

The Co-operator

The monthly newsletter of the East End Food Co-op • Pittsburgh, PA



Growth and Expansion

by Sarah Aerni, Board President

Many articles within this edition of *The Co-operator* focus on the issue of growth and expansion. It is important for you, the membership, to understand why the board has reached the point where we are exploring growth opportunities. It's also time for the board to share the perspectives we've gained through many hours of meetings and work with cooperators at other co-ops.

Growth of the National Cooperative Movement

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the seven principles that co-ops are founded on. This powerful concept guides us to think beyond our store walls, and even beyond Pittsburgh, to the national cooperative movement. To this end, we are members of the National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA), a group of 136 food cooperatives who operate 171 stores in 36 states. Combined, we have over \$1.5 billion in annual sales. One function of the NCGA is to negotiate favorable buying arrangements. They also coordinate national-level marketing and promotions, and advocate for co-ops.

Last year I heard C.E. Pugh, an executive of the NCGA, give a compelling speech about why co-ops should consider growing. Using real data, he described the markets for natural and organic food, and the companies and groups that sell this food. Currently, the entire NCGA (those 136 cooperatives) accounts for only about 2% of the sales, and overall this industry is growing at a faster rate than cooperative retailers are. There are aggressive competitors in many cities in the U.S., and Pittsburgh is no exception.

Pugh stated that the best response is growth. He wants us to play offense. Pugh claimed that large companies

want what we have: to be seen as authentic, ethically-minded, and able to claim that the money spent in the store stays in the community. Why shouldn't we spread our business model, our community-mindedness, our authenticity? Let's strengthen the national co-op movement by expanding.

Local Motivations for Growth

On a local level, there are many other reasons to grow. We are frequently asked to partner on projects and host events in our store. Unfortunately, space at our location in The Factory is limited. We don't have a classroom or an events room that can hold a large number of people. This limits our ability to support community-building activities that would serve members' needs.

We have seen double-digit growth in sales over the past few years, and our membership numbers grow steadily year by year. We're currently approaching 11,000 members. These numbers indicate that our membership is enthusiastic about the products we sell and the work we're doing.

In 2012, a food co-op impact study conducted by NCGA demonstrated the benefits that a co-op can have on the local community:

- Co-ops are the best place to find local and organic products, and we do more to support local farmers and the local food infrastructure than conventional or national chains.
- Co-ops pay higher wages to employees, and benefits are higher than at conventional grocery stores.
- Co-ops have a high multiplier effect, meaning more money remains in the local community when you spend it at a food co-op.

- Co-ops are better environmental stewards.
- Since co-ops are not run by private equity funds or a group of outside investors, our profits are reinvested back into the co-op or the local community.

I'm happy to say that our Co-op does all these things and, if we were to expand, it would enable more of these positive contributions to occur. (Learn more about the impact study on page 4.)

Finally, the board has looked at our current membership data in terms of where members live. Though 57% of our current members live within five miles of our current location, it turns out that 24% live more than 10 miles from here. A distance of 5 - 10 miles could be prohibitive for members to do all or most of their shopping with us, as traffic and busy lives can easily intervene to send members to a retailer closer to home. Having one or more new locations could make access to our products easier for more current members, and would likely grow our membership in the new area.

Living Our Ends

As I've learned more about co-ops over my years on the board, I have seen what other co-ops in the country are accomplishing with their growth and increased profits. The possibilities seem endless!

The board of the East End Food Co-op firmly believes that our cooperative is ready to be a bigger player in our local food system. We have a strong general manager and management team in place, coupled with well-trained and willing employees, a prepared and capable board, and a membership that understands where we are and where we're going. It's time to live our Ends Statement: In order to promote physical and social health in our community, we will remain a sustainable member-owned business open to everyone. We can enable a more robust local food infrastructure. We want to augment our vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people, and we want to formulate and carry out a creative vision to transform the future.

Please direct any questions about the board of directors' ideas about growth to boarddir@eastendfood.coop.

EAST END FOOD CO-OP ENDS POLICY STATEMENT

East End Food Co-op exists to enhance physical and social health in our community. To these ends, we will create:

1. A sustainable member-owned business open to everyone
2. An ethical and resilient food infrastructure
3. A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people
4. A creative vision to transform the future

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CO-OP DEALS FLYERS:

April 2nd – April 15th
April 16th – May 20th

MEMBERS ONLY:

Be sure to use your 10% quarterly discount by June 30th!
The next quarter goes from July 1st – September 30th.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The next meeting will take place on Monday, April 21st at 7 PM.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATIONS:

To register, call 412.242.3598 ext. 103
or email memberservices@eastendfood.coop

HOLIDAY HOURS:

The Co-op will close early on Sunday, April 20th at 7 PM, and the Café will close early at 6 PM.

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GM Report

by Justin Pizzella, EEFC General Manager

Your Co-op is in the planning process for identifying and moving forward on one or more new stores in the coming years. As this possibility becomes more concrete, I want to revisit why we are considering expansion.

I'll start off by explaining that it isn't a question of whether the Co-op is going to grow or not. The reality is that we are growing. A few examples will illustrate significant developments at our Co-op since 2009:

- Sales have gone from \$7.5 million (MM) up to \$9.5MM (an increase of 26.6%). We are on track to reach \$10.5MM this year.
- Our membership has grown by over 2,200 member households.
- We have increased the size of our staff 54.5% by hiring 30 new employees. We now have 87 staff members.
- Upturns can be seen in our local purchases, local sales, and there's been a marked shift from sales of grocery products to fresh and perishable categories.
- As we have grown, so have our contributions back to the community by way of our donations.

Truly we are making an impact every day! So why expand?

We have a tremendous business with a huge potential. We all want to see our Co-op leverage that potential to the greatest extent possible. The best way to accomplish that is through our core competency - operating excellent grocery stores. If we are successful in our pursuit of being excellent grocers we will achieve:

- A better economic system through a member-owned business open to everyone: Co-ops do great things and exemplify the positive effect

a business can have on the community. The more stores we have, the more impact we'll have through increased jobs and purchases, plus our success will provide an example for other co-ops looking to start up.

