



The Compost

WILLIMANTIC
FOOD
CO•OP

Vol. 31, Number 3

Fall 2009

Co-op Scoop

by Alice Rubin

Is the summer over? Did we have summer? It sure was hard to tell. This has been just about the worst growing season I have ever seen, and since most of our food has to be grown... well, I am a little worried about our food supply. Of course I am sad about the lack of fresh tomatoes in my garden, but stepping back, I see something more. Usually I put up enough of my own tomatoes so that I never buy any canned tomato products. Without my own tomatoes, and few of anyone else's to buy, I will need to buy tomato products at the Coop. This may be true for a lot of us. Now, suddenly, the Coop will have to up our purchase of tomato goods, but will there be enough available at the wholesale level? True, most of our canned tomatoes are not made from ones grown in New England, but I still wonder how this huge crop failure will affect us all. I don't mean to be alarmist about this, and I am not panicking and stock piling, but this year's lack of a major food – tomatoes – emphasizes to me the troubles with our food system. The set up for late blight highlights many of these troubles. For example, large quantities of things grown in one place, in this case tomato seedlings, which are distributed far and wide, spreading this blight. This alone was not enough, and I don't buy into blaming a particular grower as much as a distribution system. Then we had weather, weather that in itself is worrisome in its radical departure from the norm. This cool wet season created the perfect environment for the disease to flourish. Top that picture off with a record number of home gardens having been planted, offering up more hosts for the disease... late blight must think it died and went to heaven. Fortunately for us all, the disease does not survive this climate's winter temperatures, assuming of course that our winter is really winter.

Tomatoes are just one example. Last year wheat was in short supply due to the weather. Prices went up, they went up a lot, and haven't really come back down to where they were. Peanuts were, for a short time, unavailable as the salmonella issue got sorted out. What is next? The Federal Government recently passed HR 2749 The Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009. This legislation contains many stumbling blocks to local food production, favoring large, industrial growers. Next up is S 510 The Food Safety Modernization Act. I don't know much about this one, but I will keep an eye out for more information about it. We all need to be more aware of the impact these types of legislation have on our ability to eat the food that we want to eat. The Coop's website www.WillimanticFood.coop has links to sites that can help us all keep up with these issues. We will also post important legislation that may need our action.

Closer to home, the Coop itself is doing well. We did have a rough ending to 2008, and the very beginning of 2009 was pretty scary, with sales below the previous year's and increased expenses. The second quarter of 2009 has shown an increase in sales, and we cut as many expenses as we possibly could without sacrificing either jobs or our ability to serve our members. We didn't necessarily replace staffing hours when workers left. We cut our advertising a bit. We have

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invested in our business, mostly with an eye toward energy conservation. We installed 7 ceiling fans to maximize our heating, making your shopping (and our working) experience a little less chilly. And we are about to invest in more efficient lighting and fans in our coolers to reduce our electricity use. We will do this through a program with CL&P that will pay for 37% of the cost, and finance the rest with no interest. The pay back time will be 25 months, and in the long run, saves the Coop thousands of dollars. We had a new coffee counter built for us by member owned Walker Woodworking. It is very beautiful and functional. We meant to do something like this when we first moved, but it fell by the wayside amidst all of the other things that we needed to do. That, along with a little paint and some bulletin boards in the entryway, the Coop's first impression, as well as user friendliness, has been stepped up. Our plans for the bulk department are still in the works; we hope to get our expanded bulk department in place this Fall. Our new sale cycle, every 2 weeks instead of monthly just started. It comes with a new sale flier that we hope is easier to read.

