



Good Food News

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WEEKS OF MAY 23 &
MAY 30, 2006

AFFORDING SUSTAINABILITY

EDITOR'S NOTE: The rhubarb that is in this week's GFB is all local and organic--conventional boxes as well as the organic boxes. That's something that you may not know that we do whenever we can get organic produce at the same (or better) price than conventional. Read on...

LONDON - Organic farming can help reverse a sharp decline in Britain's agricultural workforce, creating on average 32 percent more jobs than conventional farming, according to a study issued by the Soil Association on Monday. The Soil Association is Britain's organic certification body.

"The decline in the agricultural workforce has been just as dramatic as the decline of skylarks," Soil Association policy director Peter Melchett told a news conference, referring to the British bird whose population has fallen sharply. Melchett said British policymakers had tended to focus on the benefits of organic farming for biodiversity but should pay more attention to social benefits such as job creation.

There has been a 79 percent drop in Britain's agricultural workforce since 1952, according to census data issued by Britain's farm ministry. Michael Green, one of the study's authors, said this had resulted in an isolated, ageing farming population, adding that organic farmers are on average seven years younger than their conventional counterparts.

About 4 percent of British farms are currently organic, and the study estimated that if all farms were to convert it would create an additional 93,000 on-farm jobs.

"Labour replaces chemicals and drugs on organic farms -- there is simply more to be done on the farm to make sure the herd is healthy and productive," dairy farmer Gordon Tweddle said in one of the report's case studies.

Economist Sean Rickard of the Cranfield School of Management said it was obvious that organic farming employed more people but less clear that this was a benefit. "The most expensive cost for farmers is labour and that is why organic food as a rule of thumb costs half as much again (50 percent more)," he said.

Rickard said there was only a niche group of consumers willing to pay the higher prices and the lower yields for organic farming meant that if all British farms were to convert the country would become heavily dependent on imports.

Natural City Conference -Forging Links from Field to Fork: Sustainable Agriculture in an Urban Context

Friday, June 2, 2006 9:00am - 4:00pm
Networking lunch from 12:00pm - 1:30pm
Bahen Centre for Information Technology, Room 2175
40 St. George Street Toronto, Ontario

"There is no such thing as sustainable agriculture if the people who pick the food can't afford to buy it." This quotation makes it clear that sustainable agriculture is much more than environmentally friendly farming methods – it involves a holistic understanding of all aspects of food production from the farm gate to the consumer's plate. This workshop will focus on food as a catalyst for considering what it means for agriculture to be truly sustainable: how it is grown, harvested, shipped, distributed and eaten. It will feature an introductory overview of the global food system, followed by presentations on such topics as organic agriculture, fair trade, food miles, food security, local food and slow food. This workshop will conclude with participants working together to build a common understanding of sustainable agriculture in an urban context.

Speakers:

- Harriet Friedmann, Department of Sociology, U of Toronto
- Ann Clark, Department of Plant Agriculture, University of Guelph
- Bill Barrett, Marketing Director, Planet Bean Co-operative
- Zahra Parvinian, Produce Manager, FoodShare Toronto
- Wayne Roberts, Project Co-ordinator, Toronto Food Policy Council
- Tony Winson, Department of Sociology, University of Guelph

Workshop Registration Fees

(Includes 1/2 day workshop and Networking lunch)

General Fee: \$75.00 CDN

Students: \$50.00 CDN

Registration web link: <<http://www.apsc.utoronto.ca/pdcweb/asp/courseinfo.asp?CODE=CF734>>

Food Share

working with communities to improve access to affordable healthy food - from field to table

Nutrition Facts:

One can of pop contains 41 grams of sugar. The average teen drinks 2 cans of pop a day. After one month that's 2.3 kg or 5 lbs of sugar!

