

Roots & Sprouts

News and Ideas from the Belmont Farmers' Market

summer 2011

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org



*June 9th through
October 27th –
rain or shine!*

**Thursday afternoons
1:30 to 7:00 pm
Belmont Center parking lot**

in this issue . . .

Gardening in raised beds
SNAP program at the Market
Food ideas for picky eaters
Roasted cauliflower and crispy leeks

Gardening Raised to Another Level

*Improve your harvest and have more fun by
raising your beds and thinking in squares*

As the weather warms, residents may notice that Belmont is increasingly becoming a town of vegetable gardeners. Along with the community garden at Rock Meadow, which has a long waiting list each year, more and more families are taking to growing vegetables in their own yards. For those who may have thought about joining this trend but were unsure where to start, or for those whose yards seem unsuitable, there may be a perfect solution: raised beds.

Belmont resident Suzanne Johannet describes how she started growing vegetables in her yard in the 1980s: "I had to dig very deeply to produce light, loose soil and enrich the soil at this deep level, all of which was a great deal of work." But a few years ago, Rose Cherneff, then a student at Belmont High School, introduced Suzanne to raised bed gardening and reduced her workload enormously without depleting productivity.

Rose's experience with raised beds came from her work with The Food Project, a non-profit farm education program in Lincoln. Part of her tenure there involved building raised bed gardens for residents of Roxbury. Drawing on this experience, she started her own business—constructing the raised bed frames, bringing in the soil, and giving advice to about 15 clients.

Why Raised Beds?

With a raised bed, you can turn any sunny area into a garden. The bed can be placed in an area which may otherwise be too rocky or unsuitable for digging. You can use the best possible soil, which you add after construc-

tion. In future seasons the soil does not have to be turned, as nutrients can be worked into the top layer.

Raised gardens are made no bigger than 4 feet wide so that you can reach across to plant and weed, without stepping into the soil. The soil therefore remains loose, rather than becoming compacted, allowing plenty of space for roots to grow and better drainage. Raised beds warm faster in the spring so planting can begin earlier and, because they are raised, they are easier to reach comfortably for those with back problems or other physical difficulties.

Planting by the Square Foot

Rose recommends applying another technique to the raised bed, called square foot gardening, which she also learned at The Food Project. Advocated by author and gardener Mel Bartholomew in his book *Square Foot Gardening*, this method, he says, is "more efficient, more manageable and less work."

Rather than traditional rows, the garden is set up in a series of squares, each one a square foot. Plantings are a set distance apart in all directions according to the recommended distance for each plant, its type, variety, and expected size. As a result, the garden can be planted more intensively, producing more per square foot than a traditional garden. If plants are likely to be large, such as broccoli, one is placed in the center of the square and if small, such as beets, 16 are placed in each square. Vines, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, squash,

(continued on page 4)

SNAP Comes to the Market

Broadening shopping options for families in need

When the Belmont Farmers' Market (BFM) opens this season, it will participate for the first time in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the current name for the federal food stamps program. From its inception, one of the BFM's goals has been to provide fresh, local food directly from farmers and producers. With its recent incorporation as a non-profit called the Belmont Food Collaborative, one of the next steps is to provide incentives for families who participate in SNAP to shop at the Market.

The mission of the Belmont Food Collaborative is to promote the good health of the citizens of Belmont and surrounding communities and to enhance the quality of life in the area by providing education and information about healthy, active lifestyle choices to people of all ages, abilities and means; by increasing the availability of fresh, locally produced foods within walking or bicycling distance; by helping people in need to obtain fresh, healthy foods; and by promoting and supporting local, sustainable agriculture and home vegetable gardening.

The number of SNAP recipients in Belmont in recent years may come as a surprise. As a result of an escalating unemployment rate and the economic downturn, many families are hard-pressed to afford food. According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor

and Workplace Development, in March of 2011 Belmont had an unemployment rate of 4.5%, or 572 people. From January 2008 to December 2010 (the most recent numbers available), the number of SNAP recipients in

In the last three years, the number of SNAP recipients in Belmont more than doubled – from 348 to 724

Belmont had more than doubled, from 348 to 724 individuals, a number that would almost fill the approximately 850 seats in Belmont High School's auditorium.

The same economic forces have affected neighboring communities. Some of Belmont's neighbors are likely to shop at the BFM, specifically residents of Watertown, which does not have a farmers' market, and Arlington, whose market does not yet accept SNAP payment. Watertown currently has 1,849 SNAP recipients, up from 934 three years ago, while Arlington has 1,592 recipients, up from 746 over the same period.

