

THE

SCOOP

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM BERKSHIRE FOOD CO-OP
spring 2019

DIY!

Make a
mason jar
terrarium!

celebrate Spring
& **new** beginnings

FIND OUT HOW CO-OP STAFF ENJOYS SPRING IN THE 'SHIRE!

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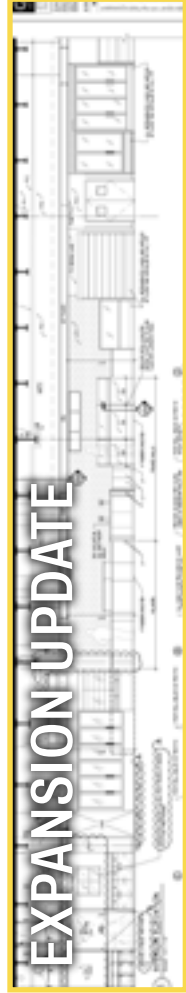
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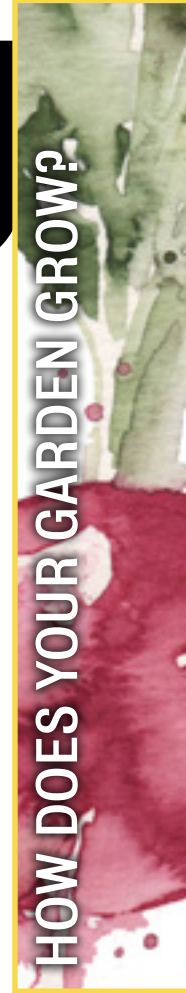
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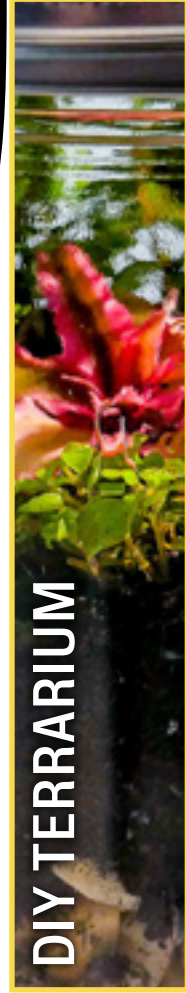
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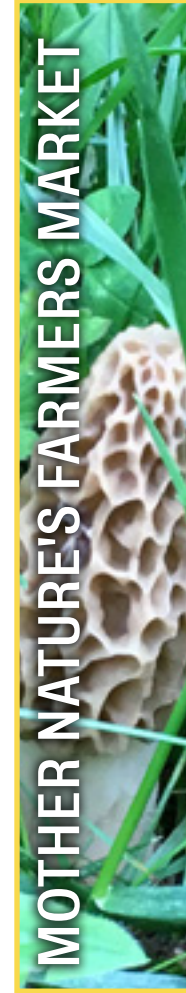
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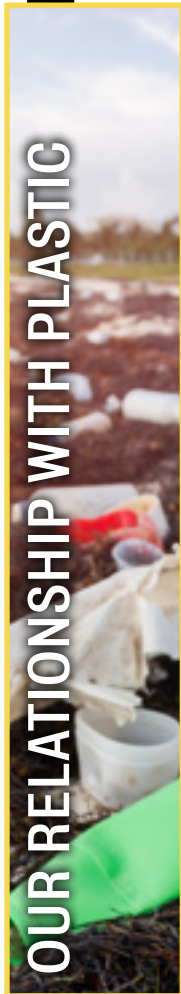
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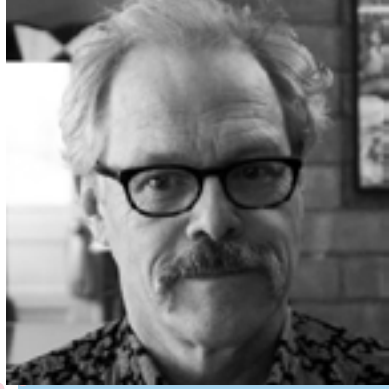
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from the editor

Jill Maldonado, Marketing Manager

Of all spring flowers, I particularly love the snowdrop for its unfailing courage. Tiny and apparently delicate, it's the first of the spring flowers to brave the cold and offer up the hope of spring. Year after year, the snowdrop defies reason and somehow breaks through icy soil to be first on the scene to celebrate the changing of the season.

It's not easy being brave. It's especially not easy to break new ground, do the unexpected and attempt a thing no matter how challenging it's going to be.