As many small businesses are struggling, the Coop is clearly in for the long haul thanks to the support of our member owners, working members, and staff. The more we support all of our locally owned small businesses, the better off we will be in the long run. I can't tell you how much we appreciate your support. 🌱

The Coop Reaches Out with Our Outreach Committee

Have you ever stopped in to shop at the Coop on a Thursday afternoon and been surprised by someone offering you a taste of Lentil Soup or Fennel Salad? Were you at the Coventry Farmers' Market, doing your shopping, and played the Garden Game with your kids at the Coop's tent? Were you one of the people who made a 'carrot' at our Third Thursday tent for the Boom Box Parade? These are just some of the things that wouldn't have happened if our Outreach Committee didn't exist.

I am very grateful for this group of working members who are thinking about the Coop and how to help people learn about the Coop. They also are working toward the Coop providing more educational opportunities. We have had several talks and 'Tours of the Store' with different health care practitioners and hope to have more of them on a regular basis.

This group attends local Health Fairs and other community events, getting the word out about the Coop, what it is, and how people can participate. We are planning even more ways to reach out into the community – our only limit is the person power. If any of this sounds interesting to you, please contact Sarah Keleher at alliswell13@sbcglobal.net. We would love to have more ideas, energy and enthusiasm.



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Denise Chicoine

www.healingpartnersllc.com



Building a Co-operative Economy Together

By Scott Patterson, Equal Exchange

A co-owner of mine recently shared an interesting interaction. A woman came up to her at a co-op event that we were sponsoring and said that she had been a passionate Equal Exchange supporter in our early days, but assumed that after nearly 25 years we had sold out to grow or survive.

Given the current climate of corporate bailouts and the long list of disappointments from Green & Black's, Tom's, Burt's, Kashi, Dagoba, Honest Tea and more, it's easy to arrive at that conclusion. When we shared that Equal Exchange is a worker-owned co-operative and that, like at her food co-op, the values of transparency and democracy are the rules by which we govern - and aren't just pretty words - the landscape shifted.

There is some grey area here; it is, of course, possible for co-ops to be broken, sold or poorly managed. But when done well, the one member, one vote and profit sharing backbone of co-ops protects against greed and promotes ethical entrepreneurialism better than any business model I have seen to date. In the case of Equal Exchange, imagine 91 people who have a genuine financial stake in seeing their work succeed. Our recent jump into bananas exemplifies this spirit.

Last December, the worker-owners at Equal Exchange voted to take on a daunting challenge. The banana industry is totally dominated by Dole, Chiquita and Del Monte. Who in their right mind would try this? But remember we aren't just talking about one company. The origins and success of Fair Trade coffee can almost exclusively be traced to a powerful chain of cooperators. Picture it: small farmers ↔ Equal Exchange ↔ natural foods co-ops around the country ↔ you.

Together, both with international and local farmers, our collective work is one of creating food chains that stand for our values. The beauty of co-ops and these supply chains is that they are transparent; you can get to know something real about the 80 farmers who are growing your bananas. With shared ownership and decision making, when you as a shopper support cooperatively owned companies on the shelves of your store, you are sharing your power and creating authentic change.

Traditionally, October's co-op month has been about celebration, and we have many successes to enjoy. At the same time, we have a lot of work ahead. While we've seen copycats repackage our work and call it things like "direct trade," we do need to reinvigorate and step up our game when Frito Lay and Wal-Mart tout their "relationships" with farmers. No wonder most shoppers are skeptical, (con't)

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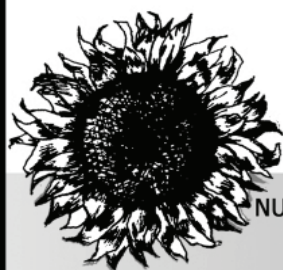
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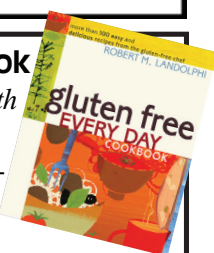
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Gluten Free Every Day Cookbook

Book signing, Recipes and questions with
Chef Robert Landolphi

Flavor does not have to be compromised in gluten-free recipes, and chef Robert Landolphi shows how in his new book titled *Gluten Free Every Day Cookbook*. Rob's recipes may be gluten free, but they are so good that no one will miss the wheat. Rob is a gluten-free chef and a graduate of Johnson and Wales University culinary school. He is currently a certified culinary arts instructor and the manager of culinary development at the University of Connecticut.

