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AGM passes major changes

The Annual General Meeting on Nov. 17 approved a new set of Rules that change the co-op from a non-trading share co-op to a non-trading non-share co-op. The upshot is that new members won't buy shares any more – instead they'll pay a one-off, non-refundable joining fee – and the shares of existing members are cancelled and those shares are no longer refundable should they resign. The Rules,

which are now in line with the Registry of Co-ops' modernised Rules, also allow a variation in the number of members of the Management Committee (MC) of between four and seven.

The better-than-usual turnout also discussed and agreed that owning our own premises should be a long-term goal of the co-op and that the MC work out how to pursue that goal.

In general business, the meeting

discussed Alfalfa House's relationship with new and emerging co-ops and how best to help them as well as how the co-op should deal with members who act in a way detrimental to the co-op.

The meeting lasted three hours and discussion was free-flowing, which is certainly healthy for co-op democracy.

– Stevie Bee

■ Draft minutes of the meeting will be on the website later this month.

IT'S ALL ABOUT STONE FRUIT

Hi everyone! I'm back from my little holiday in Europe, just in time for the summer delights! It's all stone fruit: so keep your eye out this month for cherries, mangoes, nectarines, apricots, peaches.

ON THEIR WAY OUT

- ▶ CITRUS: Tangelo, navels, grapefruit
- ▶ APPLES: Last of the season, good for apple pies, crumbles or in salads
- ▶ ASIAN GREENS: Pak Choy, Tat Soi, Bok Choy and Choy Sum
- ▶ PEAS AND BEANS
- ▶ BANANAS: Difficult to get right now
- ▶ STRAWBERRIES

NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ MANGOES
- ▶ PEACHES: Not for long though!
- ▶ NECTARINES: White-fleshed



what's good in fruit+veg with Renata Field

- ▶ SPANISH ONIONS: Finally back!
- ▶ PLUMS: Nice and juicy
- ▶ JOPPA ORANGES: FD, sweet and juicy
- ▶ GREEN CABBAGE: FD, crisp

WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ ELEPHANT GARLIC: Just dug up, FD
- ▶ ASPARAGUS: Crisp and tasty, a good source of folic acid, potassium, dietary fiber, and rutin.
- ▶ PAPAYA: Very high in vitamin C
- ▶ PURPLE ITALIAN GARLIC: Small bulbs full of flavour
- ▶ PINEAPPLE: Taste the Queensland sun!
- ▶ ROCKMELON: Not in for long
- ▶ WATERMELON: Small, sweet and seeded so full of flavour.
- ▶ GREENS: Lettuce (many varieties), English Spinach, Celery, Chicory
- ▶ BEETROOT BUNCHES: Gold and Red, FD

Use the tops like spinach.

- ▶ SILVERBEET and RAINBOW CHARD
- ▶ YAKON: Fantastic, fresh and crispy chopped up into a salad.

CHRISTMAS ORDERS

We can do bulk trays of fruit for Christmas if you let us know in advance. Pop an order into the Bulk Orders book in the shop or email me (see below)

LOCALLY-GROWN CHEMICAL-FREE

By January or February we hope to begin interviewing local farmers who supply us with chemical-free fresh produce. We have a volunteer interested in researching and visiting the farms. It means we'll be able to label our locally-grown produce more clearly so we'll all know what we're getting.

NEW, BACK & OUT

GROCERIES WITH MONIKA BAUMANN

WHAT'S new

► **UNPASTEURISED TEMPEH** made locally in East Lakes from organic soy beans, has a firm texture and to quote Amity, one of our Shop Coordinators, "it's the closest thing to real Indonesian tempe that I've eaten in Australia". It's delivered Thursdays but you'll need to get in quick or place a pre-pay order by 3pm Friday the week before you'd like it to make sure you don't miss out.

► **CHRISTMAS CAKE MUFFINS** Full of dried fruit and spices. these sugar-free, gluten-free treats from Bibba Baking are a must try on a Saturday morning, but for the next five to six weeks only.

► I've expanded our **IVYHOME DAIRY RANGE**, so as well as whole milk we now stock their **YOGHURT, DOUBLE CREAM AND FETTA IN BRINE**. All are organic, come in reusable glass jars (not plastic) and are delivered to the co-op on Monday afternoons.