Berkshire Food Co-op's expansion project has offered up many of the challenges that come with traversing unknown territory. And yet, like the snowdrop, we (all of us—leadership, staff, community) have persisted to push through the snow and ice (and noise and mud and dust) to offer hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Much like winter, the end is nearly here! Or rather, just like spring, the beginning is nearly here! Without a doubt, the snowdrop will appear before we open the doors of the new store, but it won't beat us by much!

In the meantime, we offer up the spring issue of *The Scoop*. Here, we celebrate the Earth, we welcome renewal and we look forward to getting our hands dirty.

If your green thumb is itching, we suggest a little garden planning or better yet, planting a terrarium that will keep your indoor spaces green year round! We talk about

some of the environmental challenges we, as a society face and some of the solutions we, as individuals can be a part of—whether it's outfitting your home with reusables, or rethinking the next purchase that contains plastic—incremental change matters and we hope you feel empowered to be a part of the solution!

JILL



expansion update

Dan Esko, Project Manager

As I write this update, I can't help but reflect on the fact that our new store has actually been 10 years in the making! Back in 2009, we identified the need to expand the store once again, just 6 years after moving to Bridge Street from our humble digs on Rosseter Street. While the location of the new store has changed in that time, our desire to grow our impact in our community and provide more good food to more people has not changed.

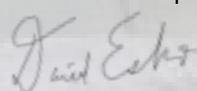
Today I am excited to say that we are literally two months away from opening our doors and welcoming all of our friends and neighbors in to experience the new Co-op for the very first time. As someone who has been working on moving the Co-op to its new home for all of these 10 years, both as an employee and a board member, to say that I'm excited is an understatement. Ecstatic might be more appropriate, but either way, this is truly a milestone for our Co-op, and one that should be celebrated by all as an amazing achievement, the impact of which will be felt by the community for many years to come.

As we stand at the beginning of this new chapter in our history, it is important to remember that this project would not have been possible without the generous support the Co-op's Owners. In particular, the 160 Owners who contributed a total of \$1,375,000 to the Co-op in the form of interest bearing loans. While this is common practice in the capitalization of cooperative businesses, this is truly a record breaking feat for our Co-op, and on behalf of the entire Co-op community, I say thank you. Thank you for believing and investing in your Co-op! You are all truly the unsung heroes of the hour, and we would not be here without you. Presently, the Co-op team, our general contractor and all of our subcontractors are hard at work

preparing for a May 1st open date. It takes a lot to build a grocery store with over 185 linear feet of refrigeration equipment and over 400 linear feet of grocery shelves to install. As reported in my last update, project costs have risen due to project delays, engineering challenges and an increase in the cost of labor and materials. To solve for this, we have just begun approaching Owners for additional loans.

Our goal is to raise \$575,000 in new Owner loans before we open our doors on May 1st. While it is unfortunate to see project costs increase, the silver lining is that the Co-op is able to provide our Owners an additional opportunity to invest in their Co-op and their community. Did you know that our Owner lenders have been paid over \$80,000 in interest to date? While the loans are unsecured and subordinate to the asset secured debt, this investment opportunity is a great way for Owners to keep their money local and see a tangible impact in their community as a result of their investment.

As the Co-op grows in 2019, we plan to hire almost a dozen of your friends and neighbors and increase our purchases of local goods and services to over \$2 million. We are raising our minimum wage to \$13 per hour on April 1st and will continue to do so well in advance of state mandates as we chart the course for \$15 by 2021. The Co-op's mission of providing real food to our community and doing real good is rooted in creating more cooperative economy. Our new home is critical to this mission and will help the Co-op grow its impact in a big way. If you are an Owner of the Co-op and are interested in learning more about the current Owner loan offering, please reach out to me, Dan Esko, at 413-528-9697, ext. 101 or desko@berkshire.coop.





How Does Your

Start your seeds early to make

Right about now it might feel like spring is never going to arrive. Don't despair! Every year, the Earth unfailingly makes its journey around the sun to, eventually, bring our corner of the world the longer, warmer days we're dreaming of. In the meantime, though, half the fun of spring is planning for it! And there's no better way to plan for spring than to dream into what you'll plant in your vegetable garden!

Early spring crops might be the sweetest by virtue of how keenly we've anticipated their arrival. Or, maybe we love them so much because they offer us the first chance to get our hands dirty! These spring favorites can all be sown directly into cold soil and will let you get the jump on gardening season!

LETTUCE is one of the easiest-to-grow spring veggies. Sure, you can buy starter plants, but it's much more cost effective and satisfying to start your own lettuce from seed. There are a plethora of lettuce varieties to choose from, so have some fun and plant a collection of them. Direct-sow seeds as early as 8 weeks before the last frost date. (Our last frost date is right around Mother's Day.) For a continual crop of lettuce, re-plant every two to four weeks until the true summer heat arrives. Once it gets hot, lettuce tends to bolt, so enjoy it early and then plant it again in the fall when temperatures drop.