At the Co-op on Tuesday, October 20th, 6:30 pm.



Bulk News

by Jon Campo

Hello fellow Co-ops, Happy Fall and congratulation on surviving some of the worst summer weather in recent memory. This will be the first in a series of columns featuring different bulk foods that we sell here at the co-op. Walnuts are the single most popular item in our bulk department, specifically, organic walnuts. Romans considered the walnut tree to be of Persian origin, but the opinions differ and their origins are unclear. What is known is that the largest walnut grove in the world is in Iran, where they are enjoyed fresh as well as dried. Ancient Greeks pressed the nuts for their oil, so think about that the next time you are mixing up a walnut vinaigrette for your composed salad. The first walnuts were probably introduced to California by Franciscans around 1770 and first planted commercially around 1869. This is where most of the domestic supply comes from and a good deal of the world supply also. Our organic walnuts are supplied by Tierra Farm who buys them exclusively from Lake Country Walnuts just north of the Napa Valley. There is a real difference in quality of these nuts compared to what we previously carried. Many walnuts contain 20%-60% halves and the rest pieces, ours average 85%-90% halves. Tierra is either the only

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or one of the very few commercial suppliers of these nuts on the East Coast. Notice the light color, thin skin, and aroma, as opposed to the bitter tasting, dark, thicker skin on most store-bought walnuts. Remember that walnuts should always be stored in the either the refrigerator or the freezer. Besides their familiar role as supporting actors in baked goods and desserts, they take well to starring roles in salads and entrees. A light toasting improves their flavor in such dishes. They make a great alternative to pine nuts in pesto sauce. (especially now that pine nuts are almost twenty dollars a pound.) As a cool climate nut, they also apparently contain some type of good fat that my doctor approves of, as opposed to, say, warm climate nuts and prosciutto. I rounded up a few of my favorite walnut recipes for this newsletter, but did not include one for pesto because it seems like most people have a favorite recipe of their own. If there is any interest, I may post one on the website, or you can just come in the store and ask.

In other bulk news, due to all the weird weather this summer, we will be seeing some crop shortages. The bean crop in New England was a total loss from all the rain, so there will be no local beans like yellow eye or soldier beans or Jacobs Cattle beans. I have stockpiled a large amount of last years crop so we do have some for now, so get 'em while you can. At the other end of the spectrum, expect shortages and higher prices on lentils and flax seeds due to drought. The F.D.A. has recalled most raw tahini, so we will not have any bulk raw tahini for awhile. The bulk raw tahini that we used to sell was coming in out of date, and now can't be had at all. We got another brand from the West coast, but some folks didn't care for it, so I discontinued it. After much scrounging, I located some in jars from Santa Cruz, California that is organic and low temp ground. I think it's delicious, and I hope you like it. We also have some new polenta from Anson mills in South Carolina that I love. It's a little pricey, but if you try it I bet you'll be hooked. I'm looking forward to enjoying it with some local mushrooms this fall. I hear this is a great year for mushrooms. More about Anson Mills and what makes their heirloom,unhybridized offerings so delicious next time.



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Design and development by WilliWebWorks.com

Celery- Apple Salad with Currants and Walnuts

This is adapted from "The Savory Way" by Deborah Madison, Bantam Books 1990. If you don't own this book, you should buy a copy immediately. It is always in my kitchen. Loads of inspired vegetable recipes.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1/2 cup currants | 1 head celery |
| 2 Golden Delicious or other early apples | |
| 5-6 pale green leaves from the heart of the celery | |
| 4 parsley branches | |
| 1/4 pound walnuts, left in large pieces | |
| 2 Tablespoons walnut oil | |

lemon juice or Champagne vinegar

salt and freshly ground black pepper

Separate the stalks of celery and peel the tougher outer stalks. Slice the celery into thin pieces, straight across or at an angle. Cut the apples into sixths and thinly slice them crosswise. Finely chop the celery leaves and the parsley. Toast the walnuts in the oven or a toaster oven, and let them cool.

