerators mock those of the rest of us. With eyes wide with excitement at all the fresh produce, we buy way too much. Then, after a few days, the enemy starts to pull ahead. The signs are subtle at first: a little yellowing on the broccoli, a few freckles on the cauliflower, celery bending instead of snapping. Once you see

these early signs, it's time to put the pedal to the metal. It's time to make a cream soup.

Cream Soups

Cream soups are the great culinary black hole. They'll suck in broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips, or anything else with similar properties in just about any combination, and turn it into an all-purpose vegetable substrate. Depending on your tolerance, you may want to trim the more objectionable looking parts. But it's surprising how much yellowing broccoli or freckled cauliflower you can leave on and still end up with a good soup.



The process couldn't be simpler. Sauté some onions and celery. (They can be old too. The vegetable substrate won't care.) Use a generous amount of oil. You'll need more than you think because later on you will be adding flour and making what amounts to a roux. Butter is good, but all oils do about the same thing. Then add your chopped substrate vegetables, including even the thicker stems that nobody likes. Now add the flour and sauté some more. This completes what amounts to a vegetable-laden roux.

Next, add broth. Chicken works best. Boil the substrate until it's just soft enough to eat without dentures. Then run it through a blender, add some milk and appropriate spices, and you're done.

(continued on page 4)

Growing in Your Own Front Yard

A pilot project gets under way on Washington Street

After moving to town a year ago, Linda Ann Ordway saw a lot of green lawns and lush New England landscaping. It was a very different scene from what she'd become used to in Kenya, where she lived and worked over the last 12 years. There, she taught subsistence farmers the techniques of biointensive farming, a holistic method that uses a small plot, minimal water, and no pesticides, yet gives high yields and enriches the soil year after year.

When the Belmont Farmers' Market e-Newsletter called for volunteers to start a vegetable gardening project, Ordway answered. She is now managing a pilot garden in a residential front yard on Washington Street. This project of the Belmont Food Collaborative combines gardening education with growing fresh produce for the Belmont Food Pantry.

In late May, I spoke to Ordway while she was busy preparing the beds. Preparation is arduous and dirty, but it is the foundation of everything to come. Ordway has so far worked with a couple of other volunteers, but she hopes to recruit several more—ideally, one for each day of the week—to keep up with the digging, planting, watering, weeding, and eventual pick-up and delivery of the harvest. The hope is that volunteers will also transfer their knowledge by farming a small plot in a sunny spot in their own yard, either to feed themselves or to donate.

Ordway explained some of the main principles of biointensive gardening. The first is deep soil preparation: her pilot farm uses double-dug beds—dug 12 inches the first year and another 12 the next, with all the old growth from the previous year turned over

into the soil. Composting the right ratio of carbonaceous and nitrogenous material is another key principle. The pilot garden has a big advantage here—chickens kept in the back yard produce plenty of manure for the front.

Next are the plantings themselves: intensive planting, or planting close enough that leaves touch at maturity, creates a mini-climate that retains moisture, reduces weed growth, and increases biological activity in the soil. Companion planting creates a mini-ecosystem of compatible plants that encourage each other's growth instead of stealing each other's nutrients—and draws a diverse beneficial insect population. For example, bok choy can be planted near beets and onions, but dislikes strawberries and tomatoes.

Ordway anticipates planting at least six beds at the pilot site, totaling about 300 square feet. She encourages people interested in helping—at the pilot garden or starting their own garden—to contact her at omariamina@yahoo.com or 617-733-0357.

When Ordway passes a yard filled with grass, she closes her eyes and imagines it pocketed with beds of vegetables, closely planted with companion crops, herbs, and flowers that enhance growth and repel insects. She knows that a 4x10 foot plot, properly planted and after several years of soil enrichment from tilled cover crops and compost, can produce many pounds of food. She hopes others will close their eyes and consider the full potential of their own yards, and then pick up a shovel and get started.

—Jennifer Angel

'Edible Landscaping'

Upcoming talk presented by landscape architect
Elizabeth Gourley

Wednesday, June 20th 7:00 PM
Belmont Public Library, Assembly Room



Learn how to incorporate edible plants into your home landscape. *Free.*



Belmont Food Collaborative Board of Directors

Kim Foster
Suzanne Johannet
Laurie Levy
Evanthia Malliris
Cate McGrail
Becky Prior
Paul Santos
Hal Shubin
Vicky Slavin
Anne Stuart
Joan Teebagy
Heli Tomford

BFCI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Volunteers

Jennifer Angel	Dee Ippen
Faye Blazer	Susan Marsh
Jan Cannon	Kathy Martin
Sara Cummins	David Mitchell
Catherine Curro	Tom Neel
Sandra Curro	Steve Pinkerton
Deborah Deutsch	Mary Ries
Debbie Dobbins	Jane Sherwin
Tom Dorsey	Lucia Sullivan
Janice Frishkopf	Bill Tomford
Liz Gourley	Denise Umans

*The Market is a member of the
Belmont Center Business Association.*



Volume 7, Issue 3

Roots & Sprouts is a publication of the
Belmont Food Collaborative, Inc.
PO Box 387
Belmont, MA 02478
belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Editor: Jennifer Angel
Designer: Dee Ippen
Logo designer: Trey Klein
Printer: Belmont Printing Co.
Distribution: Laurie Levy

 Printed on recycled paper

2012 Vendors

Here are the vendors we expect. Not all vendors will appear every week. Check the BFM website or e-newsletter for complete details.