► Organic **DRIED PINEAPPLE** – probably my new favourite thing. They're from Sri Lanka and they get even better if you soak them – put in a jar, cover with boiling water and leave it to rehydrate for 20–30 mins then remove the fruit, wait for it to cool and then savour it. Set the syrup aside and allow it to cool. Add some chopped fresh mint, put in the fridge for an hour for a naturally-sweet and refreshing iced tea. Yes, it does take a bit longer than eating it dried – which is still delicious – but trust me the wait is well worth it. (*Editor's note: If you're prepared to wait even longer, you can soak them in room temperature water for 8 hours.*)

► **CACAO CRUNCH NIBS** An organic blend of crushed cacao beans, coated in a paste of roasted chocolate liquefied nibs, and rolled in rapadura sugar. The taste has been described thusly: 'a chocolate explosion with a lightly smoky,

nutty, coffee-like flavour'. Cacao nibs are highly anti-oxidant, and rapadura



CACAO NIBS

(also known as panela) is absorbed more slowly into the bloodstream than processed cane sugar. Enjoy as is, straight from the bag as a healthier alternative to chocolate or as a substitute for chocolate chips in muffins, brownies, cakes and biscuits or add to cheesecakes, muesli, yoghurt, trail mix, crumble toppings or to bliss balls, truffles, pressed nut or crumb dessert bases or sprinkle over ice cream, gelato, hot cocoa or cappuccino.

► SPROCKET FAIRTRADE

ORGANIC COFFEE has made it into the shop after a bit of a delay due to a little hitch sourcing the beans. We now have the smooth **CRÈME BLEND** and also the stronger espresso style **GREEN GALAXY BLEND** they've developed just for Alfalfa House. This is an excellent quality coffee according to Nija, our Co-op Coordinator and coffee fiend, and is available in beans and a coarser ground suitable for plungers. Check out the November eNews for the story behind this coffee and innovative roasting process.

► Organic **DRIED PEACHES** from Bolivia – very thinly sliced and a tasty treat. Once the Australian ones become available we'll be switching over to the local ones.

► Organic **ROLLED WHITE RICE** (in the new rolled cereals section at the back of the shop). Check out the map (page 5) of where things live now that the gravity bins have all been installed.

WHAT'S back

► Organic **RAW SESAME OIL**

► Organic **PECANS**. New season stock from St Albans, NSW, has arrived

► **SAFE TOILET PAPER**

► Organic **ROLLED BROWN RICE** from India, here's hoping Australian stock will be available soon.

► **FRENCH GREEN LENTILS**

New season stock

► **CARMEL VALLEY SPIRULINA**

TREATS (Coconut spirulina, dark chocolate spirulina, mint spirulina, ginger surprise and fruit salad as well as carob-dipped spirulina, ginger surprise and fruit salad. No lac bug glazing agent used! (See eNews November 2009)

► Organic **RICE SYRUP**, available at the supplier again and we've solved the problem with the dispensing container.

► Organic **MAPLE SYRUP** – back in time for the holidays.

WHAT'S out

► Organic **TURKISH FIGS** – awaiting new season, hopefully mid-December in time for the holiday season

► Organic **BLACK MISSION FIGS** – due back late January

► Organic **BLACKSTRAP MOLASSES** has been discontinued by the supplier, I'm working on finding a new source.

► Organic **PINENUTS** – awaiting new season stock

► **AUSTRALIA'S OWN SOY MILK** – original and malt-free have both been discontinued by the supplier

► **TREGEAGLE COFFEE** – currently unavailable, waiting for next harvest

► **PARIS CREEK BRIE** – based on the feedback I've received (thanks!) I'm discontinuing the Brie but am keeping the biodynamic Nuage Blanc and Com'n Bear cheese

FOR REGULAR UPDATES VISIT

www.alfalfahouse.org/products.htm

SPEND \$60 IN DECEMBER AND SLURP ON A MANGO!

During December spend \$60 and score an organic mango plus a little surprise or two.

Best wishes for
2010

THE E-NEWS RETURNS
IN EARLY FEBRUARY 2010.

SHOP TALK

HOLIDAY SEASON AND SUPPLIES

The holiday season is coming up, which means suppliers are closing for up to four weeks from late December. I'm doing my best to ensure we are well-stocked but certain items will be temporarily unavailable, e.g., dairy and fridge goods will be in short supply in early January. Check out the PRODUCTS page of the website for updates including details of which bread and dairy deliveries are coming on what days. We'll keep updating the website as more

information comes to hand. Thanks for your understanding and cooperation in the next six weeks or so.