Combine the celery, apples, currants, celery leaves, parsley, and walnuts in a bowl. Toss them with just enough walnut oil to coat everything lightly. Add the lemon juice or vinegar to taste, salt lightly, season with pepper, and toss again. (This looks great served on glass plates.)

Winchester Nut Bread

Adapted from the Fannie Farmer Cookbook, Revised and edited by Marion Cunningham, 1979. This makes two nice loaves and would be a great house present or could be frozen.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup brown sugar | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 1/2 cup grade B maple syrup | 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder |
| 3/4 cup raw milk | 3/4 teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 cup white pastry flour | 1 egg |
| 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour | |

1 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped

Preheat the oven to 275F. Grease two loaf pans. Put the brown sugar in a large bowl, and beat in the egg and 1/2 cup cold water. Stir in the syrup and milk. In another bowl, measure the flours, salt, baking powder, and baking soda, and mix well. Stir in the walnuts. Add the dry ingredients to wet mixture and stir until just blended. Do not over mix. Spoon into the pans and bake two hours. This is not a mis-print. No peeking. Remove from oven and let sit 10 minutes, then turn out loaves onto a cooling rack until cool, then wrap. While this recipe looks like a big time commitment, it goes together really fast, and note that most of the time is unsupervised baking.

Co-op Price Comparison

by Alice Rubin

The cost of food is a very interesting thing. Many factors go into the price of an item, few of which seem to be directly linked to the actual food involved. Whatever the reason, food is a large part of most household budgets, and price is important. So we have done a Market Basket type price comparison with our prices and those at Stop & Shop and Big Y.

A comparison with 2 major supermarkets is not an easy thing to do as we carry fairly different products. Included are 25 products that we all carried in common, a little bit from each category (produce, spices, cereal etc.) to give a price to a 'typical' shopping trip.

We are not the cheapest place in town to shop. We knew that. I was a bit dismayed at how much less the same products cost at Stop & Shop in particular (see Kashi Cereal) but I know that has to do more with volume and supplier chain. The larger the chain store is the more of a product they can buy at one time. I bet you anything that they buy Kashi Cereal by the tractor trailer load, we buy a single case at a time. Though in the end that doesn't matter to the person on a budget.

This price comparison is a valuable exercise for us, a reality check if you will. As much as it shows me about our pricing, it also shows me just how different our product line is. I think the reason to shop at the Co-op is our product line and not necessarily our prices. If buying local produce, raw milk, local honey, local maple syrup, local eggs – ok, anything produced small scale and locally – is important to you, you can't shop at Stop & Shop or Big Y – they can't carry those products. Almost the same can be said for Organic Produce – their supply, quality and price cannot compete with the Coop's – and this is shown in the Market Basket Comparison by how few items we all carried to compare.

I won't even begin to add the value contained in our ownership structure, or our participation in our community to this price comparison – that is another set of reasons to

shop at the Food Coop.

Part of me would like to do a comparison with other Natural Food stores – like Whole Foods. But it doesn't make sense in many ways. The Food Coop is here to serve this community, so this price comparison with other grocery stores in our town seemed like the right thing. 🌱