- A resilient and ethical food infrastructure: By creating a larger market for the goods we sell, we can support more farmers and local producers. We can also influence the conversation surrounding GMOs and sustainability by purchasing and stocking our shelves with the products that best fit our buying guidelines. Furthermore, our success may help provide stability for many of our local producers as a result of our observance of practices that other businesses don't necessarily offer: we pay our invoices and settle our accounts on time; we work with our farmers before planting to help them most efficiently plant and grow; we strive to ensure that everyone earns a fair income; and we actively promote our partners.
- A vibrant, dynamic community of happy, healthy people: With over 10,700 members, there is definitely a strain on our current infrastructure. Parking is often a challenge and we are at maximum capacity on our sales floor. Additionally, a high percentage of our customers travel a considerable distance to shop our store. Supplementary well-placed stores will provide greater convenience and reduce some of the miles our members and customers are driving.
- A creative vision for the future: We want to be more than just an excellent grocer. Ultimately, as a larger co-op we will be more capable of investing in resources that will help achieve our Ends. That's what is great about co-ops - we're at our best when we're enhancing our community!

So back to the question - why expand the Co-op? It's all about living our values and fulfilling our Ends.

Board Corner

by EEFC Board of Directors

The Member Linkage Committee of the board of directors was established to provide a link between Co-op member-owners and the board. The primary focus of this committee is to promote awareness of the board and its activities, to facilitate communication between membership and the board, and to engage and inform members, particularly with respect to anticipated changes members need to be aware of.

Communication is an essential component of co-op governance since one of the roles of the board of directors is to represent member interests. This can be more easily accomplished if the board has a clear understanding of the members' thoughts about the issues. As the Co-op moves forward with evaluating expansion options and opportunities, communication will be extremely important.

This year, the Member Linkage Committee is increasing its efforts to engage members and is working to create an effective forum for communication and gathering feedback from Co-op members. At a recent Member Linkage Committee kick-off meeting, board directors were joined by nine Co-op members, some of whom are also staff. The agenda for this meeting was to brainstorm ideas regarding member engagement and ideas on how to move the Member Linkage Committee forward with its mission. The Marketing Department suggested organizing a "Breakfast with the Board." This event concept is one that other co-ops have successfully used to facilitate cooperation and increase awareness

of the board's role and their work within the Co-op.

At the time of writing this article, we are looking forward to our first EEFC Breakfast with the Board on Saturday, March 15th. The agenda for this meeting is to continue brainstorming ways to better engage and communicate with members. We will also discuss some current topics of interest to the Co-op. It is the goal of the Member Linkage Committee to have an open meeting every other month, with dates to be announced as far in advance as possible.

Another opportunity for members to share ideas and meet the board of directors one-on-one is at the Annual Meeting. The EEFC Annual Meeting is held each year in the fall, and is scheduled to take place on September 7th at the Union Project. This fun and informative event features complimentary food and beverages, entertainment, children's activities, and updates on the Co-op's financial performance and activities. Members may also contact the board anytime by email at boarddir@eastendfood.coop.

Your membership is highly valued and we want to hear your feedback, ideas, and opinions as fellow members of our Co-op. We look forward to hearing from you!



Our Co-op's Journey Toward Expansion

by Mike Collura, Board Vice-President

Our Co-op has been on its expansion journey since the early 2000s. In the beginning, we spent a great deal of time learning about our economy, our local and national food systems, and models for expansion that would complement our Ends goals. We engaged with consultants and spoke with industry experts. We even had several opportunities to network with other co-op directors and management that have been through their own expansion processes. All of this work really focused on what expansion could mean for EEFC. It was very important to our directors that we not expand just for the sake of profit or growth. While profitability is important to the Co-op, we wanted to ensure that our Co-op's growth led to living our Ends more fully.

Starting as early as 2006, the board and management team began the process of soliciting feedback and ideas about what expansion could look like. Management helped organize visioning sessions to assist in facilitating member input. The board also conducted a member survey, and engaged members at Co-op events like Winterfest. In 2008, the board and management began to communicate their

shared vision to members and began reaching out to community groups for support. By this point, the Co-op had worked toward building up our cash reserves in order to leverage them against a loan for expansion.

While this time period produced some initial opportunities for growth, these opportunities coincided with several disruptive circumstances. Unexpected events such as the economic downturn and the entry of some new competitors in our market slowed our initial timeline, but the Co-op continued to position itself for when the time was right. Co-op management spent a great deal of time reflecting inward to articulate specific outcomes that our Co-op exists to produce. The result was a mission statement that was clear, concise, and a more memorable way of phrasing what the Co-op was passionate about and hoped to achieve. This mission statement focused on three areas that encompassed our cooperative values and principles: people, planet, and economics.

In the summer of 2010, the board began evaluating the legal aspects of growth. We

talked about areas of our bylaws that were confusing or outdated. Our lawyer and consultants assisted us in drafting a new set of bylaws that our membership voted on and approved in autumn of 2011. We also evaluated the option of reincorporating the Co-op locally, or in another state with laws that would be more beneficial to cooperative businesses. As it turned out, the laws in Pennsylvania had significantly improved since our original incorporation, allowing us to reincorporate in our home state.

In 2012, the Co-op's management team completed renovations, which allowed us to maximize the use of our store and increase the efficiency of some key areas. As we remained in an exploratory mode throughout 2013, the bulk of our work was concentrated on the assessment of feasibility. The board and management worked with several consultants to use field-tested methods that applied to hypothetical yet realistic expansion scenarios to educate the board and management on best practices from actual co-op expansions. These

included processes for assessing organizational readiness, conducting market feasibility studies, and pro forma financial planning, all within a framework of robust risk assessment, due diligence, and a clear timeline with well-defined decision points. The valuable insights gained from these sessions allowed us to draft a feasibility assessment checklist tailored to our unique position, with focused clarity about the roles of the board and management in executing an expansion project.

Our push to open additional locations does not mean that we have to abandon or neglect our original neighborhood and community; it is simply the first of many steps toward building an infrastructure to broaden the reach of our Ends. As the Co-op continues on its expansion journey we look to our membership for support and cooperation. If you would like to get involved in this process, consider joining the Member Linkage Committee at an upcoming public meeting. You may also contact your board of directors via email at boarddir@eastendfood.coop.

