



THIS MONTH ▶ Volunteering ▶ Vitamin C ▶ Lara's shift ▶ Native jams

Lúcuma, yacón syrup

Lúcuma (pron. look-a-mah)

RAW, ORGANIC, VEGAN

▶ Lúcuma is a nutrient-dense fruit, native to the dry subtropical Andean coastal valleys of Peru. The tree is long-lived, evergreen, and belongs to the Sapotacea family being similar to the canistel and sapote. It grows at temperate elevations, between 1000-2400m. It smells malty and sweet and tastes a little like maple syrup flavoured ice-cream. Indeed, in Peru, the demand for lúcuma as an ice cream flavouring even exceeds the demand for more globally popular flavours such as strawberry, chocolate, and vanilla. Lúcuma fruit is an excellent source of carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals, including plenty of beta-carotene, niacin (B3) and iron. In Peru it's known as the "Gold of the Incas", and is considered one of the lost crops of the Incas. Today, this fruit is still prominent in

contemporary Peruvian celebrations. Lúcuma has been found on ceramics at burial sites of the indigenous people of coastal Peru.

HOW TO USE. Lúcuma powder blends easily and well with ice creams, baby food, yogurts, pies, cakes, cookies, smoothies, chocolate bars and desserts. Try a dessertspoon in your breakfast cereal or smoothie. MORE www.raw-chocolate.net/superfoods.php?functional-food=lucuma

Yacón (pron. yar-kon) syrup RAW, ORGANIC, VEGAN

▶ Yacón syrup is a sweetener extracted from the tuberous roots of the yacón plant indigenous to the warm, temperate valleys of the Andes mountains and a distant relative of the sunflower. It grows at elevations below 3500m. The tubers ▶2



LUCUMA FRUIT

F + V

what's good in fruit+veg with Renata Field

NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ TOMATOES. They're back! Fresh from Victoria
- ▶ CHILLIES. Fresh and spicy.
- ▶ CARROTS. Try FD Western Reds or Baby Carrots
- ▶ GARLIC. New season, FD Oz Purple, small but powerful.
- ▶ ONIONS: Fresh from the ground, brown onions are back again.
- ▶ PURPLE CONGO POTATOES. Lilac colour, great as mash.
- ▶ SPUNTA POTATOES. Good for frying.
- ▶ TAHITIAN LIMES. Tangy and refreshing.

- ▶ ZUCCHINI. Excellent NSW produce.
- ▶ WATERMELON
- ▶ PINEAPPLES
- ▶ CHOKOS

ON THEIR WAY OUT

- ▶ APPLES. It's the end of the season
- ▶ BROCCOLI. The last of this winter joy.
- ▶ CAULIFLOWER. Another winter staple that's on its way out.
- ▶ GARLIC GREENS. Like shallots but with a garlic taste.
- ▶ SWEDES. Fantastic baked or in soup.

WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ ASPARAGUS. Crisp and fresh. Try them raw or just blanched.
- ▶ BANANAS. Super sweet and creamy.
- ▶ BROADBEANS. Make the most of them while they're still in season.

- ▶ HERBS. Fresh basil, coriander, rosemary, lemonbalm and more in the shop fridge.
- ▶ RHUBARB
- ▶ ROCKET. Fresh, with a bite.
- ▶ LETTUCE. Many varieties, try the FD mix.
- ▶ ORANGES. Sweet and juicy. FD
- ▶ SUNDOWNER APPLES: Fresh and crisp from Tasmania
- ▶ STRAWBERRIES
- ▶ TURNIPS. FD

■ If you would like to ask me about anything, please email produce@alfalfahouse.org

■ For week-to-week fruit+veg availability: go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/PRODUCTS/fruit+veg.htm

FD: Farmer-Direct

Renata

have a mild sweet flavour and an unusual moist, crunchy texture slightly reminiscent of fresh-picked apple, pineapple and watermelon. Yacón has a unique carbohydrate composition. Most other roots and tubers store carbohydrates as starch; yacón stores them as fructooligosaccharide (FOS), a polymer composed mainly of fructose, meaning it potentially offers benefits for diabetics and those with colon-related diseases. Other benefits include increased production of beneficial short-chain fatty acids such as butyrate, increased absorption of calcium and magnesium, and improved elimination of toxic compounds, and increased bone density. It also acts as a prebiotic. The undigested portion of yacón serves as food for friendly bacteria, such as Bifidobacteria and Lactobacillus species, in the colon. Yacón provides an excellent balance of 20 essential amino acids and is very high in potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, and phosphorus. It has few calories and low sugar levels. Yacón may also help prevent acne, constipation, low immune system function and manage weight control and osteoporosis.

