



NEWS TO GROW ON



Late Summer
2009

Vol. II, No. 2

A seasonal newsletter of the Connecticut Farm Fresh Cooperative Association

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Connecticut Farmers' Markets Growing as Fast as Corn in July!

The pace of growth for farmers' markets in our state continues, and 2009 has been no exception. According to Rick Macsuga, the CT Dept. of Agriculture's marketing liaison, there are now 123 farmer's markets flourishing in the state, which has added 10 to 20 new markets each of the last five years. A big boost, he says, is the increasing support from town boards. "When the town is the sponsor, it makes the paperwork much simpler." Rick attests that the market's popularity not only saves working family farms, but is bringing once-idle farmland back into production. New farmers are venturing into the business, and younger generations of farm families are returning to the land -- confident that they will find a ready market for their produce. "Have we peaked yet?" wonders Rick, "Ask me next year!" For the full list of markets, **visit the CT Dept. of Agriculture at: www.ct.gov/DOAG**



Milford Market



Greenwich Market

What's old is new again: New England town greens used to be a gathering place for farmers and townspeople; farmers' markets let us rediscover that sense of community.

Inside this issue:

- Seasonal recipes to use your market bounty
- What's at the markets this month
- This month's Farm Visit
- Websites of interest to locavores like you!
- **New! CT Farm Fresh Market Bags**

**Submissions welcome:
"Smile! You're at the
Market"**

Photo Contest for Fun

We'd like to include photos taken by our farmer's market visitors next month. Please email your pictures to the editor, aliceely@optonline.net, and include your name, phone number and the name of the market where you took the picture. We'll publish our favorites, with your name, in an upcoming issue.



Photo by Michael Tomashefsky

Corn husking timesaver tip!



With the husk still on, microwave the ear for 45 seconds; the silk will slip right off with the husk. Cook as usual.

Roasted Eggplant Spread

Here's another quick and delicious recipe from Dana Angelo White, registered dietitian, culinary nutritionist, local food junkie, stalker of farmer's markets and all-around great cook.



(For more of Dana's healthy answers to what's for dinner, visit her blog at healthyeats.com.)

Serves 6

- 2 large eggplants, peeled and diced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 large red pepper, diced
- 1 jalapeno pepper cut in half (optional)
- ½ red onion, roughly chopped
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves
- ½ cup fresh parsley
- 2 tsp honey
- Juice of ½ a lemon
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425°F. On a large sheet pan, combine eggplant, garlic, peppers and onion. Drizzle with 1 Tbsp olive oil and thyme; season with salt, pepper and toss gently. Roast for 25-35 minutes, turning once until vegetables are slightly golden and tender- set aside to cool slightly. Transfer eggplant mixture to a food processor fitted with a steel blade; add remaining oil, tomato paste, herbs, honey and lemon juice. Pulse until just combined. Serve at room temperature with whole wheat pita chips and cucumber slices for dipping or spread on crackers and sandwiches.



Support CT Farm Fresh – Get a bag!

You can never have too many bags when you shop at the farmers' market – look for these bright blue bags for sale at your local CT Farm Fresh sponsored markets, or get one free by becoming a Farm Friend – ask the market master for details.



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Alice's Penne with Fresh Tomato Sauce, Mozzarella and Sausage

We have this at least once a week during tomato season: super easy & good! I use a good whole wheat penne, diced cubes of fresh mozzarella from Beldotti's, and two links of Ox Hollow Farms's wonderful hot Italian pork sausage. Serves 4; 30 minutes

For the sauce:

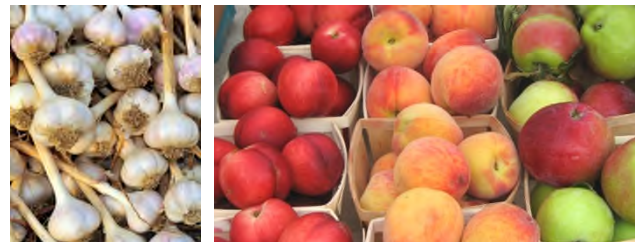
5 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
6 garlic cloves, sliced
6 large tomatoes, chopped without peeling or seeding (about 5 cups)
1 cup fresh basil cut in ribbons
Pinch pepper flakes
Salt & pepper to taste

Heat oil in large wide pan over medium-high heat. (At the same time, start heating a large pot with salted water for the pasta). Add onion and garlic; sauté 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, basil and seasonings. Cook 20 minutes to blend flavors, stirring often and adding pasta water if dry. While the tomato sauce cooks, in a separate skillet, brown the sausage. Dice the mozzarella, and grate the Parmesan. About 8 minutes before the sauce is done, add the pasta to the boiling water. As soon as pasta is al dente, remove with strainer and add to sauce in pan. Serve, sprinkling cubed & grated cheese and sausage slices on top, as desired. (Make extra sauce to freeze and enjoy next winter, when you're longing for tomatoes!)