KALE is a great early spring vegetable to plant. It does well in cooler temperatures and can be planted as soon as the soil is about 40 degrees. The best part? It only needs to grow for a month before you can start harvesting it.

Can Your Garden Grow?

Make the most of the growing season!

PEAS Whether you choose to plant shell peas, sugar snap peas or snow peas they're all best planted the moment the soil can be worked in the spring. Direct-sow them 4-6 weeks before the last frost date.



RADISHES grown in your own garden will outshine anything you could buy at a conventional grocery store. Spicy and crisp, these spring jewels love cool soil and are ready to eat within 3 to 5 weeks of planting.

Watercolors by Laurie May Coyle, Member of the Board of Directors.



CARROTS can be a little finicky, but will reward your care with a sweet spring crunch little else can measure up to. Sow carrots in well-worked soil 2 weeks before the last frost date. In the Berkshires, you can plant them every two or three weeks until mid-summer.

DIY

TERRARIUM

What you need:
mason jar
small plants
potting soil
small pebbles

Art Direction & Photography by Devorah Sawyer

"Terrarium" is just a fancy word for an indoor garden in a glass jar. Done correctly, a terrarium will let the plants you choose create the perfect environment for them, which means these beauties are super low maintenance. The best plants for a terrarium love moist soil and humid air. Even if your thumb's not-so-green, terrariums are a great way to keep plants in your home. This easy DIY is for a closed terrarium in a 32 ounce mason jar.



Prepare your materials

Wash your mason jar with warm water and gentle soap. If you use chemicals to remove sticker residue, wash your jar with gentle soap afterwards. Let it air dry while you gather the rest of your materials.

Choose which plants you'll put in your terrarium. We chose a small, pink Earth Star flower to be the focal point of our terrarium, accompanied by some tiny terrarium ferns.



Start your base

In your jar, lay down about an inch and a half of small pebbles. The pebbles serve as a reservoir for the water circulating in your terrarium.

Over the pebbles, add two inches of potting soil. This layer should be thick enough to dig into when you add your plants.

Great plants for terrariums:

spider fern
silver nerve plant
aquamarine
african violet
starfish plant
spiderwort

Add your plants

It's time for the best part! Decide how you wish to arrange your plants. Gently remove the plants from their pots by grabbing them from the base and easing them out. Break up the root clumps. In your jar, dig a little hole and gently lower the plant inside. You can use chopsticks or a spoon to reach down in the jar if you can't fit your hand inside. Add the rest of your plants and press a little soil around them when you're done. Spray your little garden with some water and find a home for it in indirect sunlight.





Mother Nature's

As the local harvest season is just 'springing', we think of early provisions such as asparagus, radishes, greens, rhubarb, etc. But what lies outside of the farm fields, markets and restaurants are wild foods considered by some to be the 'early harvest' at the time of year when gardens are just getting started. Foraging, or searching for wild food, has been a passion of mine for the better part of the last ten years and although I am by no means an expert, I love to learn and share new things from our rich land and culture as I find them.

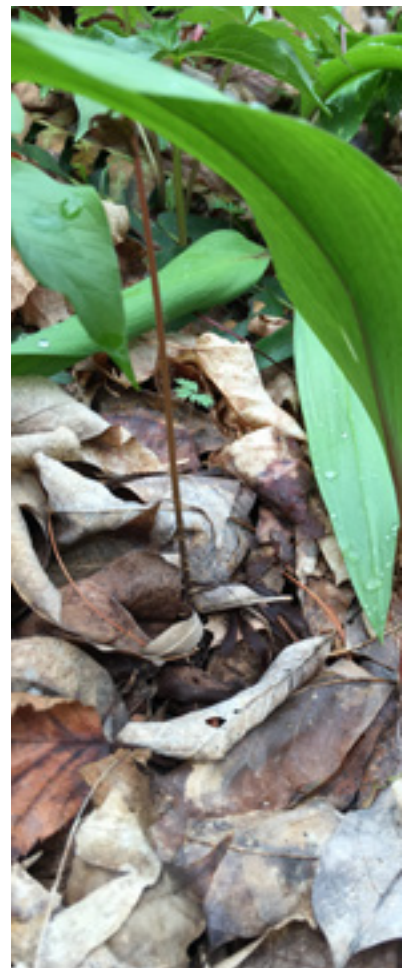
My intrigue with foraging began when I worked through several local Berkshire restaurant kitchens. Every spring the chefs would be highlighting ramps on the menu. If you aren't familiar

or are new to the Berkshire food scene, a ramp is a wild allium that has the appearance of a scallion with a leafy top, a purplish colored shoot and a spicier garlic flavor. As soon as I found patches of ramps in the woods, I knew I had found a new passion with food.