HOW TO USE. Use in place of honey, malt, rice syrup, and sugar in recipes. Ideal for smoothies, desserts, toppings.
 MORE www.raw-chocolate.net/superfoods.php?low-GI=yacon
Lúcuma and yacón syrup are from Loving Earth.

WHAT'S NEW

- ▶ Organic dried mango – new season from NT
- ▶ Organic raw pistachios, farmer-direct from the Food Forest, near Adelaide
- ▶ Phoenix organic lemon lime and bitters
- ▶ Organic gluten-free baby porridge
- ▶ Organic gluten-free rice cereal
- ▶ Barambah quark – more dense, goes further and is creamier; replaces Mungali quark
- ▶ Oracle Organics lemonade
- ▶ Organic Labna cheese – Lebanese-style yogurt/cheese; mix with a bit of salt and chopped garlic, serve in cucumber cups
- ▶ Marinade mix – see recipe page 6
- ▶ Primasoy Organic chilli tempeh

WHAT'S BACK

- ▶ Organic pinenuts
- ▶ Spinach Rigatoni
- ▶ Organic milk chocolate coated cherries
- ▶ Organic dried cherries farmer-direct from Young, NSW
- ▶ Wheat grain
- ▶ Spelt grain and rolled spelt
- ▶ Red split lentils
- ▶ Sundried tomatoes
- ▶ Organic brown Koshihikari rice – while stocks last, 1kg limit per customer per days
- * Epsom salts

WHAT'S OUT OR GONE

- ▶ Organic black turtle beans – unavailable due to poor quality
- ▶ Raw dark agave – due very soon
- ▶ Damask rose cream – delayed by supplier
- ▶ Popcorn
- ▶ Mungali Harvarti,

Cheddar cheese
 ▶ Chicory root – unavailable at supplier

WHAT'S IN SOON

- ▶ Wild hibiscus flowers in syrup
- ▶ Horizon salt crystals
- ▶ Variety of new tea blends
- ▶ Earl Grey Tea loose leaf
- ▶ English Breakfast tea loose leaf
- ▶ Salad and Veg Blend
- ▶ Casserole Blend
- ▶ Red rose petals
- ▶ Garlic powder
- ▶ Fairtrade Organic Palestine olive oil
- ▶ Fairtrade 75% olive oil soaps
- ▶ Fairtrade organic black rice and Fairtrade organic purple rice currently on a ship from Thailand

– Monika Baumann
 Groceries Coordinator

Anytime is good!

While we have a number of paid staff, the co-op relies on considerable volunteer support. If you're new to volunteering at Alfalfa, before you do your first volunteer shift, we'll take you through some basic OH+S training and get you familiar with the shop and storeroom layout so you'll know where things are. It takes about a half-hour. To book in for a tour, please email Nija (coordinator@alfalfahouse.org). Here are some of our ongoing and upcoming projects you might be interested in. And remember there's 25% off each shop for just two hours of your time!

1. **RESTOCKING.** It's the main job. Being a bulk food store means we're always refilling the bins and jars. Anytime.

2. **DATA ENTRY.** Help add more product information to our database.

3. **JOIN IN THE SHOP MAKE-OVER.**

2

We're about to begin doing up the shop and need people to help paint, refloor, and improve the lighting. If you can't help out with the work maybe you could procure or donate materials.

4. **HELP US PARTY.** Alfalfa House turns 21 next year. To celebrate, we're looking at putting on a Fundraiser Birthday Party. If party-planning is your special subject or you'd like to help make food for the party, please email Nija (coordinator@alfalfahouse.org).