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STATEMENT OF COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

Definition

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

Principles

Most cooperatives around the world follow the core principles that were adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995. Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844. These principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it does so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative’s autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.

Members Speak Out!

“Can discounts be made so that we can have four discounts per year? This quarterly thing makes timing hard.”

Due to the constraints of our system, as well as being able to budget for discounts, we currently can only offer the 10% discount once a quarter. We continue to evaluate this discount and we will see if we can make changes in the future.
-Justin, General Manager

“The book collection and magazine options are meaningful and engaging. Every time I browse the book collection, I find something to buy for a child or adult audience. Thanks for keeping this section strong!”

You’re welcome! Thanks for your support!
-Karen, Book Buyer

“Could you please bring sheep sorrel and Turkish rhubarb in bulk?”

We currently have sheep sorrel in the Essiac Tea mix, a detox tea of four herbs including sheep sorrel, in bulk. I will also consider this as I move some of the slow moving herbs into smaller jars, I may then have room for sheep sorrel. We have Rhubarb Root from the Turkish variety.
-Mary Beth, Bulk Herbs

“Thank you for bringing back the rice brownies. They are the only treat I buy here!”

We are so glad that you enjoy them!
-Maura, Grocery Manager



Do you have a thought you’d like to share with the Co-op’s staff?
Then fill out and submit a comment card at customer service during your next visit!

April’s Round Up Recipient: Grow Pittsburgh



Established in 2005, Grow Pittsburgh is a nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching people how to grow food and promoting the economic, social, and environmental benefits urban agriculture brings to our neighborhoods. Their website provides resources to all gardeners and they have a number of educational programs, many of which are focused on younger folks. In 2013 alone, Grow Pittsburgh worked with over 1,900 students, teaching food and gardening lessons through three major programs: Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh, City Growers, and the Urban Farm Apprenticeship.

The Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh program, a “seed-to-table” education model that integrates growing and cooking lessons into the classroom curriculum, is currently in six elementary schools. Urban Farmers in Training allows local teens to complete a summer internship at Braddock Farms, the one-acre urban farm operated by Grow Pittsburgh. Braddock Farms, along with Grow Pittsburgh’s two other sites, Frick Greenhouse and Shiloh Farm, produced 5.9 tons of food last year. And by providing access to information and offering assistance to neighborhoods, their community garden program, City Growers, has helped establish 16 community gardens.

You can get a taste of Grow Pittsburgh’s work by purchasing seedlings from the Frick Art and Historical Center, or by attending one of their monthly “Let Us Eat” fundraisers. Grow Pittsburgh believes access to locally-grown, chemical-free fruits and vegetables is a right, not a privilege. To learn more about their programs, please visit their website. If you want to support Grow Pittsburgh in their mission to teach people how to grow food, be sure to tell your Co-op cashier to Round Up your total this month!

Your spare change can result in positive change!

www.growpittsburgh.org

Growing in Cooperation

In the month of February we welcomed 56 new members to our Co-op!

We extend our gratitude to each and every member, whether you’ve been signed up for weeks, months, or years. We couldn’t do it without you - thank you for your support, your patronage, and your investment in this business!

We invite all of you new members to sign up for a Member Orientation with a member services expert. We will give you a guided tour of the store, explain the benefits of membership, and fill you in on the many ways you can become more involved in your Co-op. To reserve your spot, please call 412-242-3598 ext. 103 or email memberservices@eastendfood.coop.



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Healthy Foods, Healthy Communities

from www.strongertogether.coop

What’s to love about food co-ops? So much! Co-ops have a cool way of doing things differently. They’re people working together for better food, stronger communities and a healthier world. And cooperative grocers are making a big impact. A new study, *Healthy Foods Healthy Communities: The Social and Economic Impacts of Food Co-ops*, quantifies the impact food co-ops have as compared to conventional grocery stores. The study’s compelling results demonstrate the many ways that food co-ops do well while doing good. (Learn more about this study at www.strongertogether.coop/food-coops/food-co-op-impact-study.)

Unlike their conventional counterparts, co-ops are owned and governed by member-shoppers and rooted in principles like community, voluntary and open membership, economic participation and cooperation. Because of these principles and practices, food co-ops inherently serve and benefit the communities where they are located. For example, the study finds that for every dollar spent at a food co-op, \$0.38 is reinvested in the local economy compared to \$0.24 at conventional grocers.

Supporting Local Food Systems and Sustainable Foods

Though “local” has popped up in conventional grocery stores in recent years, retail food co-ops are leaps and bounds ahead of the pack. Where conventional grocers work with an average of 65 local farmers and food producers, food co-ops work with an average of 157. Likewise, locally sourced products make up an average of 20% of co-op sales compared to 6% at conventional stores.

Years after creating the market for organic foods, co-ops are still the place to find them. Of produce

sales at food co-ops, 82% are organic, compared to 12% for conventional grocers. And, organics make up 48% of grocery sales in food co-ops, compared to just 2% in conventional grocers.

Local Economic Impact

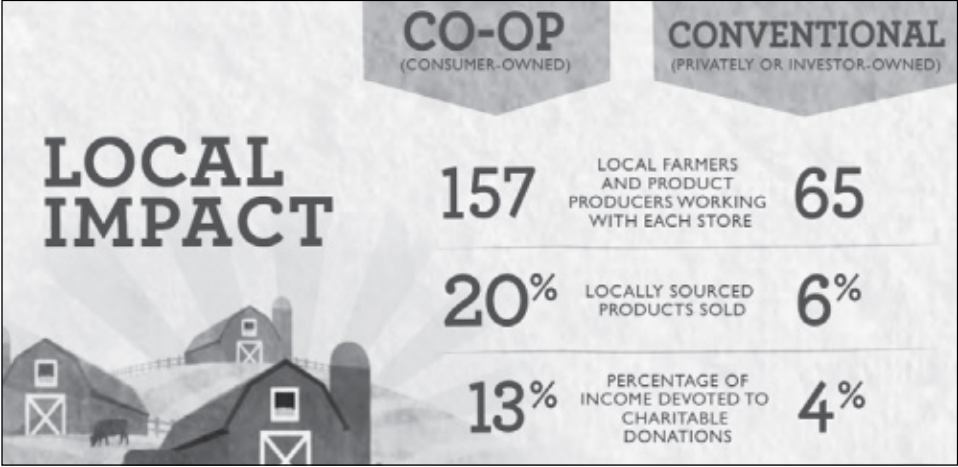
The economic impact that a grocery store has on its local economy is greater than just the sum of its local spending, because a portion of money spent locally recirculates. For example, food co-ops purchase from local farmers who, in turn, buy supplies from local sources, hire local technicians to repair equipment, and purchase goods and services from local retailers. To some extent, conventional grocers do too, but the gap is still significant. For every \$1,000 a shopper spends at their local food co-op, \$1,604 in economic activity is generated in their local economy—\$239 more than if they had spent that same \$1,000 at a conventional grocer.

