

THE SCOOP

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FROM BERKSHIRE FOOD CO-OP
spring 2022

**Chianti vs. Sangiovese:
What's the difference?**

pg. 10

**Cut down on plastic
when you shop!**

pg. 14

recipes, stories, hacks & more!

34 Bridge St Great Barrington | (413) 528-9697



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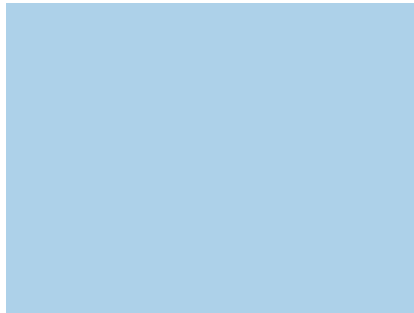
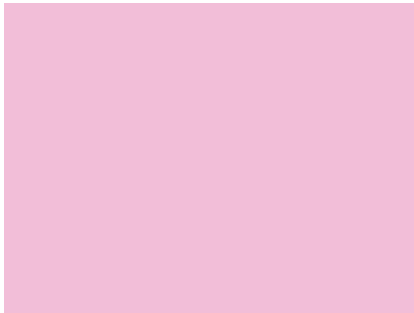
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meet the board



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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER:

I originated from a community of health-conscious individuals. Throughout my childhood, I spent countless hours learning about gardening, food preservation, and working with our land. We planned, prepared and put in the hard work. Our payoff was tremendous. The bounty of vegetables that we harvested fed us all year long. Our chickens and geese assisted in keeping the pests at bay, and our two German Shepherds protected our flocks. I think back to that time with a sense of pride and appreciation; that I have the knowledge to live in harmony with the natural world.

Each Spring I would look forward to the rhubarb that my grandmother would harvest and prepare, or her red currant jelly. Two family favorites that

live on in my memory. It could be the hyacinths and iris in bloom that stimulate my senses during this season, or maybe it's the sound of songbirds expressing themselves. Whatever it is for you, I imagine that you share the possibilities granted to us as the light eclipses our darkest months. It is a time of renewal, a time of awakening and regeneration. A time for us to come out of hibernation and reconnect with our greater communities.

This is why I invite you to visit us here at your Co-op. Come to see what local produce is available in our Produce Department, or that has been included in one of your meals from our Prepared Foods Department. You might enjoy some music on our patio, or one of our other unique events.

We look forward to welcoming many of our local producers to sample and educate you on their products as the weather warms. Take a look through all of our departments to find something that will become your new favorite. We're here to help you connect to whatever it is you're looking for.

I look forward to celebrating with you all this season, my current, extended community. Until next time, take pleasure in all of the bounty coming your way!



Jessica Bosworth
Interim General Manager



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT:

As we look to the warmer temperatures and longer days, your board of directors is hard at work planning for the future. With the amazing energy and enthusiasm of Interim General Manager Jessica Bosworth and the talented crew at the Co-op, everyone is working together in this transitional period to help the Co-op grow financially and create stronger community ties.

With this in mind, we are thrilled to be part of the launch of digital BerkShares, the digital version of our county's local currency. Our relationship with BerkShares fits wonderfully with our Ends, helping to invigorate our local economy through equitable relationships.

As you know, the Co-op has been accepting paper BerkShares for years. This new digital platform will make using BerkShares much easier for everyone and more economical for the Co-op and our local Berkshire businesses. Soon you will be able to download the BerkShares App, link it to your bank account and be a part of a growing movement to keep money here in our region, recirculating and reinvesting in our local economy.

When you charge your grocery bill using your credit or debit cards, the Co-op (and most businesses) pays fees, generally 3%, which add up to an exorbitant expense. And those dollars go to huge corporations elsewhere, never getting reinvested in our local community. When you pay with BerkShares, the Co-op (and other local businesses) will not incur