5. **GIVE US SOME ADVICE.** Anyone with experience and/or expertise in financial management, strategy, and planning would be welcomed with open arms.

WHEN IS GOOD?

■ Tuesdays, around lunchtime to give



Mailing out the annual newsletter: just one of many diverse volunteer jobs on offer

the Shop Coordinators a break.

- Thursdays, 7.30-9.30pm to help with close up.
 - Fridays, 9am-noon to help set up fruit and veg
 - Saturdays, noon onwards to help with refilling and restocking.
 - Sundays, all day, but especially 10am-noon to help set up, around lunchtime to give Shop Coordinators a break, and 5-7pm to help with close up.
- In fact, any time is good.

Native jams

As you may have noticed, the co-op is now stocking a range of indigenous Australian jams. These jams from Kurrajong Native Foods make a great condiment on toast or biscuits. Although often more bitter than their European counterparts, they can also be used as a glaze for roasting meat and sweet potato, and often make great icecream toppings. One or two tablespoons can also boost the flavour and moisture content of your favourite chocolate cake recipe. Keep them refrigerated after opening.

Desert Quandong Jam. A native parasitic tree that grows in the deserts of WA, SA and NSW, the quandong is a large red stone fruit with flavours akin to peach and apricot.

Finger Lime Marmalade. A rainforest native from south-east Queensland and northern NSW, it is thought by some to be the most superior lime flavour available because of its strong, aromatic and bitter flavour.

Lillipilli Bush Tucker Conserve. Lillipillis grow along the Australian east coast and along the coastal rivers. This conserve has an apple and cinnamon flavour with a hint of clove. It can be used as a sweet

spread, topping, or dessert filling for a flan.

Macadamia Nut Butter. Macadamias are rainforest natives of the subtropical NSW and Queensland coast. This nut butter is sweet and creamy and high in monounsaturated fats. For sweets, try it with pancakes, ice cream or mixed in a cheesecake.

Macadamia Nut Butter with Rainforest Plum Swirl. Rainforest plums are an understorey tree from Northern NSW with a dark purple fruit and a slightly sour flavour. The swirl is great with toast, pancakes or crepes.

Rainforest Plum Jam The tangy flavour of this jam is a great addition to rich desserts such as cheesecakes, and can be mixed with plain yoghurt or dolloped onto muesli.

Rosella Jam The rosella is thought to have been introduced several thousand years ago, and now grows on the rainforest and tall forest borderlands across northern Australia. The flavour is similar to raspberry and rhubarb, and a little tart. This chunky jam is perfect for toast and pancakes.

MORE INFO www.bushtuckershop.com and www.oztukka.com.au

Jo Rose



Rachel and Renata at the blitz

Permablitz takes on Alfalfa House

On Sunday November 16, Alfalfa House's backyard was transformed thanks to the hearty and impressive efforts of a dedicated bunch of twenty volunteers. The garden has been planted with some hardy herbs and the wormfarms have been relocated and tidied up to make them easier to get to so they can be fed and shoppers can fill up their worm juice bottles. Big thank yous to everyone who helped out, to Lara and Adam for their cooking and to the Management Committee for the food grant for the day.

– Renata Field

P.S. Does anyone have a watering can they'd be happy to donate to the co-op for our garden?

SPROUTING SEEDS

FIVE STEPS

1. Place your seeds in a glass jar and cover with warm water. The key is not overfill the jar - air and water need circulate for the sprouts to grow.
2. Cover the jar with the muslin and secure with an elastic band and allow the seeds to soak overnight.
3. Next morning, drain the seeds and gently shake the jar to ensure the seeds are well covered in water and to remove any excess liquid.
4. Tilt the jar with the muslin facing down at a 45° angle so the seeds are fully drained - your dish rack is ideal.

5. Rinse, drain and gentle shake the sprouts two to three times a day to keep them damp and ensure they are getting a good air supply.

After three days the seeds should have begun sprouting; after 6-7 days they should be ready to harvest. They'll keep for a week in the fridge if you rinse them every few days.

