



WHAT'S FRESH

A NEWSLETTER TO CONNECT LOCAL GROWERS AND CONSUMERS

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Master Food Preserver Training

University of Illinois Extension, Rock Island County will provide a Master Food Preserver intensive five-day training program designed to teach participants the basics of safe home food preservation techniques. The training will take from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm on July 12 - 16, 2010 at 321 West 2nd Ave., Milan, IL. After completing the five-day training



and scoring a satisfactory grade on the take-home examination, participants will receive Master Food Preserver certification. Go to <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/rockisland/> or call (309)756-9978 for more information.



Ever want *really* fresh eggs? We will be discussing raising chickens in your backyard. Learn about different breeds, where and how to buy chicks, different types of coops and egg safety. Wear your garden clothes as we will be handling chicks and mature hens. We will also be going over city ordinances about raising hens. Instructor: Cathy LaFrenz. Tuesday, July 13th from 6:30 to 7:30pm. Meet in the VanderVeer Botanical Center Stone Building. Class fee is \$12. For more information call Paula

CHICKENS IN YOUR BACKYARD

Witt 563.323.3298. Register for classes through Scott Community College. Call 563.441.4100

From Rhonda's Garden

Hello from Rhonda LeMar-James at Rhonda's Garden. Wanted to let everyone know that my strawberries are berried-out! I think the last heavy rain was the finale. I have also noticed that the Japanese Beetles have arrived. I squashed 6 last night, only to find 20 had replaced them this morning. They love the heat and humidity so whatever you do to avenge your garden from them, it is time to put it into action! I walk through my berry patch early am and at dusk and knock them into a bucket of soapy water.

I also wanted to share the joys of my gourd acreage. I have about 500 gourd plants growing currently. Some of those may succumb to the cucumber beetles, but I have a few to spare. I have decided to add a bit more nitrogen this week as the excess rain may have flushed all my fertilizer. The gourds are start-

ing to set their male vine now. The first vine that grows produces male flowers; the vines that follow produce the female flowers. I will add some potash once I am satisfied with the number and length of female vines. The potash assists in shell development. If any of you are gourd artists, you know that the thicker the shell, the more possibilities the gourd offers to the artist. Hard shell gourds only flower at night. The flower is at its prime the first night it opens. I intend to hand pollinate a few of my favorites this year. I will present another short summary of my "midnight pollinating" adventures in a few weeks! If any of you would like to try hand pollinating your hard shell gourds and are not sure how to go about it, please contact me at rhondasgarden@netins.net and I will be happy to share what I know.





VENDOR OF THE MONTH

The Mad Farmers' Garden

Inspired by Wendell Berry's *Mad Farmer Manifest*, Ian Forslund started his own farm ... The Mad Farmers' Garden. A popular vendor at the Freight House Farmers Market, Ian has a love for good food. The vegetable garden on their farm got bigger and bigger until he had to start selling at market. His garden is full of fresh greens and the kitchen is filled with homemade bread and baked goods. During the winter market, you will often see Ian knitting hats and sweaters.... sometimes with yarn that he has dyed with items from nature. Ian and Hannah also raise goats that they milk for their own use. An accomplished cheese maker, Ian will readily share his knowledge with others since it's that quest for knowledge that drives the Mad Farmers. Currently they are learning all they can about seed saving, selection and breeding, food preservation, and winter growing without heat. Keep up with their activities by following Mad Farmer's Garden on Facebook.

Mad Farmers' Garden
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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.

Buy Fresh Buy Local
%Phil Crandall
P.O. Box 4512
Rock Island, IL 61201

GO GREEN

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BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL NEWSLETTER

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INTERNEED

My Journey to Miss Effie's Farm

BY EMILY OMAN

Midway through my second semester at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, I finally picked a course of study: a botany major with an ethnobotany¹ minor. While reading up on the course requirements for my selected path, I came across "Biology 399: Fieldwork in Ethnobotany." I had no idea where to find an opportunity for that type of fieldwork, so figuring I'd work it out later, I put away the course catalog and finished out the school year.

A couple of months later, I moved to Davenport to live with my sister for the summer. She brought me to a Buy Fresh Buy Local meeting soon after I arrived. In the car on the way to the meeting, she started telling me about one of the board members, Cathy Lafrenz. "You'll love her, Em," she said. "She has a U-pick flower farm! And she bakes and cans all the time."