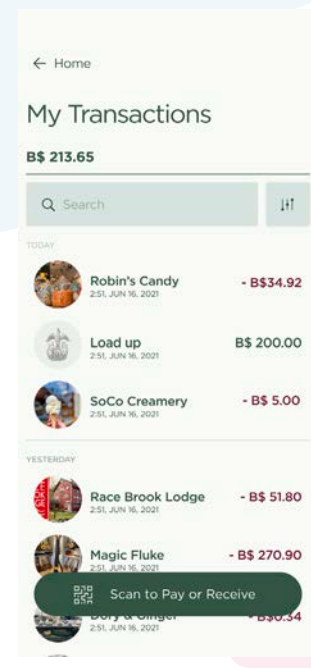
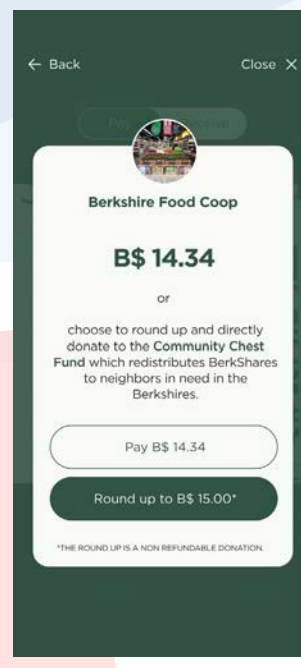
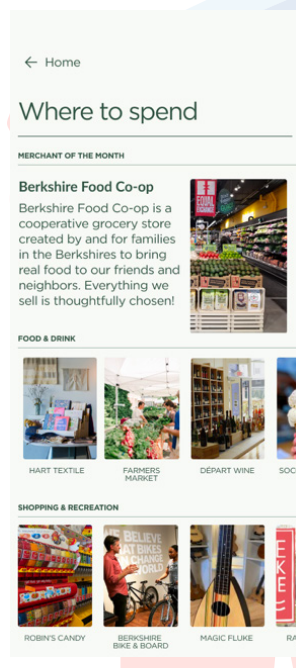
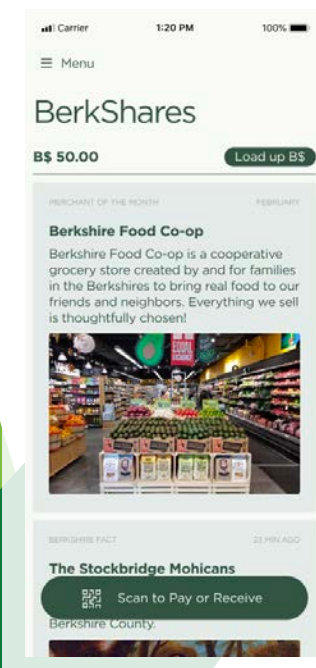
these transaction fees. Also, BerkShares highlights each business who accepts digital BerkShares, which offers us a bonus marketing tool. Only when we cash out our BerkShares for dollars by depositing them into a bank account, a small 1.5% fee is applied. This is very competitive to credit card fees. The more we source from local farmers, makers and businesses that accept BerkShares, the more the Co-op can keep money recirculating with the local economy and reduce fees.

When you use BerkShares, you are buying high-quality local goods and services and enhancing economic vitality. Imagine that for every \$1 BerkShares that you spend, you generate \$3 of economic activity in our community! Now that is a cooperative movement we should all be proud to join.

Stay tuned over the next few months as we share more exciting news. And as always, thank you all for your support!



Phyllis Webb
Board President



PASTA-ti amazing

Arianna LaBosco
Refrigerated & Frozen Buyer

When you want something flavorful yet simple, fresh but quick.

I especially love this dish in the spring and summer, but honestly it's great year round. I have always made a dish with these ingredients, but for this I took inspiration from the viral feta tomato pasta dish that circulated the internet a few months back. I actually find that recipe too zippy on its own, and learned that adding a few other things balanced it out.

You'll need:

Almost a whole jar of pitted Kalamata olives
Fresh basil sprinkled about
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
1 small yellow or red onion, thinly sliced
2 small herbed chevre

1 can anchovies (separate and save the oil)
Mozzarella balls
2 pints cherry tomatoes
1lb pasta, any shape you like



Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a large baking dish, combine everything (including anchovy oil) except the pasta, mozzarella, and anchovies. Place the chevre in the center of the baking dish. It doesn't really matter which order things go in, as long as all the specified ingredients are together. Honestly, dried herbs work great too if that's all ya got. And a note on the tomatoes: I use rainbow tomatoes, and I don't cut them, but you can if you choose to.

Drizzle olive oil on top of everything on the pan, add salt and pepper to taste, and a bit of dried oregano or Italian seasoning. Throw it into the oven for about a half an hour or until bubbling.

Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to the package. Once your pasta is done, strain it, but save a little bit of pasta water.

Stir your cooked pasta into the baking dish full of goodness, and add some of the reserved pasta water if you need to loosen up the sauce.

Serve in bowls with fresh mozz on top, a little grated parm, crushed red pepper flakes if you'd like, and a couple anchovies for that extra umami bite.

Yum!

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g.



SANGIOVESE & CHIANTI

Stephen Piersanti
Specialty Foods Supervisor

SANGIOVESE, the grape

The Sangiovese grape, a Tuscan staple, is the most abundant red grape in Italy, and Italy's most important grape given the large variety of wines made from it. It is the most widely planted grape in Italy, and, in 2019, the tenth most planted grape in the world. Sangiovese is associated ultimately with Tuscany, Italy, but its origins, though hard to determine scientifically, seem to place it as a native of southern Italy.

Sangiovese's beginnings may be difficult to locate geographically, but historically the first mentions of a grape "sangiovese" date back to 1590. It is also a notoriously finicky grape for wine, though given the right conditions, terroir, viticulturist (grape grower) and vintner (wine maker), Sangiovese can produce world-class wines. The vines grow best in what might be considered rather poor soil—well-drained, minimal water retention, pebbly. Limestone and clay impart specific and desired qualities. The "galestro" soil of the Chianti region of Tuscany is considered the ideal soil in which to plant Sangiovese.



Sangiovese is used in the production of many wines throughout Italy and the world. In Tuscany and central Italy, the Sangiovese grape is predominant in, of course, Sangiovese wine (100 percent), Chianti (named for the region), Chianti Classico, Rosso and Brunello di Montalcino, Rosso and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano (a town in Tuscany, not to be confused with the grape

"Montepulciano d'Abruzzo"), Morellino di Scansano; other wines of Tuscany: Carmignano, Orcia, Val di Cornia, to name just a few. Outside of central Italy, it is also part of the blend of Bardolino and Valpolicella (from the region of Venice), Rosso Cornero and Rosso Piceno (Le Marche region), and Montefalco Rosso (Umbria). You will find the Sangiovese well-planted in California, Chile,



Young Sangiovese wines, including young Chiantis, should be fresh and fruity with a nose of red fruits and berries, have a zippy slight acidity and some tannins present, and hints of black tea or dried herb and spices.

Aged Chianti and Chianti Classico, aged anywhere from six months to 25 years according to the classification, will present a clean and intense aroma, with notes of violets, minerals, tobacco, earth. The color will be a warm red with flashes of mahogany. The more aged the wine, the more pronounced the brown hues. On the palate: flavors of dried cherries, strawberries, earth, leather, tobacco and smoke. Tannins are very present but smooth which gives Chianti its noted and desirable dryness. In blends, the Sangiovese grape lends its fruitiness and zippy acidity.

A Super-Tuscan is a late 20th century variation on Chianti, with wines varying in style depending on the blend of grapes and fermentation process. The influence of Bordeaux-style wines is present in the use of new oak

barrels and classically French grapes like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, in addition to the tuscan Sangiovese grape. It is typically a bigger bolder wine, but the pendulum has swung back to a Chianti that is cleaner, fresher and more redolent of the native Sangiovese grape.

In all cases, terroir plays an important role in the nose and on the palate. The topography and geology of the Chianti region is varied—the climate cool in the hills and mountains north of Florence, warmer and sunnier to the south around the towns of Montalcino and Montepulciano, the soil pebbly and with limestone in the hills (“galestro”) and softer and finer, though still not a rich soil, in the river valleys and Crete Senese.

CHIANTI, the wine

The history of Chianti as an appellation goes back to 1716. Cosimo III de’ Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, issued an edict legislating that the three villages of the Lega del Chianti (Castellina in Chianti, Gaiole in Chianti and Radda in Chianti) as well as the village of Greve and a generous

and as far from Tuscany as South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Closer to home, the Sangiovese grape is grown for wine production in Virginia and the province of Ontario, Canada.

The wines from Sangiovese can run from a “rosato” (rosé), to light, fruity and quaffable reds, to full-bodied age worthy red wines.



hillside north of Greve as the only officially recognized producers of Chianti. This delineation existed until July 1932 when the Italian Government expanded and further defined and redefined the Chianti designation, incorporating neighbouring territories where grapes and chianti-style wines had long been produced. In 1967 the official Chianti DOC was created; in 1997 the Chianti Classico DOCG became its own distinct designation, carved out of the eight subzones of the existing Chianti DOC .