– Jo Rose



THE VITAMINS A TO Z

4

VITAMIN C, also known as ascorbic acid, is a vitamin with a big reputation for keeping us healthy. As you would know, during the flu season, Vitamin C can help to fight off germs and infection and to strengthen the immune system. It also helps with prompting a restful sleep – very useful when recovering and also generally in our ever stressful lives. This vitamin helps heal cuts and burns, helps blood to flow properly and also plays an important part in the production of collagen – a protein the body needs to make healthy skin, blood, bone, cartilage, teeth and gums.

A DEFICIENCY of vitamin C is relatively rare in modern society as an even moderately balanced diet will usually contain plenty of good food sources. First symptoms tend to be bleeding from mucous membranes, spongy gums and the formation of liver spots. Paleness, depression and partial immobilisation are also possible symptoms. Smokers who have a poor diet that is low in vitamin C are at a greater risk of lung-borne diseases than smokers with a higher intake of the nutrient.

C
vitamin

OUR BODIES are only able to store a small amount of this vitamin and so our supply soon depletes if we don't top up with fresh supplies. While the vast majority of animals and plants synthesise their own vitamin C, humans have lost the enzymatic ability to do so. Trauma and injury also take their toll on our reserves. That said, generally in an average healthy person, a balanced diet without extra supplementation will provide plenty of Vitamin C for our body's needs. Pregnant women, smokers or people who are under extra stress may need to add more to their daily diet.

EATING PLENTY OF fresh, colourful, raw, ripe, in-season organic fruits and vegetables is best as cooking has been shown to destroy Vitamin C in foods. Colours to look for: red, orange, yellow and green.

A RED RAW SALAD

Here's a yummy red salad I created last summer – a great compliment to any green salad throughout the warmer months.

Grate or chop (depending on preferred consistency) a couple of red capsicums, some carrots, red onion, beetroot and tomatoes. Add each one to preferred consistency and taste to a large serving bowl. I personally only add a small amount of red onion as I like to have just a hint of its flavour, but adding more will give your salad more of a bite. Very quick and easy it is a fabulous, colourful salad, full of vitamin C.

– Lucy Marinelli

Happy healthy holidays are here

November is the start of the silly season. End-of-year parties start getting under way and time, energy and resources are stretched to the limit. Children, in particular, can find this time of year exhausting:

with the end of the school year on the horizon, Christmas just over it and extra activities and functions. The best way to ensure they have the energy to keep up and bounce through each day is to make sure that, despite the extra busyness and the constant break in routine, their diet and lifestyle are on the healthy end of the scale.

Easier said than done of course, what with sweet sickly temptations at every turn. Any parent who has sent their children to a party filled with processed foods, drinks, sugars, colours and who knows what else, will know of the tell-tale spikes in energy. It's best not to stress about the inevitable occasions that can't be avoided and do what you can to make those occasions you have a little more control over a more satisfying affair all around.

Finger food is an easy way to make quick and healthy food for any gathering, be it the bring-a-plate-of-food party, open-house, picnic or barbecue. Vegetable sticks with homemade dip is an obvious but good choice and can be prepared a little ahead of time and kept in the fridge until needed. Fresh fruit platters make a colourful addition and give a sweet juicy pick up. Most kids love fruit, especially in an abundance of different colours



and flavours and when cut up into bite-size chunks ready for little fingers, they're more likely to grab some on the run.

For something a little more fancy, though still relatively quick and easy, try blending

up some cool fruit mocktails or some dried fruit balls. Spend an afternoon with the kids making a variety of flavours – banana, apricot, date, coconut and you'll have a ready supply on hand when friends drop by for a Christmas drink or they can even work as a gift arranged on a Christmas plate and wrapped in cellophane. They can make a great gift for teachers too.

Kids love to get in and help, especially when they can get their hands in there or lick the bowl. Give *Apricot Almond Balls* a try. Soak a cup of almonds overnight along with a cup of apricots until they're plump and drain any excess water. Blend the almonds and the apricots until smooth and add desiccated

coconut until it reaches a pliable consistency. Now it's time for the kids to get dirty. Get them to roll the mixture into small balls and have an extra bowl of desiccated coconut ready for coating.

