



What's Fresh

Buy Fresh Buy Local of the Quad Cities

Volume 2, #2 February 2010

"A newsletter to connect local growers and consumers"

Member Spotlight

Full Circle Soap

This month's featured vendor is Darcy Rostenbach of Full Circle Soap. Darcy began soap making in 1993 and soon, her "hobby" out-grew her house and into a successful market-based business. Inspired by her grandmother's garden, Darcy creates soap that reflect her passion for hand-made goodness..... whether in her own kitchen or in her soap studio. Chocolate scents are reminiscent of a red velvet cake while the lavender for her Goat Milk Swirl comes from her sister's garden. Darcy is the "Local" in "Buy Fresh-Buy Local". Her tallowate comes from local beef producers such as *Geest Family Farms* and *Grossman's Meat*. *The Mad Farmers* supply greens that go into Salad Bar soap and Hope Farms supply the chamomile for Calming Chamomile soap. Other herbs come from *Allens Grove Greenhouse* and *Wolf Gardens*. And *Farmer Ken* raises the strawberries for her Strawberry Soap Even though she does have wholesale accounts, Darcy loves the personal interaction that she gets from her market customers. Custom orders are an excuse to let her enthusiastic creativity flow! Its that dedication to local farmers and her customers that has made Full Circle Soap such an integral part of the Freight House Farmers Market.



Seeds

by Myra Roelens

Things to be doing in February: organizing your garden beds and tools, ordering/starting seeds and pruning your fruit trees. The ground may still be frozen but the season is already beginning! Seeds are the most wonderful things on this planet! Each tiny or large seed grows into life!. If you get a pack of 30 tomato seeds don't feel like you have to grow all of them! Many gardeners do not realize how much one plant can produce! Tomato seeds usually stay viable for up to five years if stored in a sealed container, away from moisture and light. Parsnips and lettuce have the shortest seed life. Of course this goes as always, if you grow an heirloom with no hybrids close by, save your seeds! They are free the second year and they are what you created, saved, and replanted. Cool. Within days most seeds will sprout under proper conditions. Well drained, moist soil with light waterings and sun after sprouting is required to sustain life of vegetable plants. The smaller the seed, the less soil they need covering them. Vice-versa with large seeds, they need to be planted in deeper soil. Usually never past an inch, and that's a peas, beans and corn; those don't transplant well. If you have any questions just ask a grower at market about how they grow. Each individual finds their own way to do things, as in life. They are many things to do organically like use egg shells around tomatoes, peppers and eggplants especially. Compost other things from the kitchen like coffee grounds, bananas, potato peels and any other degradable rubbish. What we take from the Earth we should try our best to replace it!

~You can find Myra Roelens of Hope Farm Produce on Facebook, In May they will be at The Freight House Farmer's Market in Downtown Davenport

Buy Fresh Buy Local Newsletter

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Expanding? In need of a Certified Kitchen

Expanding your product line? In need of a certified kitchen? Tom Swanson from River Music Experience has a certified commercial kitchen in downtown Davenport and is looking to put it to use. Give him a call at (563)326-1333 ext 102. If you have any questions about when you need a certified kitchen you can call Karen at the Scott County Health Department at (563)326-8618 ext 8810.

They're Here! Seed Catalogs

Wether you were chomping at the bit for them to arrive, consider them just more junk mail or (as our own Cathy Lafrenz) call them "farmer porn" the seed catalogs have arrived. Haven't received yours? Go online and order them, or just use their online websites to order your seeds direct. If you aren't a subscriber to any garden catalogs yet, join a mailing list. There are many seed companies out there. Some favorites for home gardeners would be Gurney's, Johnny's, Harris, Willhite and Park. They are all very good, reliable companies that we've had success with in the past. Johnny's offers many organic and heirloom seeds at reasonable prices. It should take a week or so to get your seed order.



Go Green

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www.bfblqc.org

Pruning - Get out there!

by Myra Roelens

Right now is the perfect time to prune your fruit trees! Yes, it's cold outside but doing it now is best because you will get the over-growth before the tree's sap starts to flow again, which can make a wound, invite pests you don't want and it gets harder to cut the wood if it is 'green'. Tools needed: Hand saw and 2" diameter cutters. If you have a tree that is 30' tall, that hasn't been pruned in 20 years, you are going to need some professional help! We prune every year and every year our Red Delicious grows an afro, the pear trees look like they are stretching to space and the peaches grow back everything we cut off then some! They all need yearly cuttings. If you shopped with us in our beginning years we had 2" around apples, last year we had the biggest apples ever! Some where as big as softballs! Pruning makes a difference, no drought helps too! Check to see what new growth you may want to leave, most has to get clipped. A good rule of thumb is every bud should get it's own light. How much do you have to trim, a lot! I think of it as taking your play-dough barber set out filling the head up and squishing it all out and using a knife cut all the hair off. It is traumatic but necessary to produce the best crop. When deciding where to cut. If last year the branch was hanging on the ground, it has to go. All the way to the trunk of the tree, usually, cut it all off with hand saw. It is scary but you will be delighted by what you receive, if we don't get a late frost. Now after cutting all the drooping branches look up, there will be red wood everywhere, that is your new growth. If it is pointing towards space, growing on the top of the main branch and has grown 2-4' long, cut it off with the 2" clippers. The main branches can be cut up into smaller chunks and used as grilling wood for the rest of the year. The young green wood we like to leave around the trees until the grass starts to grow for any rabbits or deer that may need some food and can smell the fruit trees. We have found that by doing this they are less likely to eat on the trees themselves. Happy seed hunting, planting and pruning!

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