One of my fondest memories as a child was picking raspberries and blackberries with my grandmother and eating the still-warm sun-ripened berries right off the bushes. Clipping the leaf of my first-of-the-year ramp and eating it in all of its odoriferous and pungent glory transports me back to those early years. Perhaps it's a hunter/gatherer instinct or just the sheer joy and wonder of nature. My family never kept a garden when I was growing up and I never grew anything on my own, so

being able to find and harvest my own produce nurtures my green thumb. The ramps are perhaps the beginning of the edible land and the start of a fresh and green new year.

I get carried away with finding and picking ramps and cooking them (I know I'm not alone) in favorite and experimental ways like ramp pesto, ramp kimchi,



Farmers Market

Curious about foraging? Here's what you should know...

by Austin Banach

ramp goddess dressing and fresh ramp pasta. By the time the window of ramps (April-May)



is over, trust me, I and all of my friends and family are ready to move on!

Here is where I'll insert an important disclaimer:

Please don't eat any wild plant without first consulting a book or experienced person on the matter. I have never eaten anything growing in the

wild without first asking a more knowledgeable friend of mine or consulting a guide. *Foraging New England* is my go-to book and can be picked up at a local bookstore.

Another favorite of mine is the wild watercress that grows in and around cold running streams. I love its peppery sweet taste and I don't tend to alter it quite like the ramps. I merely enjoy it raw in a salad or as a garnish on top of some vegetables or fish.

Fiddlehead ferns are fun to find, and taste somewhat like asparagus with a slightly more bitter flavor. Sautéed or steamed is a simple method of preparation tossed with olive oil and lemon juice. Look for curled ferns with brown onion-like skin and not the fuzzy white covering.

As funny as it may sound, some of these edibles are only known as weeds to most. Take, for instance, dandelions or knotweed. Dandelion greens from those yellow flowers that decorate just about everyone's yard in the spring and summer are great thrown into a salad mix or sautéed to give a bitter punch. Knotweed is in the buckwheat family and its taste and applications can be very similar to rhubarb. Pick it when the shoots are about a foot high for a sweet and tender bite. I've enjoyed knotweed in a cooked grain dish like farro and einkorn or as a chutney to serve with cheese or roasted meat.

By this time, all of my success with finding these spring wild greens gives me the confidence and hope to find the elusive spring



generations to come. Whether it be the maple syrup tapped from century-old maple trees, ramps, knotweed, dandelion greens, mushrooms, fiddlehead ferns or countless others, foraging in the Berkshires is proof of our culture and vast resources that I feel many of us leave untapped. And this is just the spring! I'm glad I wasn't asked to write about multiple seasons. There is a plethora of edibles out there!

Foraging connects us to the land in ways we might not see by farming. These are the wild and indigenous foods of our land that existed before a lot of the harvested crops that were introduced by the Europeans. To me it redefines 'local'. It is the product of Mother Nature in the purest and most unadulterated form. This is perhaps why I celebrate wild food as I do. It really connects me to this beautiful area that I will always call home. I hope this inspires you to take a walk into Mother Nature's farmers market this spring and throughout the year!

morel mushrooms. And, to be perfectly honest, I fail miserably every year. The morel has such mysterious growing patterns that they may or may not grow in the same places they were found in previous years. I try and I try but I am lucky to find one or two while friends of mine usually find pounds of them, sometimes while not even trying. Morels are a delicious wild mushroom specimen, indeed. These cone shaped 'shrooms' can be simply cut in half, sautéed in

butter, and served over scrambled eggs or pasta to highlight their earthy and meaty flavor.

When we think of how to describe Berkshire cuisine, 'farm to table' is a commonly used description. I almost always allude to wild edibles as well. They are, in a way, the Berkshire soul food. Sure, we have our international influences but we often neglect the things that have always been here and will continue to be here for



Austin Banach, a native of Great Barrington, produces delicious prose that blends his intertwined passions for food, health and culture. Like most food entrepreneurs, he keeps a hungry palate and indulges most opportunities that find him. Austin has cooked at several restaurants in the Berkshires and draws on this experience to flavor his freelance writing. Austin is a founding partner of Braise Worthy, a company that creates healthy stand-out, slow-cooked dishes with local ingredients for those short on time. Follow him at: austinbanach.com







Original illustration by Jenny Schwartz



spring

Hiking through
the



wilderness
in search of
uncultivated
edibles is a great
way to feel connected
to the awakening of the
earth. **Jim** is a veteran
forager and **Joel** is a relative newcomer to the wild
harvest, but they're both looking forward to getting
out into nature to find ramps, morels, fiddleheads
and nettles.