- **ButterGirl Baking Co.** fresh baked treats made with a whole lotta luv
- **C & C Lobsters and Fish** a family run business selling locally-caught seafood
- **Carlisle Honey** local honey and hand-made beeswax candles
- **Coastal Vineyards** of South Dartmouth
- **Coutt's Specialty Foods** natural jams, jellies, applesauce, relishes
- **Dan's Brick Oven Bread** natural whole-wheat sourdough
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** vegetables, fruits, and plants
- **The Farm School** organic vegetables, fruits, flowers, eggs, grass-fed meat
- **Fior d'Italia: The Pasta Man** pasta in many different shapes and flavors
- **Flats Mentor Farm** fresh Asian produce
- **Foxboro Cheese/Lawton's Family Farm** fresh cheeses and veal
- **Goodies Homemade** award-winning, better-than-homemade cookies
- **Hutchins Farm** certified organic plants, vegetables, herbs, small fruit, and apples
- **Japonaise Bakery** French pastries with a Japanese twist
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, and plants
- **Mamadou Bakery** handcrafted breads
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers
- **Nutting Farm** 100% pure Vermont maple syrup, candy, sugar
- **Pat-O's Pickles** hand-packed pickles
- **Samira's Homemade** Middle Eastern dips and salads, freshly made, delicious
- **Sfolia's Pizzelles** Italian treats hand-made in Belmont
- **Soluna Garden Farm** herb, spice and tea blends, organically, sustainably produced
- **Something Sweet Without Wheat** wheat-free, gluten-free goodies
- **Stillman's at the Turkey Farm** grass-fed meat and freshly cut flowers
- **Stow Greenhouses** hybrid lilies, flowers
- **Turkey Brook Farm** home of Red Label Poultry, raised in the French tradition
- **Turtle Creek Winery** of Lincoln
- **Underwood Greenhouses** potted plants grown in Belmont
- **Well Fed Dog** complete, balanced nutrition for all stages of your dog's life
- **Westport Rivers Vineyard & Winery**
- **Wild Acre Inns** flowers, herbs and more

Food for Thought

Anticipation finally pays off

The weather has been summer-like for many weeks now. I keep thinking the market should be open—and now it will be. The fruits and vegetables all summer and fall delight the taste buds as only fresh food grown with devotion can. The displays of colorful berries, green pea shoots and fresh eggs mix with beautiful flowers, delicious baked goods, and specialty foods, making the weekly visit a visual as well as scrumptious treat.

Each year new vendors come to Belmont, and this year is no exception:

Pat-O's Pickles from Groton creates hand-packed small batch pickles made with the finest ingredients and no added preservatives. Just the thing for a picnic.

C&C Lobsters and Fish of Hull, a family-run lobster business selling locally caught lobsters and fresh fish will join the circle of tents. Since *Frankie's Catch of the Day* in Belmont Center closed in April, this will be a welcome addition to the market offerings.

Frankie's served Belmont for more than 25 years in its Leonard Street location, serving fresh fish and lobsters as well as clam chowder, lobster bisque, and stuffed clams. Loyal customers and newcomers will welcome the addition of a fish vendor to the weekly market.

Joining the baked goods offerings is *Dan's Brick Oven Bread* of Richmond, NH. The desem bread, a naturally leavened sourdough bread, has just three ingredients: flour, water and salt. Just add butter and honey. And *Something Sweet Without Wheat* from Woburn creates fresh homemade baked goods to be enjoyed by everybody, food allergies or not. Can't wait to try them.

Stow Greenhouses, another new addition, will be brightening the area with its specialty hybrid lilies and other cut flowers. People like me with a brown thumb (everything dies), welcome the chance to buy beautiful flowers at the market!

Finally, a sweet treat can be found at the new booth for *Nutting Farm* of Vermont. Small batch maple syrup and spreadable maple crème come from a former dairy farm turned maple grove. Not only Grade A Fancy, but my favorite, Grade B Dark, are available in a variety of sizes.

