



What's Fresh

Buy Fresh Buy Local of the Quad Cities

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"A newsletter to connect local growers and consumers"

Local Food Initiative Summit

Plans are well under way for the local foods initiative summit to be held at Augustana College Saturday September 26th. This conference will be held in conjunction with the Earth Charter Summit and promote and expand the awareness of how important it is to eat and shop locally to both our health and the health of our local economy. The Local Foods Initiative meets once a month on the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm at the Unitarian Church in Davenport. If you are interested in joining the Local Foods Initiative or one of its committees please contact Rachel Griffiths rgriffiths@qconline.com 309-721-3204.

Thumbs Up!

This month our thumbs up goes to Davenport One for graciously volunteering to handle the Buy Fresh Buy Local checkbook. Previously this was handled by the Scott County Extension Office.



Grower Spotlight

Hope Farm Produce

Beth and Myra Roelens, a mother-daughter team, love to grow produce for people. Beth has been a home gardener for over 20 years! They have been a part of Buy Fresh Buy Local since its birth in the QCA. They focus on growing as many varieties as they can and as naturally as possible. Some varieties include: Asian vegetables, lettuce, spinach, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cabbage, broccoli and so many others! They do get occasional help from the 'other halves' but mostly it's from their hands to your table. When you taste anything grown locally and picked less than 12 hours ago, you will know fresh! They sell at the Freight House Farmer's Market in Downtown Davenport every Saturday May-Oct, 8-1 pm.



Did You Know?

Most fruit and vegetable varieties sold in supermarkets are chosen for their ability to withstand industrial harvesting equipment and extended travel ... not taste.

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Featured Market

Urban market is our featured market this month. One of the newest farmers markets. It is located at the Quad Cities Botanical Center in Rock Island. It is held Thursdays from 4 until 8PM. You can get more information at www.qcgardens.com or call (309)794-0991. The Quad City Botanical Center is located at 2525 4th Ave, Rock Island, IL



Sustainable Agriculture Sawyer Beef

Although Sawyer Farms has been raising beef cattle for years, they are investing more of their effort into rotational grazing. Separating pastures into small paddocks and moving cattle nearly every day into a different section gives the grasses more time to grow and develop more leaves. By allowing the plants to rest for long periods of time, the root systems begin to develop more. A better root system means more tolerance to drought conditions and better absorption of water in general. Under continuous grazing some plants cannot survive. The cattle's hooves wear down the stems of certain plants and the plant cannot grow back. Rotational grazing helps prevent erosion and ensures many more generations of Sawyers will be able to continue with the methods Neal and his father have started.



Technology Focus

“What's being said about your company?”

Growers today must focus not only on working hard but  they must work smart. Gone are the days when you could spend long hard days in the field and know your job was done when the sun went down. Working smart has become almost as important as working hard. Computers have become an essential farm tool. For the producer that sells directly to the consumer it is vital to know what is being said about your and your company. Google.com has come to the rescue with a beta version of there new system called Google Alerts. It allows you to enter search terms (such as your company name) into their system and get emails of any articles online that contain your selected terms. Do you want to know what is being said about your company? You should. Check out www.google.com/alerts to see if this free tool can be of use to you.

News Articles

Do you have something that might be helpful to other growers or of interest to our consumers? Please submit your articles and ideas to Phil Crandall or Myra Roelens. Mail to:

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Fresh Strawberry Vanilla Mini Muffins

- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- Scrapings of 1 vanilla bean, 2 teaspoons vanilla paste, or 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 3 cups cake flour (stir before scooping and measuring)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup fresh strawberries, slightly mashed



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and generously spray a 48-cup mini muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray (or use paper liners) or 14-16 regular muffins cups. Place on the prepared baking sheet.

In a medium bowl, combine cake flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

In a mixer, cream the butter and sugar until well blended. If using vanilla bean, cream the scrapings of the bean in with butter. (Slice the vanilla bean in half lengthwise and use a small knife to scrape out the beans.)

Blend in eggs and vanilla. Gradually add dry ingredients alternately with milk, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Scrape down the bowl often to make sure all is evenly incorporated. If you didn't use a vanilla bean, fold in the vanilla paste at this point. Gently fold in mashed strawberries.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin tins, filling each 1/2 full for mini muffins and 3/4 full for larger muffins. Bake until lightly golden brown, 17-20 minutes for little muffins, 20-24 minutes for larger ones, or until muffins spring back when lightly pressed with fingertips.

Notes:

Be sure not to overfill the muffin tins, especially with the mini muffins. The tins will look too empty before baking, but the muffins puff up a lot in the oven.

These muffins are easy to modify...try adding melted chocolate, instant coffee or espresso powder, mashed banana, coconut, or any combination of fresh or dried fruit, nuts, or candy chips.

This month's recipe is brought to you by Emily Oman. Emily is a student at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. Emily also volunteered to fill the slot of BFBL food editor until she leaves in the fall to return to school. You can find Emily this Summer helping out Oak Hill Farms inside the Freight House Market on Saturdays. If you have your own recipe of how you use local foods, contact Emily at (715) 587-3140.