PLACE NAMES to recognize WITHIN CHIANTI -

The Chianti region covers a vast area of Tuscany and includes within its boundaries several overlapping Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) and Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) regions. The Chianti DOCG consists of seven different appellations - Rufina, Colli Aretini, Colli Fiorentini, Colli Senesi (largest of the sub-zones and includes the Brunello di Montalcino and Vino

Nobile di Montepulciano areas), Colline Pisane, Montalbano (which includes the Carmignano DOCG) and Montespertoli. The Chianti Classico DOCG is a single appellation broken into nine different communes - Barberino Val d'Elsa, San Casciano in Val di Pesa and Tavarnelle Val di Pesa in the province of Florence as well as Castelnuovo Berardenga and Poggibonsi in the province of Siena.

Other well known Sangiovese-based Tuscan wines such as Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano could be bottled and labeled under the most basic designation of "Chianti" if so chosen.

DESIGNATIONS of qualities -

Wines from the Chianti region must meet certain standards—a minimum of 70 percent Sangiovese grapes and those grapes must come from the Chianti DOCG. There are two degrees of marks of age and quality, Superiore and Riserva.

Many of the best Chianti wines come from the Chianti Classico DOCG sub-zone within the larger region of Chianti. To carry this designation a wine must not only come from this sub-region (which is generally thought to produce better wines) but also meet more stringent production standards, such as the use of at least 80 percent Sangiovese from only the Chianti Classico region. An easy indication of a Chianti Classico wine is the mark of the famous Gallo Nero (black rooster) affixed to the neck of the bottle.

The Classico designation also contains various levels of aging - Annata, aged less than one year; Superiore, made in vineyards with low yields and aged for less than one year; Riserva, aged for at least two years. The recently-created Gran Selezione must be estate-grown, aged at least 30 months and approved by an appointed tasting panel.





GRAPES, AGING and FLAVOR PROFILES -

Chianti is so unique because every producer has a distinctive style and signature blend; no two Chianti labels taste exactly alike.

A simple Chianti is often characterized by its juicy fruit notes of cherry, plum and raspberry and can range from simple quaffing wines to those approaching the level of Chianti Classico.

Lighter-bodied styles will generally have a higher proportion of white grape varieties blended in, while a Chianti that has only red grape varieties will be fuller and richer.

These wines typically tend to have medium-high acidity and medium tannins, but that will change with aging.

Chianti Classico wines are characterized in their youth by their predominantly floral and cinnamon spicy bouquet. As the wine ages, aromas of tobacco and leather can emerge. The use of white grape varieties such as Malvasia and Trebbiano have been prohibited in Chianti Classico within the last 20 years or so.

Most blends are made of 70-to-100 percent Sangiovese and up to ten percent Canaiolo. If there are other grape varieties present in the wine, it is typically a local variety but can also be Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot or a combination of these.

In conclusion, Sangiovese is the quintessential Italian grape, and Chianti its most known and distinctive wine. Enjoy. Cin cin!

D'Agata, Ian. 2014. Native Wine Grapes of Italy. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. pp 426 - 435.
D'Agata, Ian. 2019. Italy's Native Wine Grape Terriers. Oakland, California: University of California. pp 270-299. <https://blog.vinfolio.com/2019/10/04/the-ultimate-guide-to-chianti-wine/>

Kitchen Hacks

Brought To You By:
TNT
BITTERS
CO

Anna Monaco
Meat & Seafood Team Member

With Spring (sort of) in the air, we wanted to give you some tips to prepare you for the warmer weather with some time-, money-, and space-saving ideas from our kitchen to yours!

1 As you are going through the spring and summer months, growing produce and shopping at local markets and, of course, your friendly neighborhood co-op, here's a tip to make a quick vegetable stock. Save all of your vegetable trimmings like onion skins, garlic peels, carrot skins, and parsley stems. Throw them in a freezer-safe container or bag.

When you need a veggie stock, throw them in a big frying pan (instead of a stock pot so it boils faster!), cover with water, bring it to a boil, and then simmer until you need to use it. Strain out the solids and voila! You have homemade vegetable stock that didn't cost you a penny and cut down on your trash! Good for the wallet, good for your tastebuds, and good for the earth!