Employee Benefits

The average co-op earning \$10 million per year in revenue provides jobs for over 90 workers. In total, 68% of those workers are eligible for health insurance, compared to 56% of employees at conventional grocers. Co-op employees also earn an average of nearly \$1.00 more per hour than conventional grocery workers when bonuses and profit sharing are taken into account.

Environmental Stewardship

Grocery stores—co-ops and conventional alike—generate a significant amount of waste. What sets retail food co-ops apart is what they do with that waste. Co-ops recycle 96% of cardboard, 74% of food waste and 81% of plastics compared to 91%, 36% and 29%, respectively, recycled by conventional grocers.



Deviled Eggs with Chipotle & Bacon

Ingredients:

- 1 dozen eggs
- 6 tablespoons light mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 1-2 tablespoons chipotle peppers, finely chopped or pureed
- 1 green onion, finely chopped
- Pinch each of salt and ground black pepper
- 2 strips cooked bacon, finely chopped (or vegetarian “bacon” bits)
- Pinch of smoked paprika

Preparation:

- Place the eggs in a large pot and fill with cold water to about an inch above the eggs. Bring the water to a full boil, cover the pot, and turn off the heat. Let stand for 10 minutes. Drain and cool the eggs in a bowl of ice water. When cool enough to handle, peel the eggs. Carefully cut each egg in half lengthwise and remove the yolks, placing them in a mixing bowl. Set aside the egg white halves and prepare the filling.
- Mash the yolks in the mixing bowl; add the mayonnaise, mustard, relish, chipotle peppers, green onion, salt and pepper. Blend well. Spoon the filling equally into the egg white halves (or use a pastry bag to pipe in the filling). Sprinkle each of the deviled eggs with bacon bits and a little paprika before serving.

Yield: 24 deviled eggs

Know Your Farmer: God’s Country Creamery

God’s Country Creamery is a family-owned and -operated business based in Ulysses, PA, that produces raw milk, artisan cheese, and grass-fed chicken and beef. The creamery was established by Mark and Melanie Bachman in 2008 at Wellwyn Farm, a 144-acre site that Mark’s father began as a commercial dairy farm in 1946. The farm has since scaled back from 80 cows to 25 milking cows and is operated entirely by just four people, all members of the Bachman family.

The creamery is part of the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), the American Cheese Society, and the PA Preferred Program, and is permitted in Pennsylvania for raw milk and raw milk cheese. God’s Country Creamery is proud to provide their high-quality products directly to consumers in Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and New Jersey. You can find 10 varieties of their raw milk artisan cheese in your Co-op’s Cheese Department. To learn more about God’s Country Creamery, visit their website, www.godscountrycreamery.com, or like them on Facebook.

What is your most popular product?

Boondocks Cheddar and Gridley Gruyere

How did you get into farming and what inspired you to start in this business?

The heritage of farming and finding a profitable way to maintain a fourth generation family farm spurred the current farm size and creamery. Also, the opportunity to work together as a family operation, combined with our love of working with animals and the land, inspired our current business.

What makes products from your farm unique?

Raw milk, grass-fed cows, high quality milk, and European flavor, all produced locally and free of rBST.

What is the most important thing for customers to know about your products?

Our products are carefully and proudly hand-crafted with the highest quality milk available from cows who are treated like family members.

What is the biggest challenge of being a farmer?

Money is the biggest challenge and making ends meet while still meeting the demands of consumers and balancing the ever-increasing regulations being established.

What is a typical day on your farm like?

Morning milking begins at 5 AM and ends at 8 - 9 AM. On cheese-making days, the cheese-making process will continue until 2-3 PM. Other days consist of cutting, packaging, and shipping cheese as needed. The day ends with evening chores starting at 5 PM and getting done around 8 PM. Spare time is used to keep things clean around both the farm and creamery.

What is your hope for the future of your farm?

To be able to sustain and maintain the farm profitably for future generations to work at the operation and with God’s creation.



New In The Aisles

Desert Essence - Tea Tree Toothpaste & Tea Tree Mouthwash

Lundberg - Multigrain Chips (Tomato, BBQ, Chipotle, Jalapeno)

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Endangered Species - Dark Chocolate Creme Filled Bars

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Get Growing with Garden Dreams: Healthy Spring Soil

by Hannah Reiff of Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery

Spring is the perfect time to prepare our gardens for planting and a great time to consider the life that is already present in our soil. Soil bacteria, fungi, nematodes, and protozoa are important to the gardener for many reasons. For instance, mycorrhizal fungi team up with plant roots, which enable the plant to take up more nutrients. In healthy soil, certain microbes flourish, leaving little room for plant pathogens to take hold. Microscopic life even improves soil structure by creating compounds which hold it together and add to soil fertility by decomposing organic matter.

What should spring garden prep look like if we take all these microscopic critters into account? My grandparents taught me that the first step in preparing a good garden was always to rototill. Although tilling does temporarily loosen soil and can be used to incorporate organic matter, tilling also brings weed seeds up to the soil surface to germinate, it damages soil structure, and it kills and disrupts the beneficial microbes in our soils. As a result, many folks are now opting to “let the soil be” a bit more. Using planting beds and pathways allows the gardener to keep the soil loose by walking only on the path. Substituting a garden fork or a broad fork for a tiller enables the gardener to gently loosen the soil if needed and work in a bit of organic matter without turning the soil over and damaging the microbes much.

To learn more about protecting these soil microbes in our gardens, I recently interviewed Jeff Lowenfels, founder of Plant a Row for the Hungry, co-author of *Teaming with Microbes*, and a knowledgeable source of information on soil microbiology.

Hannah Reiff: Can you talk about your conversion from a gardener that zealously tilled and used chemical fertilizers to one who promoted and protected soil life?

Jeff Lowenfels: I was introduced to a[n enlarged] picture of a microscopic fungus trapping a nematode [that would have damaged plant roots in the soil]. That was the turning point. The fungus was protecting the plant root! Kill the fungus and the plants get into trouble. That was the start.

HR: As gardeners get ready for spring planting, what are some techniques they can use (and avoid) in the garden to promote soil life?

JL: Do not rototill. This breaks up the soil food web, especially the mycorrhizal network from whence most of the carbon in soil originates. Second, always use mycorrhizal fungi for plants being transplanted and on seeds. (*Check out www.mycorrhizae.com for more information.*) Third, test your soils every few years and follow recommendations.

HR: Why are chemical fertilizers so bad for soil microbes?

JL: They can kill many of the important ones and they cause the plant to get lazy. Also, if the gardener supplies the food, why does the plant need to make the exudates to attract the right microbiology? (*Exudates are sugars that plants produce on their surfaces and roots to attract and feed specific microbes that will benefit them.*)

HR: Can you explain what mycorrhizal fungi do to help the gardener?

JL: They feed plants. Their small size allows them to penetrate soil pores the roots could never reach. They provide phosphorous, copper, zinc, and even nitrogen to plants. They’re also responsible for about 30% of the carbon present in soil.

HR: Anything else you would like to share with spring gardeners?

JL: Test your soils for chemistry AND biology. (*Information on biology testing can be found at www.earthfort.com.*)

Hannah Reiff is Production Manager at Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery. Located in Wilkinsburg, Garden Dreams is a small, community-oriented business committed to increasing access to healthy, fresh food by providing strong vegetable, herb, and flower starts to home gardeners, community gardens, nonprofits, schools, and retail markets (including the East End Food Co-op). You can learn more about their operation at www.mygardendreams.com, or attend an upcoming gardening class in the Co-op Café (see page 8 for more information).

Make Your Own Green Laundry Products

adapted from the National Cooperative Grocery Association News Service

If you’re looking for day-to-day ways to reduce your environmental impact, consider creating and using your own eco-friendly laundry products. Conventional products contribute phosphates, petrochemicals, chlorine, and other toxins to the air (during manufacturing), waterways (during use), landfills (when you toss the containers), and your skin (when you wear or use the laundered clothes). Although you can purchase earth-friendly laundry products at your Co-op (identified by words like “biodegradable” and “hypoallergenic” on the packaging), you can also find what you need to make your own laundry products, which is simple, fun, and very economical.

Laundry recipes—like cooking recipes—are a matter of varying opinions and experimentation to suit individual needs. If the consistency isn’t right or you don’t love the scent, adjust the ingredient amounts, the essential oil or soap you’re using. Keep in mind that although these laundry soaps won’t produce a lot of suds compared to store-bought soaps, they still get the job done!

Laundry Soap Recipes:

Powdered Laundry Soap
2 cups grated natural bar soap
3 cups borax
4 cups baking soda
4 cups washing soda
2 tablespoons essential oil (lemon, lavender or another clean-smelling favorite)
Instructions: Combine all dry ingredients. Whisk in essential oil. Store in a covered tub. Use: 1/8 cup per load of laundry

Liquid (Gel) Laundry Soap
1 natural bar of soap
1/2 cup borax
1 cup washing soda
5 drops essential oil
Instructions: Grate soap into a large pot of boiling water. Remove from heat and stir until melted. Add the borax and washing soda. Stir until dissolved. Add essential oils. Pour into a bucket and add hot water to make about eight gallons. Let sit overnight and stir before using. Use: 1/2 to 1 cup per load

Gentle Laundry Soap
1 squirt of liquid castile soap
2 drops essential oil
Instructions: As the water is running, add soap to a sink full of water. Add essential oil. Swish, then add your delicate items.

Tips for Other Eco-Friendly Alternatives:

Softeners
•Add 1/2 cup vinegar to the rinse cycle. Vinegar softens fibers naturally and rinses out any soap residue. It will also freshen baby clothes and diapers and remove static cling. (Don’t worry; the scent evaporates when the clothing dries!)
•Add 1/4 cup baking soda to the rinse cycle. It’ll brighten your wash as well as soften it. (Baking soda also removes soap residue.)

Fragrances
•Add a few drops of your favorite essential oil to the rinse cycle (add to the water, don’t put directly on clothing).
•Place a few drops of essential oil on a clean cotton cloth or washcloth, and toss in the dryer or drop in the washer during the rinse cycle.
•Add a fragrant sachet to your dryer load. (Some scented herbs tied in cheesecloth or a handkerchief work well.) Or place one in each dresser drawer.
•To scent linens, fill a spray bottle with water and add several drops of essential oil. Use to lightly spritz pillowcases and towels (don’t soak them).

Stain Removers
•Rub stubborn stains with white vinegar before tossing in with your normal laundry load.
•Mix cornstarch with cold water to make a paste. Cover the stain and rub gently into fabric. Let dry in the warm sun. Brush off.
•Blot stain with cold water, sprinkle with sea salt, wipe clean with club soda, and launder.
•To remove perspiration stains, spray with distilled white vinegar, then wash.
•Combine water and hydrogen peroxide (50/50). Apply to stain, then launder.

Color Preservation
•Soak new clothing in cool water and vinegar (about a cup per load of water) before washing to help set the colors and keep them from running.
•If you use a clothesline, hang clothing that might fade inside-out.

Using your own laundry products is likely to make your laundry routine more enjoyable and rewarding. Your freshly laundered clothing and linens will look and smell great, and you can feel good about the process you used to get them that way.

Parenting by Connection

by Karen Bernard, Book Buyer

There are many good books on parenting and we have some of the best that I know of in the Co-op’s Book Department. We recently began to carry my all-time favorites, which are booklets (some come in sets and some alone) from a non-profit organization called Hand-in-Hand Parenting in Palo Alto, CA. These pamphlets clarify the fundamental way children’s emotions work and how we as adults can support our young ones in using their innate healing process to recover from life’s inevitable hurts. Here are a few titles: *Crying; Reaching for Your Angry Child; Tantrums and Indignation*; and *Setting Limits with Children*. There’s also *Supporting Adolescents* and *Listening Partnerships for Parents*.