In late April of this year, the Belmont Food Collaborative submitted a proposal to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) for a \$2,000 grant to enhance our participation in SNAP. If the BFM receives the grant funds, they will be used to provide supplemental resources for SNAP recipients to purchase fresh and healthful bread, fruit, vegetables, meat, and poultry from the Farmers' Market. The BFM may be able to match SNAP dollars up to a maximum of \$25 per day, allowing program participants to double the amount of groceries they are able to purchase.

SNAP accounts may be used by stopping at the blue information tent where the market manager will initiate the electronic transfer. Shoppers will receive coupons and can then visit individual vendors to make purchases using these coupon cards.

— Laurie Levy, with special thanks to Suzanne Johannet and Anne Stuart



Belmont Food Collaborative Board of Directors

Kim Foster	Paul Santos
Suzanne Johannet	Hal Shubin
Laurie Levy	Vicky Slavin
Evanthia Malliris	Anne Stuart
Cate McGrail	Joan Teebagy
Becky Prior	Heli Tomford

BFC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

2011 Volunteers

Kelly Adams	John & Dorothy Herzog
Jennifer Angel	Dee Ippen
Libby Atkins	Julie Kirrane
Abigail Bala	Trey Klein
Henry & Sue Bass	Anna Kleinschmit-Kubasek
John Beaty	Miriam Lapson
Toni Beckwith	Anne Lougee
Ken & Nicole Bernstein	Arvy Mackevicius
Faye Blazer	Anne Mahon
Patricia Brodigan	Susan Marsh
Sumner Brown	Kathy Martin
Jan Cannon	Gretchen McClain
Ann Celi	Judy McSwain
Liliane Chaglassian	David Mitchell
Lorenzo Cosmo-Tourreilles	Katie Moustakas
Paolo Cosmo-Tourreilles	Tom Neal
Judy Cotton	Anne Paulsen
Sara Cummins	Steve Pinkerton
Catherine Curro	Mary Ries
Sandra Curro	Argelis Roman
Debra Deutsch	Aram Salzman
Debbie Dobbins	Jane Sherwin
Tom Dorsey	Anne Smith
Chris Drover	Lucia Sullivan
Naomi Ellenberg-Dukas	Deb Theodore
Ed Farrington	Victoria Thatcher
Janice Frishkopf	Bill Tomford
Liz Gourley	Denise Uman
Pam Young Heald	Pam Young

The Market is a member of the Belmont Center Business Association.



Volume 6, Issue 2

Roots & Sprouts is a publication of the Belmont Food Collaborative, Inc.
PO Box 387
Belmont, MA 02478

belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Editors: Jennifer Angel and Judy Cotton
Designer: Dee Ippen
Logo designer: Trey Klein
Printer: Belmont Printing Co.

Printed on recycled paper

2011 Vendors

- **Bee-Cause Apiaries** local honey and hand-made beeswax candles
- **ButterGirl Baking Co.** fresh baked treats made with a whole lotta luv
- **Coastal Vineyards** of South Dartmouth
- **Coutts Specialty Foods** jams, jellies, applesauce, relishes
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** vegetables, fruits, and plants
- **The Farm School** organic vegetables, fruits, flowers, eggs, grass-fed meat
- **Fior d'Italia** pasta in many different shapes and flavors
- **Golden Girl** homemade granola, treats
- **Goodies** award-winning, better-than-homemade cookies
- **Hmong Farms at Flats Mentor Farm** fresh produce featuring Asian vegetables
- **Hutchins Farm** certified organic plants, vegetables, herbs, small fruit, and apples
- **In Good Taste** Pam's black bean salsa
- **Japonaise Bakery** French pastries with a Japanese twist
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, and plants
- **Lawton's Family Farm** fresh cheeses and veal, *Fiore di Nonno* mozzarella
- **Mamadou Bakery** handcrafted breads
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers
- **On the Edge** hand sharpening of kitchen knives, scissors, shears and tools
- **Samira's Homemade** Middle Eastern dips and salads, freshly made, delicious
- **Sassy River Sauces** savory sauces without the fat
- **Sassy Sauces** sweet dessert sauces
- **Sfolia's Pizzelles** Italian treats hand-made in Belmont
- **Stillman's at the Turkey Farm** grass-fed meat and freshly cut flowers
- **Sweet Lolo's** gourmet, handcrafted caramels and brittles
- **Turkey Brook Farm** home of Red Label Poultry, raised in the French tradition
- **Turtle Creek Winery** of Lincoln
- **Underwood Greenhouses** potted plants grown in Belmont
- **Westport Rivers Vineyard & Winery**
- **Wild Acre Inns** flowers, herbs and more



Not all vendors appear every week. Check the website or e-newsletter for complete details.

Food for Thought

Recipes for the "challenging" eaters in your family

Do your meals need a makeover to appeal to picky eaters in your family? Meet the "Meal Makeover Moms," Liz Weiss of Lexington and Janice Newell Bissex of Melrose. Both women are registered dietitians and busy moms who are concerned about the childhood obesity epidemic and Americans' heavy reliance on processed and fast food. They have been a team for 10 years, recently publishing their second cookbook, *No Whine with Dinner*. (M3 Press, 2010).