2 When you make a pot of coffee and have a little bit leftover, freeze it in an ice cube tray for iced coffee later in the day or week. Made a big batch of tomato sauce and ran out of

containers to put it in? Freeze it in your ice cube tray and use one cube to add some tomato flavor to soups and sauces! We like to keep one ice cube tray designated for all things food so if we make ice in it, there are no leftover smells or tastes...just to be safe! Quick note, when freezing these things, freeze them solid in the ice cube tray and then store them in a container or bag. So, you can reuse your ice cube tray again and again.

3 Looking to bring some sparkle to your summer cocktails? Fancy ice cubes like spheres or perfect cubes are very 'in' right now. But don't worry about going out to buy another kitchen gadget to use sporadically throughout the season. Use baking dishes like a bundt pan to make ice rings for a big bowl of punch. Or small metal bowls or tupperware to make large ice cubes for a big pitcher of lemonade. The larger the ice cube, the slower it will melt and water down your drink! Plus, they look super impressive.

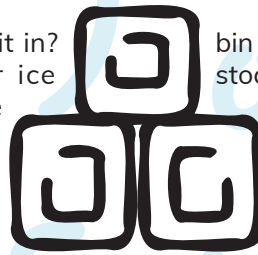
4 After so many of us largely stayed indoors during the colder months, the longer days and brighter sun mean picnics! A great space saving tip is to take a small storage

bin that fits inside your cooler and stock it with picnic essentials like plates, cups, napkins, and utensils. We recommend reusable or green products. Store that bin inside your cooler so when you are packing the food, you have everything else ready to go!

5 The easiest way to peel ginger is by scraping it with the edge of a spoon, not by carefully trimming off the skin with a knife. Check out the difference!

6 Whisking some homemade whipped cream or a batch of vinaigrette in a large bowl? Lay a towel down on the counter and place the bowl on that. It will stay in place and prevent any slipping. Plus, if you get a little too into the whisking and spill a bit, it's easy clean up!

7 If you're looking to cut down on your packaging when purchasing bulk items, bring your own containers! To prevent confusion, and, again, limit the use of disposable products, take rubber bands and stretch them around your jars. Write on them with a pen before you come into the store and hit up the bulk wall. Never confuse your various types of rice again! BONUS: When you space the rubber bands out when



putting them on the jars, they also help prevent the jars from rattling around in your bag!

8

Hoping to snazz up a weekly taco night or add some bright tang to leftovers? Pickled vegetables are where you should turn! Making a quick pickling liquid is super easy and really allows you to use

all that cucumber you bought last week that you thought you would eat more of. Or all the zucchini you grew in the garden that somehow took over! You can store pickled items up to a week in the fridge without sealing them canning

style, or you can go all fancy and seal them like you would homemade jam and they become shelf stable (think of next winter when it would be lovely to have this season's harvest ready to eat!). Just take some water, salt, sugar, and whole spices like bay leaves or whole coriander and peppercorns. Stir until the salt and sugar dissolve (you can heat gently on the stove if you're in a rush) and dump in your veg!

9

As winter citrus makes room for summer citrus, perhaps you have an extra lemon or grapefruit lying around that you won't eat. Cut it in half, sprinkle it with salt, and use it as a scrub on your stainless surfaces. Not only is it an eco-friendly cleaner but it makes your sink smell delightful!

10

Batching cocktails for the backyard BBQ?

You can mix drinks in advance of most gatherings so you have one less thing to do the day of. Just omit any sparkling component and add that during the event. Sangrias, and punches, and boozy-forward drinks hold up very well when batched. Things with fresh citrus juice should be mixed no more than a few days in advance. Want a simple way to up the measurements? Change the ounce measurement to cup and mix away! Some recipes will require a bit of tasting and adjusting when you scale up but that simple method works most of the time! And don't forget to add your bitters!

Our favorite batched cocktail is a rum-based drink with a base that can even be frozen ahead of time. BONUS: it can also be made without adding any alcohol!



Blend or muddle the following ingredients in whatever ratio you like: cilantro, cucumber, jalapeno, lime juice, simple syrup (made with 1:1 water to sugar).