Patty Wipfler is the woman who founded Hand-in-Hand and who writes these little gems. Patty knows that all parents love their children deeply (even when they’re unable to access or act upon this feeling) and they want their kids to be happy, self-confident, and fulfilled. “One of the best things about being a parent,” she writes, “is the chance to love your child with all your heart.” In the face of our own feelings of isolation, confu-

sion, guilt, and exhaustion, along with challenges like poverty, racism, and lack of time, we parents always try our very best. Parenting isn’t easy! But with support, like listening partnerships where parents share time and attention with other parents, we can shed some of the emotions that get in the way of our ability to be present with our kids. It also helps to remember some core understandings about young people.

Children are born to feel close and connected. When they feel safe and loved, their intelligence is fully available. Feeling close enables them to learn, and to handle the stress in their lives successfully. But when a child feels afraid, when he’s frustrated or has lost his sense of connection, his behavior usually doesn’t reflect his naturally brilliant, cooperative, loving nature. Reasoning with a child doesn’t work in this situation because when he’s in the grip of upsetting emotions, he literally can’t think. Fortunately, children are also born with the ability to recover from emotional distress. When a caring parent stays close, in a relaxed and loving way, children feel safe enough to unload difficult

feelings. Their natural response is to cry away pain and grief, shake off fear, and have tantrums to get rid of frustration.

Giving children attention in this way will not “spoil” them. On the contrary, listening with care has great healing power. When they are finished clearing out difficult emotions, children regain their ability to think well. And because you have allowed them to use their own healing powers, they feel self-confident and ready to tackle new challenges. I discovered this basic understanding when my daughter was three, and could see immediately what a difference listening made. When she came to me crying after a fall on the playground, instead of explaining how she’d tripped on the bump near the slide (she would dutifully try to pay attention when I showed her, still whimpering and withdrawn), I decided to sit with her while she cried. And when she was done, she was done - no more sniffing. With attention out, she was ready for action!

Since that time, my daughter has had many opportunities to shed much bigger feelings with the

help of caring adults. She is now 22 and I marvel at her intelligence and the way she trusts, and listens to, herself. Listening partnerships have also given me invaluable support, as a parent and otherwise. I can’t say enough here about how great these Hand-in-Hand booklets are - this is the wisest, most helpful parenting advice I’ve ever encountered. If you’d like to learn more, then join me on April 23rd for a workshop here at the Co-op (see page 8 for event information). I’ll go into more depth about what close listening looks like in different situations and you’ll be able to ask questions. We can also try listening to each other. It’s powerful medicine!

A PA certified teacher (K-12), Karen Bernard has taught all ages, from 3-year-olds to adults, and provides consultation and year-end evaluations for homeschoolers. She is also a family and community mediator. Karen has been practicing peer listening for close to 20 years. With an MA in Culture & Spirituality she offers holistic counseling for adults and young people around education, personal direction, and family relationships.

Featured Community Partner:
Construction Junction

The aim of the Community Partners Program is to provide East End Food Co-op members great benefits and, at the same time, to promote local businesses. Because we are committed to supporting our community, we truly value the partnerships we build through this program. Locally-owned businesses have a huge impact on the infrastructure of our regional economy and we firmly believe that we are all stronger together.

The East End Food Co-op is proud to partner with Construction Junction, Pittsburgh's first non-profit building material reuse retailer. Patronizing Construction Junction is an easy way to save money and conserve resources. They strive to keep usable supplies out of landfills and provide them to the community at low cost, which makes them one of the few building material retailers with an environmental and social focus. They specialize in used and surplus materials and are supported by the Pennsylvania Resources Council, the oldest grassroots environmental organization in the state.

They also offer drop-off and recycling services for a wide variety of building materials, appliances, scrap metal, bicycles, and much more.

Construction Junction offers Co-op members a 5% discount on most items, and the store is conveniently located at 214 North Lexington Street, just down the road from the Co-op. They are open seven days a week and can be reached at 412-243-5025. More information can be found at www.constructionjunction.org.

To take advantage of this discount, fully paid Co-op members must be sure to present their green plastic membership card at the time of payment. If you have any questions about the Community Partners Program, contact Member Services at memberservices@eastendfood.coop or call 412-242-3598 ext. 103. You can check out the full listing of your Co-op's partners on our website at www.eastendfood.coop/co-op/community/community-partners-program.

Book Review: *Food Co-ops in America*

by Dave Hereth

There are a lot of books about U.S. food and food politics, yet there aren't many about food co-ops. Although co-ops have existed in this country for almost two centuries, I can think of only two books that look at their history: Craig Cox's *Storefront Revolution* (1994, Rutgers University Press), a history of sectarian bickering in 1960s and '70s Minneapolis-St. Paul co-ops; and a single chapter in Tracey Deutsch's *Building a Housewife's Paradise* (2010, University of North Carolina Press) that charts the history of food co-ops in Chicago.

Now there is Anne Meis Knupfer's *Food Co-ops in America* (available at the Co-op), a new book that gives cooperators a broader look at who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. Using newsletters, correspondence, newspapers, and board minutes, as well interviews with co-op members, workers, and managers, Knupfer tells the story of American food co-ops from the pre-Civil War era to the present. It's interesting to read about the historical circumstances that have led so many Americans to start and support food co-ops over the past 180 years. Some of those founders' concerns will sound familiar to us: food safety and quality, as well as the desire for greater control over economic resources. Other motivating factors are relatively new. Environmental issues, for instance, didn't have much impact on people's decisions until the 1960s and '70s.

Knupfer also writes in great detail about the rise (and in some cases, the fall) of several long-standing co-ops in various parts of the country: Ithaca, NY; Hyde Park in Chicago; Hanover, NH; and Adamant, VT. She provides an abundance of information for those readers interested in what makes food co-ops succeed and what causes them to fail. The story of the Ithaca Consumer Co-operative Society (ICCS) is one example that provides great insight into the role of democracy in keeping co-ops healthy. The ICCS, which started during the Great Depression, closed their doors for good in the early 1980s. The co-op lost the support of many members when its board failed to support the United Farm Workers' grape and lettuce boycotts and even called the police to remove picketers from the store's entrance and parking lot.

