



The Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

July 24, 2012 | 5 Av, 5772

See this newsletter online: groups.yahoo.com/group/TuvForAllFHJC – in "Files > 2012 Season"

TUV HASHAVUA — BEST OF THE WEEK

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

THIS WEEK:

Chrissy Lucchesi Leon
Martin Koles
Marcy Birnbaum

FOOD BANK DELIVERY:
Lenny Fuchs

NEXT WEEK:

Veronica Nazginova
Irina Nazginova
Avital Mullokandov
CAYUGA: Doria Kalt

FOOD BANK DELIVERY:
David Snyder



CHICO BAG fundraiser:

www.chicobag.com/fundraiser/tuvhaaretz

**Please remember!
Bring your extra
plastic bags to the
pick-up!**

Small-Scale Grains: A Piece of the Locavore Puzzle by Rhea Kennedy

There is no question that fruits and vegetables have been the backbone of the locavore movement. The number of farmers markets in the U.S. has increased 400% since 1994, while CSAs grew from a handful in the 1980s to an estimated 6,500 today. Eggs, meat, fish, and dairy have joined produce in market stalls and CSA boxes, but grains often lag behind.

"There are more small grain growers than a decade ago, but the trend here is growing quite slowly and is far behind small-scale produce, meat, and dairy growers," says Erin Barnett, head of the local food directory Local Harvest. Out of more than 18,600 small farms listed on the website, fewer than 600 grow wheat, and an even smaller number offer oats or rye.

For generations, large-scale agribusiness has been seen as the most efficient way to produce commodity grains, such as corn, wheat, and rice (a fact that may be changing thanks to climate change). Big Midwestern farms churn out enough to feed every American 8.2 servings of grain a day. Farm subsidies (and, increasingly, crop insurance) have also given large farms an advantage for years. Buoyed by this system, large farmers and processors can grow grains at a price much lower than small producers can even imagine.

But as Big Grain has taken over, the variety of seeds available and the wisdom about growing grains sustainably have diminished. Until recently. Now some small-scale grain farmers have stepped back into the fray. They approach it not as direct competitors to commodity grain growers, but as an alternative for eaters in search of healthier, more sustainable options. Such producers claim a corner of the market with sustainable growing methods, value-added products, or specialty crops that customers choose for flavor.

In fact, most successful local-scale grain farming relies on all three. "This is the absolute opposite of large farming systems," says Eli Rogosa, who grows grain for seeds and retail in western Massachusetts, and who directs the Heritage Grain Conservancy and coordinates the Northeast Organic Wheat initiative, funded by Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education.

Most small grain growers just got rolling in the past 15 years, but already consumers are smitten. A gluten-sensitive customer of Rogosa raves about an ancient wheat so pure and free of the allergenic protein that she could eat pita again. A San Francisco chef has gushed over cornmeal from South Carolina's Anson Mills that "made love to buttermilk." And the Moutoux Orchards CSA sold out with its 2011 debut — even with a price tag of \$250 per person per month.

"There is a growing contingent of people who put a lot of importance on food quality and safety," explained Mark Sorrells, chair of the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics at Cornell University. "Also, people want to support local economies and businesses that give back to the community."

Before farmers can add grain to the local foods picture, they have to address some problems unique to these crops. That is where people like Rogosa and Sorrells come in.

For one, thanks to industrial agriculture, the array of available seeds has been winnowed down to very few varieties. And most of these varieties are patented. "This is a global, silent crisis of loss of biodiversity," says Rogosa. And that biodiversity has only gained in importance as farmers face the increasingly brutal results of climate change.

Another challenge stems from the price factor. Once grain farmers supply specialty markets, they have to face the same reality as all local producers — mainstream consumers balk at the price of most of small-scale, sustainably produced foods. While seasonal herbs or vegetables can compete with supermarket prices, shoppers are unlikely to find local flour below \$1.25 to \$2 per pound.

Perhaps the biggest problem, though, lies in the food system itself. To truly fix grain production, Americans must change the way they farm and eat in a number of ways.

For one, we may have to eat more actual grain ourselves. "Ninety-plus percent of all the grain grown in North Carolina goes into the mouths of animals, it doesn't actually feed people," says Glenn Roberts of Anson Mills. If we return to the model used by beloved agriculture pioneer Thomas Jefferson, who saw meat as a condiment, then local grains might sound more affordable. When we see grains not just as cheap fillers, but as unique foods, they become worth a little more investment — both of our money and our culinary attention.

Based in Washington, D.C., Rhea Yablon Kennedy writes and teaches about sustainable food, among other topics. This article is excerpted from "Small-scale grains: another piece of the locavore puzzle" on grist.org.

THIS WEEK'S BOX:

Zucchini
Cucumbers
Green Cabbage
Long Peppers
Walla Walla Onions
Asian Eggplant
Bell Pepper
Green Long Peppers
Red Potatoes
Basil or Chives

FRUIT SHARE:

Donut Peaches
Yellow Peaches

HERB SHARE:

Tarragon
Orange Mint

Miso-Glazed Tofu with Cabbage and Peppers

eatingwell.com

3 tbsp mirin, or dry sherry
3 tbsp miso, dark
2 tbsp ginger, minced
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 tbsp sugar
1 tsp chile-garlic sauce
1/2 tsp sesame oil
14 oz extra-firm tofu, water-packed
1 small green cabbage, cored, cut in 8 wedges
2 large bell peppers, seeded and sliced
1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced
1 1/2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

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FEATURED RECIPES:

Chilled Zucchini Soup with Purslane or Arugula

Alain Coumont, foodandwine.com

2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 tsp thyme leaves
1 bay leaf
8 small zucchini (3 pounds), thinly sliced, plus long zucchini shavings for garnish
Kosher salt
3 cups water
2 tbsp finely shredded basil
2 cups ice
Freshly ground pepper
2 cups purslane or baby arugula

In a large saucepan, heat the 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and cook over moderate heat until translucent, about 8 minutes. Stir in the thyme and bay leaf and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the sliced zucchini, season with salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 10 minutes. Add the water and bring to a boil. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Discard the bay leaf and stir in the shredded basil.

Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender until very smooth. Transfer the zucchini puree to a large bowl. Stir in the ice. Refrigerate the zucchini soup for at least 3 hours.

When thoroughly chilled, season the soup with salt and pepper. Ladle into shallow bowls and top with a small handful of purslane and zucchini shavings. Drizzle with olive oil. Makes 12 servings.

Make ahead: The recipe can be refrigerated for up to one day.



→ Miso-Glazed Tofu with Cabbage and Peppers (...continuation)

... Whisk mirin (or sherry) miso, ginger, lemon juice, soy sauce, sugar, chile-garlic sauce and oil in a small bowl until blended. Drain and rinse tofu; pat dry. Cut the block into eight 1/2-inch-thick slabs. Arrange the tofu slices in a single layer in a shallow nonreactive pan; pour 1/3 cup of the marinade over it, turning to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 1/2 to 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Coat a 9-by-13-inch roasting pan with cooking spray. Arrange cabbage wedges, cut-side down, in 2 rows. Scatter bell peppers around the cabbage. Sprinkle with scallions. Pour the remaining marinade over the vegetables. Cover tightly with foil. Bake the vegetables until tender, 25 to 35 minutes.

When the vegetables are tender, overlap the tofu slices in the center of the pan and baste with any pan juices. Roast, uncovered, until the tofu is heated through, 12 to 15 minutes more. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Yield: 4 servings.

Nutritional Information, per serving: 304 calories, 8g total fat, 17g protein, 38g carbohydrates, 11g fiber, 0mg cholesterol, 700mg sodium, 917mg potassium, 406% VitC, 68% VitA, 19 calcium, 16% folate, 16% iron

Tuv Ha'Aretz at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

106-06 Queens Blvd
Forest Hills, NY 11375
718.264.7000, ext 250
tuv@fhjc.org

Our Websites:

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