Store in small airtight containers in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

When ready to use, defrost or remove from the fridge, add clear liquor of choice if using (like white rum, silver tequila, gin, or vodka), and top with seltzer, a pinch of salt and a 5 dashes of TNT Bitters Sucker Punch Lime Bitters or TNT Bitters Pink Mist Smoked Grapefruit Bitters. Feel free to play around with it by adding an amaro to kick up the bitter aspect, agave nectar instead of simple syrup, a flavored seltzer like coconut or citrus... the possibilities are endless!





Tennis and... Vegetables?

Mitch Adler
Produce Team Member



“I saw an ad for a position with the Co-op. I thought to myself ‘I have now found a perfect place to work.’”

Tennis has been my main passion and my career path for close to 40 years now—I grew up as a nationally ranked junior player in NYC. My career has taken me all over the US and to many different countries and continents, even as far away as China and Israel. (I lived in both countries for 4 months each and had life changing experiences.) Now, I teach tennis to a handful of clients, but I contemplate playing competitively again—vying to win a national 55-and-over title in honor of my son, who we sadly lost at age 26 just 2 years ago. He always wanted me to win a national title, so perhaps 2022 will be the year?

As you can imagine, Christina (my wife of 30 years) and I, like many others in the world, have had a very tough two years, but my work at the Co-op is slowly helping me heal. I am grateful for that daily. I had not been healthy enough mentally to work very much during the pandemic so this is my recovery job. Combined with getting back on the tennis court, hopefully it will get me back feeling like my old self.

So how did I end up working in the produce department at the Berkshire Food Co-op in Great Barrington? The answer is pretty easy: the produce itself and the people who work there.

I live in Pine Plains, NY, (about a 40-minute drive) and found Great Barrington again when the cannabis dispensaries opened up a couple of years ago (I thought of working in the industry). My brother lived here two decades ago and, while it has changed dramatically, much of the culture I love remains in place. It was not until just a few months ago that I found the Co-op, and it was love at first sight. Walking into the produce department for the first time I was astonished by a sight I'd never seen before: greens and vegetables and fruits, so fresh and beautiful. Further, I was warmly greeted by the employees, which you just don't get at your typical grocery store.

So, I started shopping here. My wife is a vegetarian and eats primarily organic, so I had just found the perfect place to shop for her. Then I saw an ad for a position with the Co-op. I thought to myself “I have now found a perfect place to work.” I met with Mark, the produce manager, and to be honest, with no background in produce I did not think I would land the job. Thankfully, I was wrong.



I enjoy the work, which can be hard and tiring, but my team of co-workers and the Owners who shop here are appreciative of how special this place is and of our team’s hard work. This is not the norm in the industry, but again: the Co-op is special in many ways.



Now, with just over a month under my belt, I am learning quickly about produce—and the entire store—and hope to be a part of this team for a long time to come. With warmer weather coming our way I will once again be teaching tennis after work and on my days off—in both Great Barrington and Dutchess County. It will be a lot on my body, but I love what I do, and my time on the tennis court with my clients is always special.

“I look forward to working with our local farmers and getting to know the community even better.”

In the produce world, warmer weather means more local products will be available. I look forward to working with our local farmers and getting to know the community even better. Meeting new people daily is so warming. Next time you’re in the store I hope you will take a moment and say hello; we are here for your produce needs and to help make your visit a friendly, enjoyable one. Don’t hesitate to ask a question. We are here for you!

As we get ready to leave sweet potato season and start to see plums, pears, and all that summer brings, it’s exciting to work in such a seasonally changing department. The Co-op is like a second home now and I’m feeling lucky to be a part of it.

See you in Produce soon!



Mitch and Jim Courier, former world champion.



MARINADES

for the whole family

If your household is anything like mine, your mealtime routine quickly gets into a rut. Here are some of my favorite 'go-to' marinades to spice-up mealtime. The best part—you can get any of these ingredients at the Co-op!

Note: For all of these recipes, I mix the marinades in my mini electric chopper, however a blender, food processor or even a brisk whisking will accomplish the same task.