What's fresh now:

Better bring two bags to your farmers' market this week: there are so many exciting choices: beloved summer favorites such as sweet corn, heirloom tomatoes, squash in a rainbow of colors and shapes, eggplants, all kinds of greens, and gorgeous berries, peaches and nectarines.



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A "hand-picked" selection of websites to visit, if you are interested in all things fresh, local and healthy:

<http://www.slowmovement.com/>

Articles on the slow food movement and community agriculture.

<http://www.care2.com/farmersmarket>

Vote for your favorite farmers market

<http://www.healthyhighways.com/>

Delicious Destinations: a state-by-state guide to health-oriented eateries and natural food stores, with maps and driving directions from the nearest highway or main road among the comprehensive details given for each entry.

Updates and traveler comments are posted on the authors' Web site

http://chge.med.harvard.edu/programs/food/food_guides.html

Online guide and detailed profiles of more than 40 fruits and vegetables

<http://www.localharvest.org/>

Find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your local area, where you can buy produce, grass-fed meats, and many other goodies.

www.buyctgrown.com

was created specifically to provide folks looking for fresh, healthy food and farm-related products in the Nutmeg State with a resource to find farms, CSA's, restaurants, nurseries, pick your own orchards, catering companies and much more...

Ctfarmfresh.org

The official site for the CT Farm Fresh Cooperative Association, this site is currently being upgraded but will re-launch very soon, with lots of farmer's market news including back issues of this newsletter.

www.ct.gov/DOAG

The CT Dept. of Agriculture maintains a comprehensive list of farmers' markets in the state.

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New World Salad Niçoise

Serves 2-3 as a main dish – 30 min. prep
I named it “New World” because the dressing is inspired by chimichurri sauce, which tastes amazing combined with this Mediterranean classic.

Salad:

1 large ripe tomato, cut in wedges
2 large handfuls green beans, steamed
2 hardboiled eggs cut in quarters
4 small new potatoes, boiled, cut in quarters
4-6 pitted olives
Arrange vegies on a bed of lettuce, leaving a well for the spiced tuna.

Spiced Tuna

1 can (4 oz.) Break up with fork and season with cumin, curry and adobo spice.

Dressing:

2 T lemon juice
4T olive oil
¼ cup chopped parsley
¼ cup chopped cilantro
1 green onion (or garlic scape) sliced fine
1 large garlic clove, minced
Add salt, pepper & herbes de provence to taste. Drizzle dressing over salad and serve.



The only things *not* from the market in this dish are the tuna, olives and some seasonings!



Tucked away, on a Westport road lined with stately new homes, is a peaceful link to the past: Belta’s Farm, a surprising 22-acre expanse with greenhouses and well-tended rows of crops. The farm, established in 1945, was one of two remaining working farms in Westport in 2005, growing flowers for wholesale to local retailers such as Stew Leonard’s. But, according to Greg Belta, the rising cost of fuel made continuing to farm flowers wholesale uneconomical. So he abandoned farming for a few years, until this year, when his daughters, hearing of others’ success at farmers’ markets, persuaded Greg



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to give retail farming a try, with their help. Three generations of Beltas are pitching in on the venture, as Greg’s father, James, still works actively on the farm. The family hopes that the new demand for locally grown, quality produce – and interest in CSA’s as well – will be enough to build a viable business for the farm once more. Big obstacles remain – not only fuel prices, pests and voracious deer – but the inevitable pressure to sell off such a valuable, beautiful piece of land. The Beltas are thrilled with the response to their produce to date, though, and are already talking about what to grow next .



Laura Belta Loffredo, left, and Angela Belta, right, show off the luscious variety from their family farm,. The two sisters persuaded their father to put the farm back in production and give farmers’ markets a try for the first time this year.



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