I'd like to say the words "flower farm, bake, and can" immediately made me think "Ooh! What an amazing ethnobotany opportunity!" But that thought didn't occur to me until months later, when I was already back at school. And even then, it took a call from my sister for things to finally click. "Cathy wants you to intern on her farm this summer," she told me. My first thought was "Holycrap holycrap holycrap...am I dreaming?" My second thought was less of a thought than an internal squeal of delight. My third thought was a little more grounded: "Hmm...I wonder if I can get that fieldwork credit for this?" Working on a flower farm and using those flowers and homegrown herbs in canned and baked creations is exactly what ethnobotany is all about. I think I actually made my advisor jealous when I outlined the terms of my project to her. Needless to say, she signed off, and, officially enrolled in Biology 399, I set out for my second summer in Davenport.

I've been working at Cathy's farm, Miss Effie's Country Flowers and Garden Stuff, for three weeks now. I can, I weed, I mulch, I dry herbs...mostly, I try to be helpful (sometimes I am, sometimes I'm not: in my second week, I burned a batch of strawberry jam so badly that the pot had to be boiled with baking soda several times just to remove the unyielding black residue clinging to it). My fingernails are now short and usually harbor a little Iowa farm dirt underneath. I have a ridiculous farmer's tan. I am trying (with only moderate success) to overcome my fear of the spiders that proliferate in Miss Effie's gardens. Every day, I think I can't possibly see a bigger dandelion, and every day I am proven wrong. And the job has certainly given me a new respect for the whims of Iowa weather: I grew up on the border of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan—we don't get this kind of rain (or heat) there! Every time one of those sudden downpours hits, I worry about the flowers—will they survive this one?

But the trials and tribulations of a flower farm intern are minute compared to the joy such a unique opportunity brings. Every day I'm amazed that I get college credit to wander a couple acres of beautiful flower beds...sure, I pull a weed here and there, but really, weeding is therapeutic, an opportunity to connect with nature and with yourself. I love seeing customers come to marvel at the blooms, filling milk jugs with all manner of flowers. And I love the days I get to be in the kitchen, canning up jams, jellies, and syrups. I can't wait to start baking for the under-construction retail shop at Miss Effie's, the Summer Kitchen. In short, I feel truly blessed; there has not been and probably will not be a class I enjoy more than Bio 399: Fieldwork at Miss Effie's Farm.

¹ Ethnobotany is a discipline within the field of anthropology; specifically, it is the anthropology of plants—how people use and have used plants throughout history.



PODCAST

Local Foods



Let the University of Illinois and the county extension offices keep you informed on local food subjects by listening to podcasts. Download them to your iPod and keep informed while on the go. Visit them at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/podcasts/localfoods/>

MARKET MASTER The Freight House Farmers Market has a new Market Master, Joshua Schipp. An Augie grad, Joshua has a major in Political Science and a Art history minor, although environmental studies interest him more than any other. Raised in McHenry, Illinois he now calls Rock Island home where he constructed a 20 x 25 ft garden plot complete with rain garden. Joshua usually spends at least half his FH income at the market. Next time you see Joshua be sure and congratulate him on his new job!



COOKING

Fig and Raspberry Cake

Adapted from *Sweet Food: 200 Delicious Treats to Cure any Craving*

¾ cup unsalted butter
 ¾ cup sugar
 1 egg
 1 egg yolk
 2 ⅔ cups all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 Pinch salt
 4 figs, quartered (dried figs can be used here, just plump them in a little hot water for about 15 minutes before drying and proceeding with the recipe)
 Grated zest of 1 orange
 1 ⅔ cups raspberries
 2 tablespoons coarse sugar

Preheat the oven to 350°. Cream the butter and sugar in a bowl until fluffy. Add the egg and yolk and beat until well mixed. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Gently fold into creamed mixture. Chill until firm enough to roll out, at least 15 minutes.

Lightly grease a 9" springform pan. Divide the dough into two pieces and roll out one piece large enough to fit the bottom of the pan. Cover with the figs, orange zest,



and raspberries. Roll out the remaining

dough with a little water and sprinkle with coarse sugar.

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