Jessy Turner
Program Coordinator



Cilantro-Lime Chicken

2 lbs of Smart Chicken breast tenders (or tenders cut into strips)
2 limes
1 bunch of cilantro
1 clove of garlic minced (or whole if using a blending tool)
1 tbsp of agave
1 tsp of cumin
1 tsp of chili powder
Salt to taste

If using the blender method, squeeze the juice of both limes into a blender. Add a heavy handful of cilantro, the clove of garlic, agave, cumin, chili powder and salt. Blend on high until fully combined. If using a bowl, finely chop the cilantro and mince the garlic prior to adding, then use a whisk to blend. Pour the marinade over the chicken. I use a gallon plastic bag, but a shallow dish with a tight-fitting lid will also work. If using the bag method, massage the chicken until evenly coated. I prefer to let chicken marinate overnight, however 6-8 hours will do. Grill the chicken on medium heat until done or bake in an air fryer according to manufacturer directions.

We serve with Mi Tierra Corn Tortillas, lettuce, tomato, sour cream and extra cilantro for garnish.

Lime Coconut Curry Shrimp

1 lb of 16/20 sized shrimp (preferably raw), thawed and peeled
2 limes
1 tbsp of virgin (unrefined) coconut oil. I like using Dr. Bronners
1-2 tbsp of Field Day curry powder to taste
1 clove garlic minced (or whole if using a blending tool)
1 tsp of Agave
Salt to taste
Bamboo Skewers

Squeeze the juice of both limes into a blender. Add the coconut oil, curry powder, garlic, agave, and salt. Blend on high until fully combined. If using a bowl, mince the garlic prior to adding, then use a whisk to blend. Pour the marinade over the shrimp. I use a gallon plastic bag, but a shallow dish with a tight fitting lid will also work. If using the bag method, massage the shrimp until evenly coated. I prefer to let the shrimp marinate overnight, however 6-8 hours will do. Skewer 4-5 shrimp per bamboo skewer. Grill on medium heat until finished. If you don't have a grill, you can cook in a lightly oiled pan over medium heat until the shrimp turns pink and is cooked through.

Serve with saffron rice (another recipe for the future) or plain basmati rice. Our family loves broccoli as a side dish.



HOPE SPRING'S ETERNAL

Matt Sinico
Evening Store Supervisor

As the days pass from shorter to longer we awaken from our winter slumber to a new season—Spring. Spring comes with all the hope and glory of a new promise of warmer weather, greener grass and blooming flowers.

Dad always loved spring. He loved to plant flowers outside and made sure he brought his three boys along to learn.

If we played our cards right, in late fall we would surely see daffodils, tulips, hyacinth, lilies and crocuses bloom bright and full. But it was lilacs that caught my fancy. Purple, yellow, white and bright pink were everywhere in our yard. The smell was amazing. We made sure to cut each type and fill the house with the wonderful natural scent.

Then, a bit later in spring it's time to plant the annuals. One of my favorite things to do is plant flowers. Not too

early though—Dad always said Memorial Day weekend was the perfect time to plant, though we usually pressed our luck and started around Easter.

The whiskey barrel planters that fronted our store were legendary. They were even there for my first memory of planting flowers. Dad and my grandfather would plant flowers every year. We always had geraniums, spikes of ivy, petunias and marigolds of all shapes and sizes. The worst part was always using the compost to fertilize the soil. Dad said to “tickle the soil” around the plants. I never quite understood it when I was young, but I got the idea later. After a full dose of water and 5-10-5 fertilizer we had the full effect of our toil in about 8 weeks.

Maybe it wasn't the planting that made that time so

special—maybe it was the time I had with my Dad. At the moment it was a chore; something I had to do that was dirty, not a lot of fun and always back-breaking. But every year we did it together.

As time passed, Dad stopped planting and I began doing it myself, but still feeling his presence and hearing him tell me what to do and how to do it. I can only hope to show my daughter the love and care he had for flowers by passing on his teachings. We could dust off the gloves or just chance it and just go bare-handed. He always said you have to get dirty for the plants to really grow. Thanks Dad; the next generation is very appreciative of all you have taught.







Nurturing Little Green Thumbs

By Eve Adamson

When my two sisters and I were youngsters, my dad had a great idea. One warm May day, as the three of us stood in the grass of our big backyard watching and wondering what he was up to, he cut 15 six-foot lengths of molding left over from our recent basement remodel, stuck them into the warming dirt of our garden in three circles, and lashed the tops of each together with twine to make three “teepee” forms. Next, he tore open a packet of pole bean seeds and gave us each a small handful. He showed us how to plant them around each wooden stake, and then he watered the soil with the green garden hose, while we ran through the spray.

