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Supplying local produce and supporting local farmers for 19 years.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Don't Miss the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) 2011 Summer Conference

Once again, NOFA's annual conference will be packed with interesting sessions – more than 200 of them! Keynote speakers are Eric Toensmeier, Perennial Edibles Expert, and GMO Activist Dr. Ignacio Chapela of UC Berkeley. Workshops will cover organic gardening, farming, food politics, permaculture, landscaping, alternative energy, cooking, and more! Hundreds of Vendors and Exhibitors. Live Entertainment. Children's and Teen Conference. Country Fair and Farmer's Market. This year NOFA is partnering with the Draft-Animal Power Network. Spend the weekend or come for the day, August 12-14 at UMass Amherst. To register, visit www.nofasummerconference.org. For more info, call 978/355-2853 or info@nofasummerconference.org.

Still Taking Bulk Berry Orders

Blueberries, gooseberries and currants should be available for the next few weeks. Please note, in order to get the bulk price, you must order full flats – although you can mix and match some items. See order form for details, <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/2011/07/berry-bulk-order-form/>.

Organic Gardner Faces Jail Time

A woman in Michigan faces a possible 93 days in jail for planting an organic garden in her front yard. Why? Apparently code in Julie Bass' town, Oak Park, deems that only "suitable live plant material" is acceptable in a front yard – and city planners say a vegetable garden is not suitable. "That's not what we want to see in a front yard," Oak Park City Planner Kevin Rulkowski told Fox 2 News. The city issued her a warning, then a ticket and then charged her with a misdemeanor. It looks like Bass may be facing a jury trial, after another pretrial hearing at the end of the month. To see her garden and get the full story, visit <http://bit.ly/qHgzSG>

Cookbook Author Series at Boston Public Market

Susie Middleton, author of two cookbooks-Fast, Fresh & Green, a collection of vegetable side dishes, and Fresh & Green for Dinner, which will be published by Chronicle Books in 2012, will be appearing at the Boston Public Market at Dewey Square on Thurs., Aug. 11 from noon-2 pm.

Vacation Swaps

Going to miss your FDC goodies? Email newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org with **depot, the day you will be away, contact details and share**. We'll run an ad to see if anyone wants to swap.

FDC Fresh Ideas

By Operations Manager Julie Pottier-Brown

As I write, the dramatic weather outside is making me concerned about our growers – especially Nourse, harvesting those delicate summer berries. Hopefully, the rain wasn't quite as hard there at as it was around here!

This week, everyone is getting fresh onions and fresh garlic. They do not store like their cured counterparts, so keep them in the fridge and use within a week or so. Rob from Riverland is providing the fresh garlic – he told me he usually winds up harvesting more garlic than he has space to cure, so we are getting some now, and some later after its been cured. You can use fresh garlic anywhere you would use cured garlic, but it tends to be stronger than its cured counterpart, so take that into account.

This week, all shares will be getting a choice of weighable items. Many people don't realize this means you can take anything from the weighable table, and mix and match until you reach the weight for your share—one of this, two of that, a handful of something else. You're not restricted to taking a pound of something, or filling your choice with just one item. So enjoy a little bit of everything!



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Julie

Slow Down Summer Slide: The Importance of Reading

By Susan Butterworth, Marblehead Depot

Reading makes you smarter. It is a fact. Researchers have proved that those that read have higher GPAs, higher intelligence and general knowledge than those that don't. Especially for a child's developing brain, volume of reading (in other words PRACTICE) is beneficial in a wide variety of ways.

Reading increases vocabulary, and improves spelling and writing skills. According to research, even comic books and popular magazines have a higher level of vocabulary than television shows or everyday adult conversation.

Reading improves general knowledge, analytical thinking AND memory.

Reading reduces stress. It's a relaxing activity. It is a cool thing to do on a hot summer day. Most libraries are air-conditioned. Many bookstores have pleasant areas to sit and read on a rainy day.

It is also a fact that most schoolchildren experience Summer Learning Loss, losing as much as a month of instruction during the summer vacation. Summer reading reduces Summer Learning Loss.

Okay, you're convinced. How can you encourage your child to read this summer? How can you keep summer reading from becoming a battle? Here are a few suggestions:

Provide materials. All kinds of materials. Let your child choose them and don't judge what your child reads. Sports magazines. Graphic novels. Comic books.

Modeling. Read with your child. Read the same book together. Read out loud. Listen to books on tape.

Find a time of day that works for your child and doesn't conflict with time with friends or favorite activities. I always found that my son liked to read on summer mornings, before his friends were up and about.

Reading should be social! Post messages on social media about what you're reading. Encourage your child to review books on Amazon.com. Get kids reading together in informal reading groups. (Shameless Commerce Division, as Click and Clack say on Car Talk: hire a cheerful, friendly tutor to work with your child and one or two friends...)

Please, Read!

Susan Butterworth (prof.butterworth@comcast.net) is a long-time FDC member and an English teacher and reading and writing tutor.

Leave a Lasting Legacy to FDC

Hi to all you fellow FDC members!

I have been a member now for 11 summers and treasure my membership as something vital to my good health, both physically and psychologically

I know many of you fellow members volunteer to help the Coop in a bushel basket full of ways. I have done table duty, etc. over the years, as I am sure many of you have done, too. We all care about the FDC and want it to continue and to be able to give scholarships to those in need.