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recipes

Persian Rhubarb Stew

(you're probably expecting a pie recipe or something :o)

- 1.5 lbs. stew meat (beef, lamb or...)
- 1 lb. rhubarb, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 c. chopped parsley
- 2 T. dried mint
- 1-2 T. tomato paste
- 1 chopped onion
- 1/4-1/2 tspn turmeric
- pinch saffron dissolved in hot water
- 3 T. lemon juice
- salt and pepper to taste

Procedure:

Brown meat and onions. Add 2-3 cups water and tomato paste, turmeric, salt and pepper. Cook one hour. Saute parsley and mint. Add to stew with saffron. Cook another hour. Add lemon juice and rhubarb. Cook until rhubarb is tender but not falling apart. Serve over hot rice. Cooking times are approximate. Meat should be almost falling apart. There should be about 1 to 1-1/2 cups liquid in stew at end of cooking time.



featured this week: Rhubarb

Rhubarb is a perennial plant that grows from thick short rhizomes, comprising the genus *Rheum*. The large, somewhat triangular leaf blades are elevated on long, fleshy petioles. The flowers are small, greenish-white, and borne in large compound leafy inflorescences.

The plant is indigenous to Asia, and many suggest that it was often used by the Mongolians; particularly, the Tatars tribes of the Gobi. Varieties of rhubarb have a long history as medicinal plants in Traditional Chinese Medicine, but the use of rhubarb as food is a relatively recent innovation, first recorded in 17th century England, after affordable sugar became available to common people. Rhubarb is now grown in many areas, primarily for its fleshy stems. In temperate climate rhubarb is one of the first food plants to be ready for harvest, usually in April/May. The stems can be cooked in a variety of ways. Stewed, they yield a tart sauce that can be eaten with sugar or used as filling for pies, tarts, and crumbles. This common use led to the German slang term for rhubarb, *piestengel* or "pie plant." Rhubarb is also used to make wine.

Rhubarb is used as a strong laxative and for its astringent effect on the mucous membranes of the mouth and the nasal cavity. Rhubarb leaves contain a poisonous substance, oxalic acid. While the oxalic acid content of rhubarb leaves can vary, it averages about 0.5%, so a rather unlikely five kilograms of the extremely sour leaves would have to be consumed to reach a lethal dose.

Rheum species have been recorded as larval food plants for some butterflies and moths including Brown-tail, Buff Ermine, Cabbage Moth, Large Yellow Underwing, The Nutmeg, Setaceous Hebrew Character and Turnip Moth.

Arugula Salad with Strawberry Rhubarb Vinaigrette

Dressing:

- 1 C chopped fresh rhubarb
- 1 1/4 C chopped fresh strawberries
- 3 large shallots, coarsely chopped
- 1 T sugar
- 1/3 C red wine vinegar

Simmer in small non-reactive saucepan until tender, about 10 minutes. Puree, strain into large bowl, and cool. Whisk in: 3/4 C canola oil 1/4 teaspoon dijon mustard

Salad:

- 1 bunch arugula 12 whole strawberries 4 oz goat cheese

Sweet 'N Sour Rhubarb And Spinach Salad

- 4 stalks Rhubarb, cut diagonally into thin slices
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 T. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 16-20 spinach leaves
- 6 tbsp. vegetable oil

Place the rhubarb in a wide saucepan. Sprinkle on the sugar and add enough water to cover by 1 inch. Place over high heat and bring to a boil. Cook, uncovered, for exactly 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and pour through a large sieve into a bowl. Return the liquid to the pan. Stir in the vinegar, salt and pepper, and place over high heat. Cook, uncovered, until the mixture is reduced to 1/2 cup. Meanwhile, divide the spinach among 4 salad plates. Arrange the rhubarb over the spinach. When the liquid is reduced, remove the pan from the heat and whisk in the oil. Pour over the salads and serve at once.

- **by any other name...**
- Rhabarber - German
- Ruibarbo - Spanish
- Rhubarbe - French
- Rivas - Iranian
- Rabarbaro - Italian
- Rhubarb - Portuguese

DELIVERIES

for the week of: May 30
orders are due 5 pm Tues. May 23

for the week of June 6
orders are due 5pm Tues. May 30



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