Refrigerate the balls to harden them and they're ready to serve. Variations will depend on what dried fruit is around and you can change the amount of nuts and coconut to taste and consistency. Have fun experimenting with flavours and ask the kids for suggestions. You never know what might just taste great. *A Healthy Start is a regular column on children's nutrition.*



My shift

Lara Daley, Chair of Alfalfa House

INTERVIEW BY STEVIE BEE

How long have you been a member?
About two years.

How did you find out about Alfalfa House?
I was a coordinator at the UTS [University of Technology, Sydney] food co-op and when I finished my degree I decided to join my community food co-op, which was Alfalfa House. I was also interested in working at Alfalfa House.

How did you first get involved in the co-op? Was it as a volunteer?
No, as a shopper. I didn't volunteer initially.

You ended up joining the staff as a Shop Coordinator a few years ago. What did you learn from that experience?

Being a Shop Coordinator quickly familiarised me with how the shop worked and by going to staff meetings and to Management Committee (MC) meetings I learned how the co-op as a whole worked, in particular its processes and decision-making, and so working at Alfalfa House deepened my awareness.

How did you go from a Shop Coordinator to the MC?

Although I stopped working as a Shop Coordinator in 2006, I still wanted to continue my involvement. For me, that meant that I had to be fully involved; I couldn't do it by half measure. To be honest, I love process, I'm a meeting junkie!

You didn't just join the MC, you stood for chair. Was that a big move for you?

No, it wasn't. I didn't see the role of chair being any different to other positions on MC. The title of chair is just a legal requirement, but it doesn't carry any more importance than any other role. Because I enjoy facilitating and encouraging communication in groups, and having been a staff member, I felt I was in a good position to facilitate communication within the MC and between MC members and staff. I see my role as a supportive one.



How do you see Alfalfa House and co-ops in general?

I see Alfalfa House as a space to create social change in a practical, tangible way, to build alternatives now as well as to achieve broader structural change. It gives people a chance to run an ethical business within certain limits – sourcing food directly from farmers, paying Fair Trade prices for goods and so on. I also believe Alfalfa House and co-ops in general can inspire people to undertake similar projects in other areas of life.

For a lot of members the MC doesn't enjoy a high profile. How do you think that could change?

Communicating through the eNews and the website for a start. A report on what's going on in the MC in the eNews – members can now check out the MC meeting minutes on the website. Make more procedures accessible on the website. Make it known to members that they are welcome to come to the monthly meetings.

What do you think you've achieved in your year on MC?

A lot less than I thought I would! I think our biggest achievement is that we are on track to create a stronger community. We've clarified our processes and

responsibilities. I think we've done a great job at building trust between MC and staff and have really improved our channels of communication. We've also discussed strategy and goals at our MC-Staff Vision Day and at our Business Planning night and I think we're a lot clearer about that. We've also gone from having just four members on MC to a full MC of seven. We've empowered staff to make certain decisions, which used to be undertaken by MC and which means we can minimise our involvement at the shop level. Staff are now more engaged with MC through having elected staff delegates to the meetings and I'm pleased to say more staff come to the MC meetings.

What's next for the MC?

Taking action on the priorities identified in the business plan and building upon this work. A continuing challenge will be balancing the community and business sides of the co-op to ensure a sustainable and happy Alfalfa House. A new MC has just been elected with both some previous MC members and one new person. I have decided to take a bit of a break so have not renominated. MC are still a few members off a full MC and I encourage any members with community or business experience and passion to consider putting their hands up for this year.

When you're not busy with the co-op, what do you like doing?

Well, I do paid work at AID/WATCH, campaigning on Australian overseas aid issues; I do a little bit with Friends of the Earth (Sydney) and I've active with the Mexico-Australia Solidarity Network.

And when you're not doing that?

I can't sit still! I like making zines and other crafty things, visiting Newcastle, gardening (I'm doing a course in permaculture), riding my bike, I love cooking when I get the chance, shopping for food and oh yes, I'm getting back into flamenco dancing.