This attractive, appealing, and well-organized book is replete with tempting photographs. It features 150 healthy kid-tested recipes that include breakfast ideas, lunch box winners, vegetables you don't have to hide, meatless meals, pasta, pizzas, and desserts. All the recipes were tested by moms and approved by their kids to make sure that every family meal can be a happy and healthy one. In fact, all of these recipes are so enticing and creative that they seem perfectly suited for the entire family, not just the kids!

To come up with ideas for the book, Liz and Janice surveyed moms across the country. Using their large social media network, they received 600 responses. Respondents said that complaints from picky eaters presented the biggest obstacle to getting their children to eat in a healthy way. The authors' strategy

for writing the book thus became one of providing moms (and dads) tools to overcome this obstacle. The book includes 50 moms' secrets to getting picky eaters to try new foods, including:

- Choose colorful words to describe recipes.
- Offer tiny tastes to spark curiosity.
- Serve soups that include lots of vegetables.
- Have a "new dish night" once a week.

In addition to *No Whine with Dinner*, Liz and Janice authored *The Mom's Guide to Meal Makeovers*, published in 2004. This book features a 5-step meal makeover plan and 120 recipes to help busy families eat healthy and nutritious meals.

Liz and Janice maintain a comprehensive website, *MealMakeoverMoms.com*. The site includes a moms' club with opportunities to submit recipes in need of a makeover, a monthly online newsletter with product news, recipes and tips, family nutrition articles, moms' cooking videos and blog suggestions for hosting a cooking party, and a weekly radio podcast.

The next adventure for Liz and Janice is to travel widely to offer workshops. You can check out one of their recipes below.

Bon Appétit!

— Judy Cotton

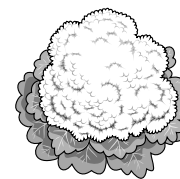
Roasted Cauliflower with Crispy Leek Rings

- 1 large leek, white part only
- 1 head cauliflower (about 2¼ pounds), trimmed and cut into 1-inch florets
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Wash the leek well to remove any dirt trapped between the layers. Slice into ½-inch rounds and break them apart into little "rings." Place the leeks, cauliflower, oil, salt, and a few cranks of pepper in a large bowl and toss to coat with the oil. Transfer to a 9 x 13-inch glass baking dish.

Bake until the cauliflower turns golden and the leek "rings" become crispy, 20 to 25 minutes. Stir well every 10 minutes so the leeks don't burn. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste.



(continued from page 1)

and melons, can be grown vertically onto a frame constructed at one end.

Square foot gardening offers many advantages. Relatively little care is required and few tools are needed. Daily watering is necessary but little weeding is needed because the plants are placed close together. Rather than work the entire garden, you add nutrients to improve the soil as you harvest each square. Crop rotation occurs automatically because you plant vegetables according to their best growing season and then replace them with something different once the first harvest has been picked. Plants such as onion, garlic, nasturtiums, and marigolds, which deter pests such as aphids and beetles, should be planted in squares scattered around the garden. Since the crops are all within a small distance of each other, the entire garden is protected.

Reaping the Rewards

Anne Lougee, another Belmont resident, started her first vegetable garden after buying a frame from Rose. In her 4-by-6-foot garden, she has planted cherry tomatoes and

larger varieties, basil and other herbs, zucchini, and cucumbers. She added marigolds for color and to discourage predators. Anne has loved her garden, the “tastiness” of her vegetables, and the ability to “just pick what you want for your salad, right there.”

For more information on square foot gardening, please consult these excellent references:

- Bartholomew, Mel. *Square Foot Gardening*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press. 1981.
- www.squarefootgardening.org
- www.thefoodproject.org/search/node/raised-bed-guide
- Rose Cherneff. (Now in college, Rose is on hiatus from her business, but is still happy to give advice—ask at the blue tent at the Farmers’ Market.)

—Denise Umans



Jennifer Angel photo

Suzanne Johannet's vegetable garden

How to Start a Raised Bed Garden

- To build the frames, cut 2 x 8 untreated spruce into pieces the desired length and width, but no more than 4 feet wide.
- Use brackets or metal corners for fasteners.
- Line with landscaping cloth to prevent the roots from extending into the soil below.
- Add good quality soil.
- Place in an area with at least 6 hours of direct sunlight a day in the summer.
- Place in a level area where water does not run off and form puddles.
- Place close to the house or somewhere easy to access for watering and caretaking. As Bartholomew points out, “Out of sight is out of mind.”



Jennifer Angel photo

Anne Lougee's vegetable garden