Knupfer finishes the book by looking at some co-ops that have begun operating in the last 10 years. Food co-ops are financially fragile, and if they succeed they face other challenges. Can they be profitable without becoming "corporate?" Can they grow and open new stores without sacrificing democracy and community? Although the number of food co-ops in the United States is growing, unfortunately many of those mentioned in the book have already closed their doors. Learning about their rise and fall, as well as examining the history of the movement overall, can only benefit organizations such as ours that continue to thrive and look toward expansion.

Did You Know...
it's possible to shop your Co-op on a budget?

Many people believe that maintaining a healthy diet will break the bank. Since we hope for all people to have access to clean, healthy foods, we want to share some tips about how you can shop your Co-op on a budget.

(Please note that items on sale will only be sold at the sale price, less the 2% member discount.)

Make Some Changes

Set a Budget and Plan Ahead

- Be realistic: When you make your food budget, be sure to factor in dining out. Even if you mostly eat at home, almost all families eat at restaurants from time to time.
- Make a list: Though many shoppers skip the list, it can help deter impulse buying. You can base your list around supplies already in your cupboards.
- Plan around deals: Keep a copy of the current Co+op Deals flyer handy when you develop your menu and shopping lists.
- Shop the specials: In addition to Co+op Deals on grocery items, our fresh departments also have regular specials. You can find information on our website and social media pages, plus be on the lookout for signage in the store.

Be a Smart Shopper

- Join the Co-op if you're not a member: With a daily 2% discount, the quarterly 10% discount, plus regularly distributed Co+op Deals coupons, it pays to be a member!
- Shop seasonally: when produce is locally in season it will typically be at its cheapest. As an added bonus, it will also be at its freshest!
- Bulk it up: Some of the best pricing at your Co-op can be found in the Bulk Department. Plus you can buy just the amount you need.
- Special order savings: Stock up and shop by the case when possible. This member-only option allows shoppers to save 20% off of retail prices.

- Learn to cook: Buy less processed and packaged foods. Investing time, rather than money, in preparing a meal will typically be more economical (and healthier!).
- Veg out: Vegetarian options are often less expensive, so consider decreasing the number of meat-based meals you eat.
- Explore alternatives: Try cheaper options for your go-to snacks and beverages. For instance, try making your own batch of herbal iced tea instead of buying it by the bottle, or make your own kale chips at home.
- Love leftovers: Whether it's for dinner another night, or packing a lunch to take to work, leftovers are a great money-saver. You could even start a message board on your fridge alerting your household to what needs to be eaten first.

Don't forget your Co-op also honors some additional discounts, such as SNAP benefits and Senior Discount Days (anyone 62 or older receives a 5% discount, which may be combined with quarterly member discounts and/or SNAP benefits).

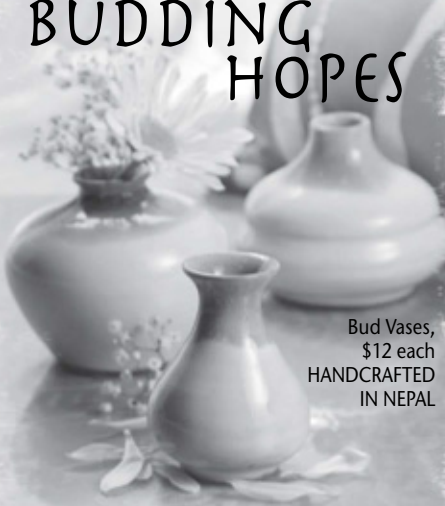
A final tip is to regularly re-evaluate your shopping, menu-making, and actual eating habits. Figure out what's working and what's not, what expectations or plans are unrealistic, and what other practices you can put in place. If you'd like to share other suggestions for ways to shop the Co-op on a budget, email memberservices@eastendfood.coop.

Unclassifieds:

MASSAGE THERAPY: Great gift for yourself or a loved one! Deep Tissue massage or Shiatsu. Co-op member discount is available. Marcia Smith, www.bodyharmonypgh.com, 412-871-5388.


IMAGINE YOURSELF HERE! Classified ads available in *The Co-operator* for only \$35/month. Member and contract discounts available. For more info contact memberservices@eastendfood.coop or call 412-242-3598 ext. 103.

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THE CO-OP

The East End Food Co-op is Pittsburgh’s only member-owned natural and organic food market, serving the community since 1980. We offer the finest in certified organic produce and herbs, bulk foods, vitamins and supplements, cruelty-free health and beauty aids, organic and natural packaged and perishable goods and hard-to-find items for special dietary needs.

Our award-winning Vegetarian Café and Juice Bar offers a daily array of fresh, wholesome, hot entrées, soups, salads and vegan dishes.

The Co-op is open to the public and membership is not required to make purchases, but members do receive better prices, have access to the Federal Credit Union, and can vote and serve on the Board of Directors.

7516 Meade St. Pittsburgh, PA 15208
www.eastendfood.coop

Store: 412.242.3598
Café: 412.242.7726
8 AM - 9 PM 8 AM - 7 PM

Credit Union:
412.243.7574
Wednesdays 6-8 PM
Saturdays 3-6 PM

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Opinions expressed are the writers’ own and do not necessarily reflect Co-op policy. The East End Food Co-op does not endorse the views or products of the advertisers in this newsletter.

CONTACT US:

If you are interested in more information about advertising or would like to submit an article, please contact Member Services:

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7516 Meade St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

Email: memberservices@eastendfood.coop

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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH: THREE-WAY TIE!

Congratulations to Frank Salati, Dominic Vizzio, and Jordan White who were all chosen for the Co-op staff picks for March 2014 Employees of the Month. Frank (not pictured) is a manager on duty in the Front End; he has worked at the Co-op for 8 months. Dominic is a Café hot cook who has worked here for over 2 years. Jordan is the night shift stock supervisor and has been with the Co-op for nearly 2 years.



Frank Salati

Q. If you could change one thing about the Co-op, what would it be?

A. I would make it bigger so that more people can experience it.

Q. How did you feel when you found out you were the Employee of the Month?

A. Ticked! I was very happy to learn that I was tied – I think that is cooperative. I’d be happy to share this title with any of my co-workers.