They say there are great health benefits to playing
in the dirt. Whether it's the happy-making properties
of the bacteria that live in the soil, mood-enhancing

power of sunshine or
immune-boosting
power of "horticultural
therapy", there are a
lot of co-operators who
eagerly await spring

so they can ready their
gardens for planting. **Lynn**
and **Jen** work together on a family
garden and **Adam** digs prepping
his garden plot with his family.
Andrea is an avid gardener too!



When the weather warms
up, **Stacey** loves to
get out on her bike
to enjoy the sights
and sounds of
spring in the 'Shire.



staff

ing

When spring dawns in the 'Shire, it's time to shake off the winter doldrums and enjoy the sunshine! Co-op staffers rejoice when the days become longer and the hills grow green again.

Sheila

loves to hike at Olivia's Overlook. The unique beauty of the Yokun Ridge reserve is matched



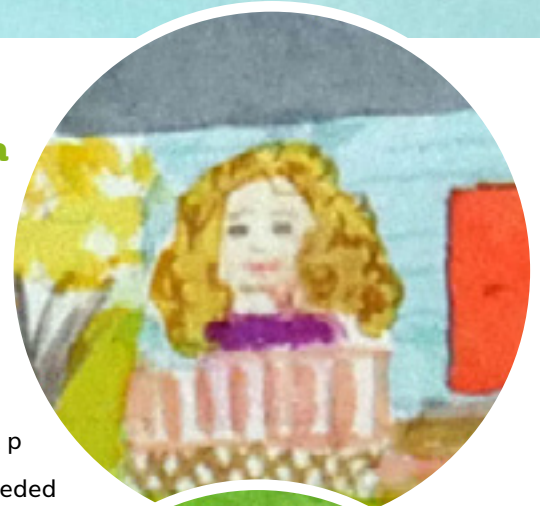
only by its interesting history. Having once been farmland, then home to Shadowbrook, the Gilded Age estate of Anson Phelps Stokes, the property eventually housed a Jesuit order and now is the home of Kripalu Yoga Center.



Matt is working hard to improve his golf game and likes to hit the links in Lee as soon as the weather allows!

Dianna

welcomes spring by spending time on her porch and soaking up some much-needed sunshine.



Nicole

loves trail running! Being out in the woods is her favorite way to connect to nature, and the softer ground makes for less impact on her joints.



She loves the moments of peace and stillness, and gets a great workout at the same time.

faves

power up your *Breakfast*

Rise and shine! Fuel your day with these healthy, high-protein breakfast options.



Kale and Chickpea Mini Frittatas

Servings: 12. Prep time: 45 minutes; 15 minutes active.

12 large egg whites
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 15-ounce can chickpeas
4 leaves kale, chopped finely
1 large tomato, chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon dried thyme

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with paper liners, or grease with shortening or butter, and set aside. (The egg whites will stick if you don't line or grease the pan well.)
2. Whisk the egg whites and salt in a medium bowl; reserve.
3. Drain the chickpeas in a wire strainer and place in a large bowl. Add the kale and tomatoes to the chickpeas. Add the parsley and thyme and mix well, then divide the mixture between the muffin cups, placing the items loosely so the egg whites can flow around them. Divide the egg whites between the muffin cups, about 1/4 cup of egg per muffin. Tap the pan on the counter to settle the ingredients.
4. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the eggs are set and firm. Cool on a rack before refrigerating or freezing in an airtight container or plastic freezer bag.

Bake these low-fat frittatas ahead of time and store them in the fridge. They're easy to take along as you run out the door on a busy morning!

Reprinted by permission from StrongerTogether.coop. Find these and more great power breakfast recipes at www.strongertogether.coop.

Peanut Butter Berry Smoothie Bowl

Servings: 2. Total time: 15 minutes.

1 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
1/4 cup peanut butter
1 large frozen banana
1 cup frozen strawberries
2 tablespoons strawberry jam

Toppings

2 cups fresh strawberries, sliced
1 cup granola
2 tablespoons chopped roasted peanuts
2 tablespoon chia seeds

1. Place the yogurt, peanut butter, banana, strawberries and jam in a blender, and secure the lid. Puree until smooth. Divide the smoothie between two low, wide bowls and spread mixture evenly. Arrange the sliced strawberries on each bowl, then garnish with the granola, peanuts and chia seeds. Serve immediately.

A bowl so delicious, it's almost like having ice cream for breakfast — but with nutritious protein and fruit you can feel good about.