		Stop & Shop	Big Y	Coop
Avocado	Conv/ea	\$2.00	\$1.28	\$1.89
Bananas	Conv/lb	\$0.59	\$0.79	\$0.85
Lemons	Conv/ea	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.95
Lettuce, Iceberg	Conv/ea	\$0.88	\$1.49	\$1.55
Orange, Navel	Conv/ea	\$0.90	\$1.49	\$0.59
Pepper, Green	Conv/lb	\$1.49	\$0.98	\$1.69
Pepper, Red	Conv/lb	\$1.99	\$3.99	\$2.35
Potatoes, Russet	Conv/lb	\$0.99	\$1.29	\$0.59
Tomatoes	Conv/lb	\$1.49	\$2.99	\$2.25
Apple, Gala	Organic/lb	\$1.99	\$2.29	\$2.25
Bananas	Organic/lb	\$0.99	\$1.69	\$0.95
Cauliflower	Organic/ea	\$3.49	\$3.99	\$3.95
Celery	Organic/ea	\$2.99	\$2.49	\$1.75
Green Mountain Gringo Salsa	16 oz	\$3.79	\$4.79	\$5.19
Short Grain Brown Rice	32 oz	\$3.99	\$5.49	\$2.70
Organic Canned Beans	15.5 oz	\$1.00	\$1.36	\$1.29
Kashi Strawberry Fields Cereal	10.4 oz	\$3.99	\$4.49	\$6.19
King Arthur Flour	5 lb	\$4.49	\$4.69	\$7.49
Madhava Agave Nectar	11.75 oz	\$3.99	\$4.39	\$4.19
Earth Balance Butter	15 oz	\$3.69	\$3.99	\$4.55
Cabot Extra Sharp Cheddar	8 oz	\$3.19	\$3.57	\$4.75
Tom's Toothpaste	6 oz	\$4.49	\$4.55	\$5.45
Cinnamon	1 oz	\$1.26	\$1.03	\$0.60
Basil	1 oz	\$4.01	\$2.80	\$1.09
Coffee - French Roast	1 lb	\$8.49	\$7.99	\$8.29
		\$66.67	\$74.40	\$73.39

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HABA Talk

by Cari

Welcome to the health and beauty corner. As most of you know, I took over the position of HABA buyer a few months ago when Amy moved. Since then, I have been doing a bit of updating and rearranging of products. I know it can be hard to find things, so please don't hesitate to ask me (Cari) or another employee for help. I have gotten quite a few new products in. Here are a few:

Amazing Grass Organic Wheat Grass Powder and Tablets are a high quality alternative to juicing wheatgrass. Gaia Green Tea Extract and Acai Caps are powerful antioxidants that many members have requested we carry. Gaia's Reflux Relief Caps have been a good seller so far. Also by Gaia: Willow Bark, Skullcap and Black Walnut Tinctures.

I have brought in a new facial care line from Humphrey's in East Hampton, CT. The name may sound familiar; we have carried their Witch Hazel forever. We now also have good, old fashioned Hydrogen Peroxide and Epsom Salts.

Be sure to check out the Alaffia display across from the shampoo. Alaffia is a worker owned cooperative in Togo, West Africa that is made up of over 300 women who handcraft all of the base butters and oils for Alaffia face and body care products. I had the opportunity to meet the founder of this cooperative, who wanted to help create economic opportunity for his mother, and women like her, in Togo. Alaffia collects various things to send to Africa to help the children and villages of the women in the cooperative. Here at the Coop, we are collecting glasses (sunglasses, too) to send to children who need them. Thanks so much to everyone who has already donated glasses to the cause! As soon as the box is full, I'll be sending them out. This is an amazing company!

Alaffia uses Shea butter in most of their products. Shea butter comes from the nut of the Shea tree, which is indigenous to West and Central Africa. It is protective, soothing and moisturizing to the skin. It is commonly used for the following: wrinkles, dry skin, psoriasis, hair care, stretch marks, burns, chapped lips, sun damage, small wounds and scrapes, diaper rash (prevention and relief), insect bites and stings, muscle fatigue, pets (skin infections, dry skin & coat). Give their testers a try. I think you'll love 'em. We also have shampoo, conditioner and lotion in bulk from them.

Thanks for reading and please share your product wishes with me! 🌿





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