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## Whatcom Locavore: The ingredients of spring arrive with opening of the Bellingham Farmers Market

NANCY GING - FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Bellingham's Saturday Farmers Market opened last Saturday. The weather was daunting, but we here in Whatcom County rarely let that stop us, so there was an enthusiastic crowd. I arrived early in the afternoon, and most farmers I talked with had been doing a brisk business all day.



First stop for me was the Red Barn Lavender booth located inside the shelter. They were extending their egg CSA program and I wanted to renew my subscription. CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. When you sign up for a CSA, you prepay for a "share" or "subscription" of some type of farm product-vegetables, meat, flowers, eggs, etc. Then once every week or so you pick up some of the products you "subscribed" to receive. For example, I renewed my CSA subscription to pick up 1 dozen eggs every week for the next three months. Each CSA program has its own terms, pick-up points and prices, and the Farmers Market is a good place to find out about and compare CSA's being offered.

Next I went to the Sustainable Connections booth to pick up their brand new 2011-2012 Whatcom Food and Farm Finder booklet, which has just been published. Important note: in a recent article, I incorrectly stated that only farms with SC memberships are included in the booklet. In fact, any food producer can be listed. Besides indexing the farms by type of products, the booklet uses "Sustainability Indicators" to show which farms have programs which contribute to sustainability, including organic certification, salmon-safe practices, and working toward zero waste. The booklet also has information about which

farms have farm stands, CSA programs, special events and where their products can be purchased.

Updated annually, the Food and Farm Finder is indispensable for any aspiring locavore in Whatcom County. (A "locavore" is a person who tries to eat only locally grown food as much as possible.) Besides the farm listings, the booklet includes a chart of when different kinds of products are typically in season and at their peak in our area. It also indexes local wineries, restaurants and cafes, catering and other retail food sources. The events calendar and local food map are helpful, too. Finally, the booklet has information about the SC Food & Farming Program and the Eat Local First Campaign which helps connect farmers with consumers.

With my most urgent business taken care of, I began to browse the rest of the vendor booths. I said hello to Michelle and Josh from Nooksack 9 Farm, whom I met last fall, and purchased some of their winter Brussels sprouts. Last year, they successfully experimented with growing four types of grains - red wheat, white wheat, triticale, and rye. They are planting more acreage in grains this year, but I found out they still have grain available from last year. They don't routinely bring it to the market, so contact them earlier in the week if you want to buy some. They offer discounts for people who buy at least 20 pounds at a time. Reach them through their website at [nooksack9.com](http://nooksack9.com) or call 360-966-0148. They also offer a certified organic fruits and vegetables CSA.

Rabbit Fields Farm had some beautiful sunchokes (Jerusalem artichokes) - more about them in next week's article! I picked up a bunch of their fresh, tender arugula, and some chives and sage, too. Delightful!

Terra Verde Farm had some lovely red cipollini onions that I couldn't resist (the Italian-style onions that look flattened instead of round). I also bought a colorful kale mix. Along with Broad Leaf Farm, Holistic Homestead Farm, and Rabbit Fields Farm, Terra Verde is part of the cooperative farm market called Field of Greens, located at the corner of Kale Road and Everson Road, Everson. I asked if TV had anything new planned for this year, and they do indeed. They are experimenting with growing ginger. It will be a late fall crop, perhaps mid-September and I for one will be hoping they get good results. The Field of Greens store will be reopening this year on May 1.

Farmers at the market were offering several ways for people to save money on food this year.

Besides the CSA programs and on-the-spot price specials for the day, several farms offer discount prices for customers who set up prepaid accounts. For example, Rabbit Fields Farm calls their system Bunny Bucks. For a minimum prepayment of \$200 you can apply the credit whenever you like throughout the growing year and get a 10 percent discount off their regular produce prices. Both CSAs and prepaid accounts put money in the hands of the farmer at the beginning of the growing year when they are buying seeds. The farmers get extra cash when they most need it and you get lower food prices in return. Discounts typically range from 10 percent to 20 percent.

After getting some yellow onions at Alm Hill Gardens' stand, I made one last stop at a booth encouraging people to sign up for the Green Energy program through Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Basically, for about 10 percent extra on your electric bill, you can have 100 percent of your money go to purchase your power from green energy sources - wind power, solar power, and biomass energy. A very few small hydropower plants are also included. Large hydro plants are not considered sustainable and are not included. PSE doesn't deduct a profit from the Green Energy program funds. The booth was using free Theo's chocolate bars as an incentive to sign up for the program, so my family is now enrolled. Okay, seriously, we would have signed up even without the chocolate because it's a good deal, but really, free chocolate AND green energy? A perfect combination.

Visiting the Farmers Market was a wonderful way to welcome the new growing season, and was an enjoyable way to spend part of our Saturday afternoon. I hope you'll become a regular in the coming weeks!

This week's recipe is a nice spring salad with a dressing which includes some raspberries frozen last year. It's tangy and tasty!

Producers are listed after each ingredient.

## SPRING SALAD WITH PEARS AND GOAT CHEESE

### Ingredients

4 cups fresh salad mix (DEVine Gardens, Custer)

1 cup canned sliced pears (home-canned with pears from Full Bloom Farm, Lummi Island)

3 oz. goat cheese, chopped into 1/4 inch cubes (Silver Springs Creamery, Lynden)

1/4 cup roasted hazelnuts, chopped (Holmquist Hazelnut Orchards, Lynden)

1 recipe Raspberry Yogurt Vinaigrette (see below)

### Directions

Place salad mix on plate, torn into bite-size pieces. Top with sliced pears, bits of goat cheese, and toasted hazelnuts. Dress with Raspberry Yogurt Vinaigrette.

Serves 2-4.

## RASPBERRY YOGURT VINAIGRETTE

1/2 cup plain yogurt (Grace Harbor Farm, Custer)

1/4 cup frozen raspberries (Boxx Berry Farm, Ferndale)

2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar (BelleWood Acres, Lynden)

3-4 teaspoons honey, to taste (Guilmette's Busy Bees, Bellingham)

#### Directions

Whisk together all ingredients until well mixed.

Makes about 3/4 cup of dressing.

#### LOCAL RETAIL FOOD RESOURCES

Appel Farms Cheese Shoppe, 6605 Northwest Road, Ferndale; open Mondays to Saturdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Artisan Wine Gallery, 2072 Granger Way, Lummi Island; open for tasting Saturdays 1-5 p.m.

Bellingham Farmers Market, Railroad at Chestnut, Saturdays 10 a.m.-3p.m.

Cloud Mountain Farm Nursery, 6906 Goodwin Road, Everson

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

Everybody's Store, 5465 Potter Road, Deming

Field of Greens, corner of Kale Road and Everson Road, Everson (opens on May 1)

Red Barn Lavender Farm (eggs), 3106 Thornton Road, Ferndale; open Saturdays 3-5 p.m. (call 360-393-7057 Fridays for availability)

The Islander, 2106 S. Nugent Road, Lummi Island

Terra Organica, 1530 Cornwall Ave., Bellingham

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