Avocado and Egg Brown Rice Bowl

Servings: 2. Prep time: 15 minutes.

- 1 ½ cups leftover cooked brown rice
- 2 teaspoons canola oil or butter
- 2 large eggs
- 1 large avocado

Optional garnishes: Sliced pickled ginger, kimchi, toasted sesame seeds, sautéed greens or leftover cooked vegetables, shredded cheese, hot sauce.

1. Reheat rice gently in a small pan with a few drops of water, or in the microwave. Divide the heated rice between two wide bowls. Heat a cast iron or non-stick sauté pan over medium heat for a minute, then add the oil or butter to the hot pan.

Crack each egg into the pan and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover the pan and let cook for about 2 minutes, until the whites are set and the yolk is jiggly when you shake the pan gently.

2. While the eggs cook, cut the avocado in half lengthwise, and remove the pit. Use a paring knife to slice each avocado half in the shell, then scoop the slices out with a spoon. Fan half of the avocado slices over each bowl of rice, and place a cooked egg on each bowl. Serve with optional garnishes for a hearty breakfast or lunch.

For an even heartier breakfast, add sausage, cubed tofu or bacon crumbles to this whole-grain dish.

Peanut Butter Pancakes

Servings: 4 (12 pancakes). Prep time: 30 minutes.

1 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
1 tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 large egg
½ cup creamy peanut butter, divided
½ cup nonfat Greek yogurt
1 ¼ cup milk or almond milk, divided
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 tablespoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon coconut oil
Fruit, such as bananas, grapes or cranberries

1. Heat the oven to 200°F, to keep the pancakes warm while you finish cooking.
2. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt, and whisk to mix well. In a medium bowl, combine the egg, ¼ cup peanut butter, and yogurt and stir to a smooth paste. Whisk in a cup of the milk gradually, then the vanilla, until smooth. Stir the egg mixture into the flour mixture, just until combined.
3. Preheat a griddle or a large non-stick or cast iron skillet over medium heat. When hot, brush lightly with oil. Use a ¼ cup measure to scoop portions of batter into the pan, leaving space between the rounds of batter. As the pancakes start to form bubbles on top, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook for about 2 minutes on the first side, until the edges look cooked and the top is bubbled. Carefully flip each cake and cook for about 2 minutes longer. Transfer to a large, heavy platter and place in the oven as you finish the remaining pancakes.
4. Before serving, combine the remaining peanut butter, coconut oil, remaining ¼ cup of milk and maple syrup and stir over low heat just until warmed and pourable. Stack three pancakes, top with the peanut butter sauce and add sliced or whole fruit.



Our RELATIONSHIPS

What day is your trash pick-up day? Mine is on Monday. Each week, it's a clear visual of how much or how little waste (trash or recyclables) is accumulated. Growing up, it used to feel so satisfying to recycle. Now, it feels more important to bring less to the curb and find ways to reuse instead. Recycling is still beneficial but there's more to it than meets the eye—not everything should be tossed in the bin without a thought. Are there products that we can buy in bulk with a reusable container, things we can make ourselves or items we can do without altogether? If you challenge yourself, a little determination can go a long way in reducing what goes out on the curb every week.

Recently while browsing Facebook, I came across a short video entitled "Stop Recycling." It caught my attention and I clicked to view it. It mentioned how our use of plastic

in this country is off the charts. How our waste is saturating the oceans and that items we think are being recycled are ending up in landfills. Waste is only recycled if there is a market for it. If not, it goes into a landfill. While this was something I was aware of, it was when I traveled to Mexico that it really hit home for me. Plastic was everywhere. It covered the utensils at restaurants. The scent of burning plastics filled the streets at night.

One day, in Rio Lagartos, we drove down a beautiful sandy road. On one side was the Gulf of Mexico, on the other was a biosphere, home to hundreds of species of birds. It was hard to know where to look as each side was so beautiful. We saw a little path that led to a quiet beach. We got out of the car to check it out. As we walked up the path, there was a sign that told us to be mindful

of any trash we accumulated. On the same sign it alerted us that turtles migrated to this beach to lay eggs. When we got to the end of the short path, it opened up into a beautiful panoramic view of the ocean. On the beach, it wasn't turtles we saw but trash... everywhere. I mean everywhere. At first I thought someone's trash bag somehow opened up onto the beach. But then it became clear that it was washing up onto the beach from the ocean. Flip flops, plastic bottles, caps, pieces of plastic bags. It covered the sandy white beach. I collected what I could but it was just a band-aid on the problem. Over time, it was going to come right back, overtaking the beaches and any sign of my clean up effort would be long gone. Picking up the trash was helpful but it's not a solution to the problem.

