

POSTED: Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2010

## Whatcom Locavore: Finding local foods close to home

NANCY GING - FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Finding locally grown organic food can be a fascinating treasure hunt, but it also can be time consuming, especially at first.

Here are some food finding tips to help jumpstart your locavore lifestyle and eat foods grown locally whenever possible:

1. Start close to home. You may have noticed that I mention some farms more frequently than others.



That's because they are the best sources I've found close enough to my normal errand routes to be convenient. My goal is to find the quality I want as close to home as possible.

2. Use local farm directories. The free Whatcom Food and Farm Finder booklet is published each year by Sustainable Connections. Pick it up at over 200 local businesses (Community Food Co-operative, Village Books, etc.), libraries or farmers

markets. It contains farm directories by food category, information about individual farms, and a map so you can get locate them. Most of the sources listed in the rest of this article are included in the Farm Finder booklet.

If you use the Internet, another good resource is the interactive map found on the Northwest Farms & Food website at [nwfarmsandfood.com](http://nwfarmsandfood.com) Click on the Farm Map link near the top.

3. Shop local grocery stores: Get familiar with the local foods offered by nearby grocery stores. If they don't carry local food, let them know you would like them to do so. The advantage of grocery stores over other sources is that you can pick up a lot of your food and pantry items all in one stop.

In or near Bellingham, I recommend starting at Terra Organica, the Community Food Co-operative stores and Haggen grocery stores.

Everything at Terra Organica is organic, and the origin is plainly and accurately labeled. Produce, dairy, and bulk bins contain a lot of locally produced foods.

The two Co-op stores have both organic and non-organic products. In the produce section, look for white labels that identify products grown nearby, though that doesn't necessarily mean in Whatcom County.

Take along your Whatcom Food and Farm Finder so you can look up the farm name shown on the white label to see if it's a Whatcom County farm or not.

Haggen stores offer some locally grown produce, too. When you get there, ask one of their staff what local foods are currently available.

All three of these grocers make a real effort to support local farms. Let them know you appreciate it whenever you can.

4. Visit farmers markets regularly: During the season when the farmers markets are in operation, they are the place I go first for fresh fruits and vegetables. Vendors have usually just picked what they are selling, so if you go early you can get the freshest, ripest, highest quality produce imaginable.

You can also meet the farmers face-to-face and talk about their farming methods. When you visit their booths each week, you gradually get to know the people growing your food. That's invaluable.

Don't be confused by fresh produce markets made to look like farmers markets. Many of them are selling the same imported factory farmed food you find in traditional groceries.

5. Shop at farm stands: If I can't find something at the farmers market, or I'm shopping on a day the market isn't open, farm stands located right on the farm are the next place I go. Some farms sell only through their farm stores.

Going to the farm stand also gives you a chance to see the farm itself and the care going into raising food for you.

I also go to farm stands when I want a better price or more unusual varieties than the grocery stores offer. Buying farm direct is almost always less expensive, though you have to take transportation into account.

6. U-pick produce: For the best prices or to buy in quantity for canning and freezing, u-pick farms are a great resource. When you pick the food yourself, you get just the ripeness you want.

There's also no substitute for experiencing the connection between the land and your food that u-pick allows. Make it a family affair!

7. Community Supported Agriculture: If you don't want to spend a lot of time shopping, purchasing a CSA "share" in late spring or early summer may be a good solution for your produce needs. By paying about \$200-\$400 up front to a farm offering a CSA program, you "subscribe" to a weekly bag or box of fresh produce. The season for CSAs usually lasts from roughly mid-June through mid-October.

Some CSAs also include eggs, meat, or other options -- even flowers! April is usually a good time to choose your CSA.

8. Grow a garden for the freshest, most local food of all.

Today's recipe was created as a result of a very large, homegrown red cabbage given to us by a friend of my daughter. It was delicious!

#### SAUTEED RED CABBAGE

##### Ingredients

3 tablespoons butter (Breckinridge Farm, Everson)

1 small green shallots (home garden)

4 cups red cabbage, shredded (friend's garden)

2/3 cup apple cider vinegar (BelleWood Acres, Lynden)

2 tablespoons honey (Guilmette's Busy Bees, Bellingham)

1/16 teaspoon dried habanero pepper, ground (friend's garden) Salt

##### Directions

Heat a skillet over medium high heat. Add butter and onion and saute 2 minutes.

Add cabbage and stir, sauteing it until it wilts, 3 to 5 minutes.

Add vinegar to the pan and stir the cabbage in it. Drizzle honey over the cabbage and stir to mix it. Season with habanero pepper powder and salt and reduce heat a bit. Let cabbage continue to cook a few more minutes until softened, but still a little firm.

Serves 4 as a side dish.

#### FOOD SOURCES

The Islander, 2106 S. Nugent Road, Lummi Island;

Terra Organica, 1530 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham;

Community Food Cooperative, 1220 N. Forest St. or 315 Westerly Road, Bellingham.

#### MORE RESOURCES

Cloud Mountain Farm Nursery, 6906 Goodwin Road, Everson;

Bellingham Farmers Market, 1100 Railroad Ave., Saturdays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.;

Fairhaven Market, Fairhaven Village Green, Wednesdays noon-5 p.m.;

Ferndale Farmers Market, Centennial Riverwalk Park, Saturdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.;

Field of Greens, Kale Street and Everson Road, Everson, Wednesdays to Fridays 2-6 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays noon-4 p.m.;

Lummi Island Farmers Market, next to The Islander grocery store at 2106 S. Nugent Road, Lummi Island.

Reach Nancy Ging at 758-2529 or [nancy@whatcomlocavore.com](mailto:nancy@whatcomlocavore.com). For complete weekly locavore menus, recipes and more resources, read her blog at [whatcomlocavore.com](http://whatcomlocavore.com).

Read more: [http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2010/08/31/1593930/whatcom-locavore-finding-local.html?story\\_link=email\\_msg#ixzz0yPMg7Z4j](http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2010/08/31/1593930/whatcom-locavore-finding-local.html?story_link=email_msg#ixzz0yPMg7Z4j)