With the troubled economy lately, that can get to be anyone of us. As my cousin Tina used to say, "Some days you are the windshield, some days you are the bug."

As I have gotten older, I have thought of other ways of giving back to the Coop. My area of specialization for the past 27 years is Planned Giving and that is what I am now offering as my way of volunteering.

Have you ever thought about leaving a gift to the Coop in your will or estate plan? Well, Planned Giving donations can make new things and new programs possible without adding to the cost of our regular shares.

Can you think of programs you'd like the Coop to do -- like getting one of our farmers to talk about how they became organic and why, as a downloadable video from our website?

Producing such a video is outside of the regular FDC budget, and the board and staff work hard to keep membership and share costs down. Leaving a gift to the FDC in your will could allow such special projects to occur, or could simply help build the FDC's long-term financial security.

Or, maybe there are other items you'd like the Coop to offer? I love the fish fertilizer that is so good for all my indoor plants. To get a regular supply, we would need capital to buy it. And of course, there are always capital improvements needed at the depots, from painting sheds to purchasing new tents.

I am offering to help you add the FDC to your estate plan easily and affordably. I am not a lawyer, but I have lots of experience in helping these kinds of gifts become reality.

With a bequest to the FDC, you can assure the future of the Coop that we all care about and treasure. So please do think about it!

Look for a brochure about the FDC Bequest Society at your depot and on the website for downloading soon.

Please call me at 978/744-3180 or email me at giving@farmdirectcoop.org for more information.

*Warm wishes,
Your Planned Giving Volunteer
Susan DameGreene*

Thrift Rules: Baggie Update

By Jeanne Coffey, Newsletter Editor

Readers from last season may recall that I am trying to cut back in small ways on my family's reliance on fossil fuels -- starting with plastic baggies. I am pleased to report that keeping zipper bags in the basement has cut WAY down on our dependence on them. In the past year, I've only bought 30 new baggies -- not bad for a mom with two small kids. What am I doing instead, you might wonder. Well, we have a lot of reusable containers, including my favorite Ball Freezer jars, which are great for everything from snacks to an emergency drinking cup -- oh, and you can freeze stuff in them too. But we're also saving plastic bread bags and other bags--hang onto them yourself for a week or two and you'll be surprised at how many come into your house.. Share your favorite environmentally friendly tips at newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org.

Red Raspberry and Currant Jam

By Karen Yates, Melrose Depot

A friend told me about a wonderful raspberry and currant jam that her grandmother used to make. I pieced this recipe together from several currant-containing confitures I found in my collection of vintage cookbooks. It was a bit tart for my taste; when I tried a second batch, I used 5 baskets of raspberries, 3 baskets of currants, and increased the sugar to 1 cup per cup of puree. I preferred the sweeter, raspberry-heavy version, but when I mailed a jar of each to my friend she said that the first one was a dead ringer for her Grandma's.



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Making jam without powdered pectin is not as hard as I'd thought it would be. After my first few attempts, though, I realized that I was cooking the jam for too long. Be sure to start checking for the jelling point* about 5 minutes of boiling after you've added the sugar.

Ingredients

Red raspberries
Red currants
Sugar

A large pot, at least 6 qt in volume, ideally with a heavy bottom

Half-pint canning jars and lids, washed [and prepared for processing](#)

- 1) Use equal amount (by weight or volume) of raspberries and currants. For my first batch, I used 2 lbs of each fruit, or four baskets.
- 2) Wash and drain the currants in a colander -- no need to remove them from the stems. Place a layer of currants into the pot and crush lightly using a potato masher or spatula. Repeat until all the currants are in the pot. Turn the heat on and bring the currants to a simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes.
- 3) Rinse and drain the raspberries and add them to the pot. Bring the fruit to a simmer again and cook for another 15 minutes or so. Turn off the heat.
- 4) Working in batches, put the cooked fruit through a food mill or strainer. I used a [vegetable strainer attachment](#) for my Kitchen Aid mixer, but you could use a handheld food mill too -- just be sure that the mesh is fine enough to remove the currant seeds and stems (some raspberry seeds will get through no matter what you do). Transfer the strained puree to a bowl as you work.
- 5) Measure the puree and return it to the pot. Calculate how much sugar you will need: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar per cup of puree. (For example, when I used 2 lbs of currants and 2 lbs of raspberries, I ended up with 5 cups of puree. So I measured out $5 \times \frac{3}{4} = 3\text{-}3/4$ cups of sugar). Put the sugar in a large bowl and set it next to the stove.
- 6) Turn the heat on medium high and bring the puree to a boil; let it boil for 5 minutes. Add the sugar all at once and stir well; keep stirring until the mixture comes to a boil again. Reduce the heat slightly and let it cook. Start testing for the jelling point* after 5 minutes.
- 7) When the jam is ready, turn off the heat. Pour into clean, hot half-pint jars, seal, and process in an open kettle for 15 minutes. Remove the jars from the kettle and let them stand, undisturbed, overnight. Check the seals and store any unsealed jars in the refrigerator.

*There are a few ways to do this. I prefer the [sheet test method](#), because it's quick and easily done while you stand at the stove.