We have a problem with plastic.

SHOP with Plastic

by Jenny Schwartz, Education & Outreach Coordinator

We can no longer have peace of mind when we throw something into the recycling bin. Changing the way you shop is a more productive way to achieve peace of mind and make a greater impact on the plastic problem. Reconsider your habits to decrease your dependence on plastic.

HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT:

- 1. BUY LESS PLASTIC.** Do you really need that plastic-packaged product you're about to buy? Is there a metal or glass alternative?
- 2. SHOP BULK!** Rather than buy plastic-packaged products, see if that same item is available in our Bulk Department and bring your own containers from home!
- 3. BE IN THE KNOW.** Check with your transfer station or recycling company to see where your recycling goes.
- 4. KNOW WHAT'S RECYCLABLE.** Not all plastics are recyclable. Paper coffee cups often have a waterproof lining that makes them un-recyclable.
- 5. WASH IT OUT.** If you do put plastic in the recycling, be sure to clean it out well! Plastic that isn't clean won't get recycled.
- 6. EXPECT DIFFERENT.** Recycled plastic doesn't feel as sturdy or look as shiny as new plastic. While it's great to buy products made from recycled plastic, be prepared to adjust your expectations.

There are lots of products available at the Co-op that can help set you up for a reduced-waste lifestyle: Reusable shopping bags, Mothering Mother bags for bulk and produce purchases, Kleen Kanteen bottles and BPA free containers are perfect for hot bar and salad bar purchases. When you have a system in place, it feels good. It feels even better when trash day comes around and you see how much less you're carrying to the curb.

As we head into spring, take a moment to think about your relationship with the environment and the active part you can play in making things better. Take the recycling bin challenge! Can you create less waste than you did last week? **3, 2, 1...GO!**



Ecological *land care*

by Devan Arnold



Ecological Land Care is, in essence, a landscape philosophy that looks to emulate the way nature organizes itself within an environment to provide food and water to all of the many plants, animals, fungi and microbes that reside there - all without the need of outside fertilizer, pesticides or irrigation. Ecological Land Care is all about recognizing and nurturing the positive relationships that exist between the many living things in a landscape, while also creating a living, artistic expression that inspires and satisfies the innate need for beautiful textures, colors and forms.

By following the *Key Principles of Ecological Land Care*, it is possible to transform any landscape from a barren and bland resource hole into a living, productive, symphony of organic interaction.

It is estimated that in the United States, over 40 million acres of land is devoted to lawn, that all-American symbol of suburban landscaping that offers little to no function. But what if we did something more with those 40 million acres? What if, instead, we designated all of that land to a diverse selection of plants that were adapted to the location's specific conditions and provided beauty, but also supported a diversity of other species, all with their place and function in supporting the overarching community? With such

a transformation we would be converting more atmospheric carbon dioxide into stable forms stored in the soil, enhancing the water storing capacity to buffer against times of both drought and flood, enhancing the viable habitat of pollinators and other crucial beneficial insects, and providing cleaner air, cleaner water, and more beauty.

I believe this is an attainable vision, but it is only attainable if we all work together to bring it to fruition. It can be easy to take small steps towards

creating a more resilient and healthy landscape in our own backyards. Some great things that you can do at home without much cost or effort include...

Don't Use Pesticides or Herbicides

It may seem like an easy solution to weeds or pests, but from a broader perspective, the damage inflicted on surrounding life forms, especially the little-understood yet critical soil microbes, is a high price to pay. Healthy plants are the best defense against pests and invasion.

A Late Spring Clean-up is the Best Spring Clean-up

Though it can be tempting to start clearing away the leaves at the first sign of spring, there is much to be gained from delaying the clean-up until spring is well established. The duff (leaves and minimally broken down plant matter) is home to many overwintering bumble bee and butterfly species who rely on this protective insulation to survive the sudden cold snaps that characterize the early spring. These insects provide important functions in the landscape including pollination and act as food for many birds and higher organisms. It's recommended to wait until the apple trees have finished blooming to clear the duff from your yard.

Plant Appropriate Perennials

Picking plants that are appropriate for a site can have tremendously beneficial consequences on a broader landscape level. These are plants which have adapted to the local conditions of temperature, precipitation, soil characteristics and living community. Plants that are not adapted to the checks and balances of the local biological community (i.e. invasive species) offer few positive interactions within the environment while dominating the available resources. Native plants on the other hand, have evolved in

combination with the other plants, animals and microbes around them, and tend to have the highest number of beneficial relationships throughout the ecosystem.