Dominic Vizzio

Q. What is one thing you’ve learned in your time working at the Co-op?

A. That learning will never stop unless it is hijacked by conditioning.

Q. How did you feel when you found out you were the Employee of the Month?

A. I felt gratitude for the people that I work with, and for my nomination. I felt like I wanted to take a group photo instead of just myself.

Jordan White

Q. What is one thing you’ve learned in your time working at the Co-op?

A. People really like kale.

Q. What are your favorite things about your job here?

A. The people are pretty cool, but I’ve gotta say that fronting and facing are a close second.

NEW FACES

Caleb Ellis Café

Before joining the Co-op, Caleb had experience working on farms, which in part led him to apply for a job here. Caleb enjoys many hobbies outside of work, including playing music, drawing, embroidering, felting, sewing, and screen-printing. An avid walker, Caleb plans to spend the spring, summer, and fall finding and walking up every set of city steps in Pittsburgh.

Will Heriford Stock

Will values building local networks, sourcing local, sustainable food, and community partnership and education, so naturally he came to join the Co-op. Working here brings back happy memories of his days working in local health food stores in Chicago. In his spare time, Will enjoys physical training and mud challenges among many other interests that range from art and music to science and comedy.

Krissie Scagline Café

Krissie brings over 13 years of customer service experience to the Co-op, having worked at juice and smoothie bars, café hot bars, and as a baker. She enjoys writing, dancing, adventures, and crafting, and strives to be as natural and eco-friendly as possible. Krissie is always looking for ways to help others, and one day she hopes to start a camp for girls.

Cavanaugh Quick Front End

Cavanaugh came to the Co-op because she wanted to work with an organization that emphasizes community benefit as part of its business model. In college, Cavanaugh helped “green up” her campus through encouraging the sourcing of local, sustainable products. In addition to her role at the Co-op, she is an educator and event coordinator for a youth arts organization, Dreams of Hope, and a teacher at Northside Studio.

Meghan Keating Produce

Meghan brings over 14 years of experience in the natural foods industry to her role as the Co-op’s produce manager. She has an interest in sustainable agriculture and the right to food availability and accessibility for all people. Meghan believes the only way to truly make a change in the world is to become involved in your community and create a common vision. She enjoys live music and swapping good recipes.

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Café Specials • April 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 LEMON PASTA WITH WHITE BEANS & GREENS	2 BURRITO BAR	3 SEITAN STROGANOFF	4 PIZZA DAIRY & VEGAN	5 BBQ TOFU
6 CHEF'S CHOICE	7 ROASTED VEGETABLE LASAGNA	8 MOCK TUNA NOODLE CASSEROLE	9 COUNTRY KITCHEN	10 COCONUT CURRY TOFU	11 PIZZA DAIRY & VEGAN	12 ASPARAGUS & MUSHROOM QUICHE
13 CHEF'S CHOICE	14 RED CURRY WITH SQUASH	15 PAD THAI	16 THAI KITCHEN	17 BLACK BEAN & YAM QUESADILLAS	18 PIZZA DAIRY & VEGAN	19 BROCCOLI WITH TOFU & PEANUT SAUCE
20 BRUNCH BAR (ALL DAY)	21 CHARMOULA SEITAN & POTATOES	22 CHANA MASALA	23 INDIAN KITCHEN	24 EGGPLANT TAGINE	25 PIZZA DAIRY & VEGAN	26 QUINOA POLENTA WITH ROASTED RED PEPPER SAUCE
27 CHEF'S CHOICE	28 BARLEY RISOTTO	29 JAMBALAYA	30 CAJUN KITCHEN			

Café Hours

SOUP, JUICE & SALAD BAR:
DAILY 8AM-7PM

HOT BAR:
DAILY 11AM-7PM

WEEKEND BRUNCH:
9AM-1:30PM

April Co-op Events

INTRO TO ORGANIC GARDENING

Bob Madden, Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 7:00 PM

Calling all beginner and budding gardeners... This workshop will cover all the basic skills and methods you need to know to start digging in. Experienced urban farmer and garden educator Bob Madden will discuss layout, soil management, planting, watering, weeding, and of course, growing and harvesting some of your favorite veggies. Bob will answer your questions about gardening, and help you prepare to get growing!

ADDING VALUE TO OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

Danielle Roberts, Republic Food Enterprise Center

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 6:30 PM

Danielle Roberts of the Republic Food Enterprise Center (RFEC) invites you to join in the discussion on food sheds, food hubs, and food deserts, as well as the multiple definitions of local. Danielle will also talk about how RFEC is creating value-added products by utilizing "second-grade" produce that would otherwise be wasted. Come learn about how this organization is working to make healthy, local food available to everyone!

GETTING TO KNOW GARDEN HERBS

Bob Madden, Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 7:00 PM

Join Bob Madden for another spring-time workshop that will help you cultivate a deeper understanding of organic gardening. In this workshop, Bob will discuss how to plant, maintain, and harvest several varieties of popular herbs, such as rosemary, basil, and parsley. He will also share a number of his favorite cooking tips and storage strategies. Come learn about these tasty and fragrant additions to your garden!

PARENTING BY CONNECTION

Karen Bernard, EEFC Book Buyer

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 6:30 PM

Family/community mediator, counselor, and certified teacher, Karen Bernard will present the basic ideas of *Parenting by Connection*, a series of booklets that are now available at the Co-op. This approach emphasizes listening to children's feelings and encourages parents to develop listening partnerships with other parents. This interactive workshop will include open discussion, questions, and the opportunity to practice listening. To allow parents to share freely, this event is for adults only.

SMALL SPACE GARDENING

Bob Madden, Garden Dreams Urban Farm & Nursery

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 7:00 PM

Do you have a small yard, patio, porch, sidewalk, or even a window sill? Then you can garden! In this workshop, Bob Madden will cover many tactics for producing high yields of fruits and vegetables in small spaces. Strategies include using vertical space, containers, indoor growing, Bio-intensive spacing, and high fertility soil. Come learn about maximizing the growing potential of the small spaces in your garden and around your home.

These events are FREE; just call 412-242-3598 to reserve your spot!

Save
..... the
Date

EAST END FOOD CO-OP

ANNUAL MEETING

When? Sunday, September 7th

Where? The Union Project
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