There are many returning vendors, too. While there is not enough space for me to fondly recommend each one (but see the list at left!), I would like to make special mention of our four vendors from Belmont. *Goodies Homemade* cookies, made from scratch with no preservatives, trans fats, artificial flavors or colors, are perfect with a nice glass of iced tea. *Underwood Greenhouse* will have potted annuals, perennials, herbs, and tomato plants,

all grown in the heart of Belmont. *Sfolia Pizzelles* creates a modern version of the traditional Italian pizzelle in a variety of sizes and flavors—crunchy and delicious. And one of *Samira's Homemade* Lebanese and Egyptian dips is always in my shopping bag.



Peppers from Hutchins Farm for sale at the Belmont Farmers' Market

What I especially like about the Belmont Farmers' Market is the opportunity to buy a full meal! There are vendors for fruit and vegetables, grass-fed and hormone-free meats, poultry and cheese, eggs, pasta, breads and dessert: cookies, brownies, tarts, and pastries. Every nutritional need (and indulgent sweet tooth) can be satisfied.

Seasonings of hand-crafted herb and spice blends, sauces and relishes, or fresh herbs and flowers add a special something to any dish. And a bottle of local wine, too, can be purchased at the market to accompany your meal.

Even your favorite canine can get some treats at the *Well Fed Dog* tent. Their recipes are formulated to provide complete and balanced nutrition. Rover will like the taste—no need to tell him it's good for him.

It's made me hungry just writing this. I can't wait for the market to open! See you there.

—Jan Cannon

(continued from page 1)

With old food, presentation is crucial. Add a sprig of parsley or cilantro, very fresh so you can send the right subliminal message. Or add a topping of croutons, crumbled hard-boiled egg, or anything with some color that will float. A sprinkling of paprika helps a lot, and goes well with just about any shade of substrate green. And whatever you do, don't call it "cream of compost soup." No garnish will make up for such a marketing faux pas.

Embalming in Oil

Another strategy for winning the race is not to sprint to the finish line, but to slow down

the enemy. A good way to do this is with an embalming fluid, such as sugar syrup or oil.

The oil method works well for those bunches of herbs, half of which you use up for a specific dish, and the other half of which usually waits in the produce drawer, working its way deeper into the back until, weeks later, alone and forgotten, it decays into a forlorn puddle of green slime.

Save it from this fate by chopping it up, perhaps mixing it with chopped garlic, and soaking it in oil. This is the principle of pesto,

chimichurro, and many other oil-based garnishes. And best of all, you can mix up whatever you've got. They'll blend in unpredictable ways. In fact, you might just by chance create something really delicious by doing this. If you come across more herbs that need embalming this way, you can just chop them up and add them to what you've already got.

Tricks like these will leave many disappointed raccoons on trash-day eve. But they will save money, and you may even create something exceptional.

—Tino Lichauco

Volunteer Opportunities This Season

There is a lot going on inside the volunteer-run Belmont Food Collaborative (BFCI). Want to help? Check out these brief job descriptions to see what looks interesting. Read more details at belmontfarmersmarket.org. Then come see us at the blue tent on Market day or write to belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com to be matched up with your dream volunteer job!

Market Manager: Be the "person in charge" of the market for the day. Resolve any problems that come up with vendors or customers and ensure that the market runs smoothly.

Market Table Volunteer: Staff the information booth (blue tent).

Market Day Volunteer Coordinator: Help to find and schedule volunteers.

Sign Patrol: Place BFM signs early Thursday mornings and take them down at end of day.

Fundraiser: Help start a fundraising program for the BFCI to fund many exciting projects.

Organizer: Plan and supervise special events, such as the Farmers' Market Week and the Apple Dessert Contest, or coordinate activities involving Belmont Center merchants.

Marketing Outreach Coordinator: Contact local businesses to see how we can collaborate with them to bring more shoppers to the market.

Yard Sign Adopter or Placement Strategist: Put a BFM sign on your lawn, or find strategic private locations for yard signs and secure owner permission.

Photographer: Take photos of vendors, products, performers, and special events.

TV Program Producer: Plan and execute a local cable show about the BFCI and/or growing food.

Weekly eNews Writer: Help to write and produce our weekly email newsletter for shoppers.

Roots & Sprouts Writer, Bundler, or Distributor: Write about BFCI activities and related topics for this quarterly newsletter, or help bundle newsletters for distribution and delivery to schools and other locations around town.

Workshop Coordinator: Work with the education committee to find local residents with expertise in beekeeping, backyard chickens, gardening, etc. Organize public workshops on these topics.



Gardening Project Coordinator: Work with other volunteers to continue and/or expand existing bulk plant order project (Pomona Project), or establish other gardening projects.

Food Donation Liaison: Act as liaison to the Belmont Food Pantry and Boston Area Gleaners. Coordinate food pick-up/drop-offs and supervise volunteers.

SNAP Coordinator: Help with logistics for accepting SNAP (Food Stamps) at the market. Work on outreach to those who will be able to take advantage of this program.