Reduce Your Lawn

Replacing even a small portion of existing lawn with a diverse planting of appropriate species can be a great place to start, even an area as small as 10'x10' can provide a habitat and food to support other organisms, as well as enhance soil structure for better water infiltration and storage capacity.



Devan Arnold on the Wet Spring Plant Walk

A small company rooted in Great Barrington, MA, Sassafras Land Care offers education, design, installation and maintenance services for projects big and small with a core goal of creating ecologically beneficial landscapes that provide function as well as beauty.

Native Perennials

for your new garden



Zizia aurea
Golden Alexander
Yellow flowers in spring, groundcover for wet to dry sunny or part shaded conditions.



Geranium maculatum
Cranesbill Geranium
Pink flowers in early summer for average to wet shaded conditions.



Waldsteinia fragaroides
Barren Strawberry
Yellow flowers in spring, ever-green groundcover for dry to average shaded conditions.



Echinacea purpurea
Purple Coneflower
Pink flowers in late summer, for dry sunny conditions.



Symphiotrichum cordifolium
Bluewood Aster
Blue flowers in fall for dry to average, shaded conditions.



Helianthus divaricatus
Woodland Sunflower
Yellow flowers in late summer for average to dry, shaded conditions.



Aquilegia canadensis
Wild Columbine
Red flowers in early summer, for dry sunny conditions.



Schizachyrium scoparium
Little Bluestem
Medium-sized clumping grass for dry sunny conditions.



Monarda fistulosa
Wild Bee-balm
Pink flowers in mid-summer for dry to wet, sunny to part shaded conditions.

SAUTÉED

Fiddleheads

This simple sauté is a lovely way to enjoy the earthy freshness of fiddlehead ferns.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. fiddleheads
- 1 clove garlic (or 1 small shallot)
- 1 tablespoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons oil or butter

1 Trim the fiddleheads, removing any brown ends or mushy parts. Immediately before cooking, rinse them clean in cool water.

2 Peel the garlic or shallot and slice very thinly. Don't chop or mince them as that could result in their pungent aroma overwhelming the delicate flavor of these wild beauties.

3 In a large pot, bring 2 quarts of water to a boil. Add the salt and the cleaned fiddleheads. Cook for 1 minute. Drain and rinse with cold water until the fiddleheads cool off (or dunk them in a bowl of ice water to shock them). Drain them and lay them out on layers of paper towels to pat them dry. This process of blanching removes the bitter edge of fiddleheads. If their bitterness doesn't bother you, feel free to skip this step.

4 In a large frying pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the blanched fiddleheads. Cook, stirring frequently, until they start to brown on the edges, about 5 minutes (longer if they aren't blanched). Add the garlic or shallots, if you like, and cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic is fragrant and just starting to color, about 1 minute.

Salt to taste & serve.



SHOP @

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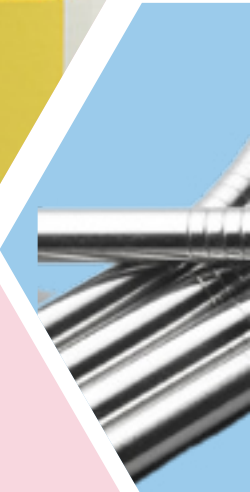
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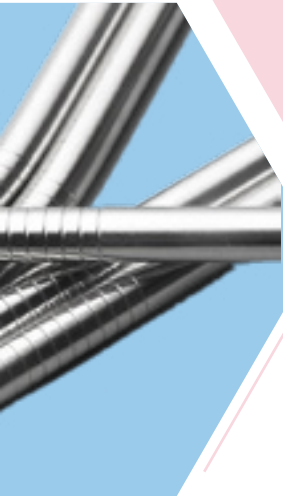
GREEN

Whoever said it's not easy being green obviously didn't have a friendly neighborhood Co-op. Here's a round up of our favorite products that make it EASY to be GREEN!

Curated by Samantha Zepeda



Klean Kanteen offers style & sustainability in ONE cup! These stainless steel tumblers are perfect for toting around your hot coffee, tea, kombucha, or drink of choice.



We're SO OVER single-use plastic! Replace those plastic straws with some stainless steel ones!



Made from recycled plastic, this small but mighty compost bin will keep your home odor-free while keeping your commitment to being GREEN!

Bring your own reusable containers and shop in bulk for zero-waste grocery shopping!



Hudson Valley Seed Co. offers beautiful heirloom & open-pollinated seeds for a variety of vegetables, flowers & herbs. Artists submit their work to be featured on the packaging, making these truly beautiful, from start to finish!



plastic cutlery & say hello to are! These lovely come in a handy traveling case too!





Berkshire Food Co-op

42 Bridge Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230 | 413-528-9697 | berkshire.coop