Recipe of the moment

WITH MONIKA BAUMANN

Bangers and Mash (Alfalfa-style)

VEGAN, GLUTEN-FREE. SERVES 3-4

- 500g Earnest Bean tofu
- 30g marinade mix
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- tamari to taste
- 1 cup sunflower oil
- 1 kg Purple Congo potatoes
- 250ml soy milk
- salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

- Slice the tofu into strips. In a bowl mix the marinade mix and sesame oil and mix through the tofu strips. Set aside for 30 mins. Mix again and add tamari to taste.
- Meanwhile, boil potatoes whole to maintain flavour and colour till soft. Drain and rinse with cold water.
- Peel potatoes, if desired, and mash. Add salt and pepper and a good dash of sunflower oil. Add soy milk until the desired consistency is achieved.
- Heat sunflower oil in a pan and fry up the tofu.

TIPS

- Leave the marinade mix to sit overnight for a stronger flavour
- Choose potatoes of a similar size for easy cooking!
- Boil up some broad beans as a colourful side dish.

All ingredients are available from the co-op. All past recipes are on the website. Go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/recipes.htm

Permaculture Diary and Calendar 2009



■ The Permaculture Diary is no ordinary diary; it's more a book within a diary. It boasts 83 pages of good news stories on sustainability together with

hundreds of photos of permaculture in action, including school food gardens and urban community gardens. There's also a seasonal sowing chart and biodynamic best sowing times.

■ The calendar, which opens to A3 and is made from 100% recycled paper, illustrates David Holmgren's 12 permaculture design principles with full colour photos and text.

AVAILABLE ONLINE (FREE POSTAGE) AT www.permacultureprinciples.com

Buy in bulk and save even more!

Members of Alfalfa House can order food in bulk (in the minimum weight or quantity the co-op buys the product in) and receive an extra 5% discount on top of any other discount to which they are entitled. If it's not a regular co-op product, we may still be able to get it in. To find out more go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/bulk_orders.htm

POSITION VACANT

Shop Coordinator

TEMPORARY PART-TIME

18-20 hours per week
Three shifts: Thursday, Saturday, Sunday.

FULL DETAILS

www.alfalfahouse.org/html/news.htm

URBAN ORCHARD

Urban Orchard is a monthly local produce swap where people share excess produce from their gardens, and food gleaned from their neighbourhoods. By hosting Urban Orchard, we're hoping to build on our objective of fostering community. What to bring? Anything you have spare in your garden, or anything you find in your local area such as herbs, fruit or vegetables. Swap lemons for apricots, apples for tomatoes, basil for nectarines, recipes for gardening tips, on a completely informal basis. The swap is the last Saturday of the month at the co-op.

WHEN: Saturday Nov. 29 from 10am-noon

6

for the diary

Next Management Committee meeting
Wednesday November 26

7.30pm at the Black Rose Bookshop
22 Enmore Road Newtown.

All members are very welcome and encouraged to attend.

PLEASE NOTE that the nutritional advice given in the eNews is of a general nature only and is not intended as a substitute for professional advice.

PRICEWATCH

Product	Alfalfa House* Cert. Organic	Health Food Store Cert. Organic	Supermarket Cert. Organic	Supermarket Not Organic
Balsamic vinegar, 100g	\$2.44	\$2.90	\$2.31	\$1.09
Tamari, 100g	\$2.80	\$3.20	\$1.68	NOT AVAILABLE
Pasta sauce, 100g	\$1.05	\$1.35	\$1.14	\$0.47
Coconut cream, 100ml	\$0.45	\$0.62	\$0.54	\$0.31
Spelt pasta, 100g	\$1.65	\$2.80	\$2.14	NOT AVAILABLE

SURVEY NUMBER 4, NOVEMBER 2008

*PRICES ARE WITH THE BASIC 10% MEMBER DISCOUNT.

— Compiled by Jo Rose

FEED THE eNEWS

This newsletter is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members.

Please feel free to send in your hints, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to feedback@alfalfahouse.org

E-News is edited and designed by Stevie Bee for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd