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RECIPES & REVIEWS



STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY KEPFERLE

Local Motion

WELCOME TO YOUR FOODSHED

LAST SATURDAY, the typically bucolic acreage at Ferndale's Hovander Homestead Park was a scene of controlled mayhem. It was time for the Master Gardener's annual plant sale, and Whatcomites were out in full force.

While volunteers in bright orange vests pointed out available parking spots, a steady stream of humans could be seen either racing toward the thousands of available vegetation samples up for sale or unloading purchases of vegetable starts and fruit trees as well as shrubs, shade-loving perennials and everything in between into their cars.

I was there for the tomato starts—the Master Gardeners produce varieties that do better in our cooler climate, and I've had delicious luck with pretty much everything I've picked up there—and I wasn't the only one (to the lady who grabbed the last Sun Gold start: I never forget a face).

Other than 16 tomato plants, what I took away from my foray to Ferndale was that, whether they're the ones growing a garden or simply wish to put things in their bodies that have a link to the place they live, people are hungry to feel a connection to the land.

Lucky for us, this spring, summer and even into the early fall, the clever folks at Sustainable Connections are taking their annual "Eat Local" campaign—which in past years has been crammed into a seven-day period in the late summer—and spreading the love throughout the seasons.

Every Thursday from May 7 to Oct. 1, a different restaurant within our foodshed will highlight that day's menu offerings with edibles gleaned from nearby sources. For a sample of what to expect, Pizza'zza—located at Yorky's Market in Fairhaven—will lead

the way by offering up what they're calling a "Skagit River Sausage Pizza" as their featured menu item. How local is this pie? Well, the crust will be made with Fairhaven Mill flour, the sauce will include red wine from Mount Baker Vineyards, and the fungi will be included courtesy of Twin Sisters Mushroom Farm.

When Honey Moon takes the reins May 14, they'll continue the trend with a frittata of spring greens and Farmstead cheese and a rhubarb, hazelnut and raspberry mead crisp. Their ingredients will be sourced from Everson's Holistic Homestead, Lynden's Holmquist Hazelnuts and Silver Spring Creamery, and others.

"By working within the community you have a face and a story to share with customers," owner Nana Thebus says. "It also provides an opportunity to be creative with our dishes by challenging us to use what is local and in season."

"We encourage the restaurants to be as excessive about it as they can muster," Sustainable Connection's Shonie Schlotzhauer adds. "We've had chefs trying to dry their own salt and then panicking because it wasn't drying. Different restaurants will take it to different levels."



EAT LOCAL

MAY 7: Pizza'zza
MAY 14: Honey Moon
MAY 21: Swan Café
MAY 28: The North Fork Brewery
JUNE 4: Billy McHale's
JUNE 11: La Fiamma
JUNE 18: Diego's
JULY 2: Mallard
JULY 9: Pastazza
JULY 16: Old World Deli
JULY 23: Temple Bar
JULY 30: Colophon Café
AUG. 6: Bellingham Golf & Country Club
AUG. 13: Old Town Café
AUG. 20: Fiamma Burger
AUG. 27: Nimbus
SEPT. 3: Panini Grill & Deli
SEPT. 10: Chuckanut Brewery
SEPT. 24: Mount Bakery
OCT. 1: Boundary Bay
INFO: 647-7093 or sconnect.org

Not so coincidentally, many of the items that will make their way onto menus and into stomachs of ravenous patrons can be located in the 2009 Whatcom Food & Farm Finder, available now at the Bellingham and Ferndale farmers markets and other local businesses. The timely brochure includes "who, what, when and where" listings of 123 Whatcom County farms, fisheries, eateries and markets that have taken a "fresh and local" pledge.

Other oh-so-helpful features in the "finder" include a local food and agriculture calendar, info on additional Eat Local events, a fold-out map and a seasonal guide to what's fresh, and when. If you want to know when Barlean's fisheries will have sockeye salmon available or how

to find Raven Springs honey, the answers will be right there at your fingertips.

"People are more and more intrigued with eating locally," Schlotzhauer says. Plus, "spending on local food stimulates the economy right here where we live. Those dollars help keep farmers in business, create local prosperity as they change hands, preserve and create local jobs, and provide us some insulation from rising energy and transportation costs. And in terms of food safety, knowing that the farmer you're buying from is eating that very same food is reassuring." ☺