Every day, we went out to the backyard with my dad to check on our seeds. When the sprouts emerged, we cheered. He showed us how to pluck out the weeds and keep the soil moist. As the beans began to grow, in the impressively speedy way they tend to in the rich Iowa soil, something amazing happened. Without any prompting or guidance from us, vines sprouting leaves and bean pods began to wind around the wooden stakes until they reached the top. The leaves and tendrils grew thicker and denser, until one day, each of us could crawl inside our little green houses and be completely alone. I remember sitting in the cool dirt, quietly marveling at the way the vines filtered and freckled the bright July sun. It is one of my fondest childhood memories.

Sometimes I would pluck a tender raw bean and eat it. It tasted like spring to me — fresh and grassy. Or, I would

collect them in a bowl and bring them into the kitchen, so my mother could make them for dinner. I didn’t even mind eating them too much — with a little butter. They tasted nothing like those mushy beans from the can we had to eat in the winter, and those fresh beans prompted me to try the garden carrots, lettuces and tomatoes, too.

There’s something about growing things that appeals to kids, and several casual studies suggest that when kids grow their own vegetables, they are more likely to eat vegetables. It was certainly true in my case. Decades later, my own son, who at 14 remains suspicious of most green things, finally became more open minded when his summer camp grew a vegetable garden.

If gardening is the way to get kids to eat more vegetables (not to mention spend more time with you), then why aren’t we all doing it? Even if you only have a small backyard plot, or room for a few containers on your deck or porch, you can get growing together.

Gardening with your kids gives them many gifts. They learn where food really comes from. They learn how to work together with others toward a common goal. They learn practical skills. They learn how fresh food tastes. They learn the feel and smell of wet dirt and mulch. And they learn that they have the power to take something as small and full of potential as a seed, and nurture it until it becomes everything it was meant to be. Just like you are doing with them.

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Fun gardening projects with kids



Tube garden

Start your seeds and recycle at the same time. Toilet paper tubes are easy for small hands to manipulate. Plant tomato, pepper, pea or bean seeds in tubes filled with potting soil, in early spring. Prop them upright in a tray or flower pot. When the seeds sprout, pop the whole tube into the garden after the soil is warm.

Salad in a box

Any window box, bucket, basket or other container with drainage at the bottom will do. Fill it with potting soil and plant a variety of lettuces and spinach scattered over the top. Press into place and water lightly. Keep the soil moist. When the greens sprout, trim off a few leaves each day to include in a salad. For kids who don't like bitter tastes, butter lettuces are a good choice.

Mushroom garden

If your child has a daring palate, try growing mushrooms. Many companies sell mushroom growing kits that make it easy to spawn this fascinating fungus in a box at home.

Herb circles

A round container or a small circle dug out of your sod can become an herb circle. Plant basil, lavender, tarragon, thyme and edible nasturtium flowers in concentric circles. Your child can sample the different smells and tastes, and help you decide which herbs to add to which foods.

Flowers and fruit garden

For some kids, fruit is an easier sell than vegetables. Try planting watermelons, cantaloupe or honeydew melons, interspersed with native wildflowers, for a pretty and gastronomically satisfying garden experience.

Bean teepee

If you have the space, give your child a magical-seeming, ephemeral playhouse. You don't have to use leftover molding like my dad did; any thin wooden pole or bamboo rod will work. For each teepee, put five or six poles, about 5 to 6 feet long, in the ground in a circle, approximately 3 feet in diameter. Prop or tie the tops together. Plant pole bean seeds around each stake. Water and mulch, then watch as each teepee leafs out, creating a private space just for small people.

Salsa garden, pizza garden or spaghetti garden

Devote your garden plot to a food theme kids can relate to. For a salsa garden, plant tomatoes, tomatillos, bell peppers, jalapeno peppers, onions and cilantro. For a pizza garden, plant Roma tomatoes, onions, garlic, basil, spinach or whatever else you like on your pizza. For a spaghetti garden, try tomatoes, onions, garlic, oregano and thyme.

Pumpkin garden

Two or three pumpkin plants will sprawl and spawn just what you need for Halloween crafts as well as pumpkin pie, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread, and pumpkin puree you can add to applesauce, smoothies, or even chili. Marigolds nestled between the vine make a prettier plot.



Find more ideas for gardening projects with kids and recipes for your harvest at [grocery.coop](https://www.grocery.coop).

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