A reminder that all bulk orders for pick up before Christmas need to be placed by Thursday Dec. 10, except for Demeter stock, which need to be in by the end of Monday Dec. 7. Bulk orders must be collected promptly as Alfalfa has limited storage space, particularly over the holiday period.

Prepaid bread and dairy milk orders are not available between Monday Dec. 21 and Monday Jan. 11, due to suppliers closing over the holiday period.

GRAVITY BIN INSTAL COMPLETE

After a year of fundraising and installing and fundraising and installing the last of the gravity bins went in in late November. A big thank you to all who donated (both cash and in-kind), helped with fundraising, ate copious amounts of fundraiser chocolate (such a pain, I know), were there on those numerous late night instal (and never complained when things didn't always work out) and and so much more.

Monika Baumann, Groceries Coordinator

Festive Trading Hours

Thursday	Christmas Eve	December 24	11am-8pm
Friday	Christmas Day	December 25	CLOSED
Saturday	Boxing Day	December 26	CLOSED
Sunday		December 27	CLOSED
Monday	Public Holiday	December 28	CLOSED
Tuesday		December 29	11am-7pm
Wednesday		December 30	11am-7pm
Thursday	New Year's Eve	December 31	11am-4pm
Friday	New Year's Day	January 1	CLOSED
Saturday		January 2	9am-6pm

Free Buckets

The co-op has plenty of 5 to 25L heavy-duty plastic buckets and containers with lids. Hundreds of household uses. Ideal for nappies, compost, garbage, pot plants, food storage, tools and so on. Come in, have a look and take one or more! If you'd like to know more please email produce@alfalhouse.org

THE *what's* WHAT of Dried fruit

BY MONIKA BAUMANN

First off, rest assured that none of our dried fruit contains sulphur dioxide (often listed as E220 or 220), which is a preservative commonly added to dried fruit because of its anti-microbial properties and because it maintains the appearance of the fruit, that is, it makes the fruit look brighter. All are organic, except the incan berries, which are wildcrafted. Here's exactly what's in our dried fruit.

APPLE WEDGES: just granny smith apple that's been dried with the skin still on.

APRICOTS, TURKISH: just apricots

APRICOTS, AUSTRALIAN: just apricots (currently waiting for new season stock, which is at least a few months away)

BANANAS: just banana

CRANBERRIES: sweetened with concentrated organic apple juice (rather than pumped full of sugar as is commonly the case!). They also have a little bit (less than 0.5%) of organic sunflower oil added to stop them clumping together.

CURRENTS: lightly coated with



MANGO



PINEAPPLES



GOJIS



FIGS

organic grape seed oil and organic vegetable oil (non-specific) to stop them clumping together.

DATES, MEDJOL: just dates

FIGS, TURKISH: just Loreda figs

FIGS, BLACK MISSION: just figs

GOJI BERRIES: just goji berries, certified organic by ACO in Australia

INCAN BERRIES (wildcrafted): just incan berries, which are also known goldenberries

MANGOES: just mangoes

NECTARINES: just nectarines, from Young NSW

PEACHES: just peaches

PINEAPPLES: just pineapples

PRUNES: just dried sugar plums, from Young NSW

RAISINS: lightly coated with organic sunflower oil to stop clumping and sticking together

SULTANAS: just sultanas, no oil coating. (Golden sultanas are sultanas coated with organic olive oil to stop clumping and make them look plump.)

TOMATOES: salt added as a natural preservative, but no added oil

TRAIL MIX: contains sultanas, almonds, cashews, apple wedge, pepitas and raisins (all organic). The sultanas have a coating of olive oil and the raisins have a grape seed oil and non specific vegetable oil coating.

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Recipe OF THE MOMENT WITH JUSTINE WILCOX

Vegan sausages

Makes 7-8 sausages
simple and open to interpretation

- 1/2 cup cooked beans or lentils: soft, easily blended types are best; black, brown or blue lentils give best flavour
- 1 cup water or vegetable stock (if

using water
adjust the
amount of
tamari to compensate)

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- a clove or two of garlic
- flavourings to suit: favourites include sage, majoram, thyme, rosemary, pepper, curry, chilli, paprika, fennel, also rehydrated shiitake mushrooms diced fine (use soaking water as stock), and



reconstituted sundried tomatoes

- tamari to taste
- 1 1/4 cups gluten flour

(Have a steamer ready with rapidly boiling water; so you can steam them as soon as they are made.)

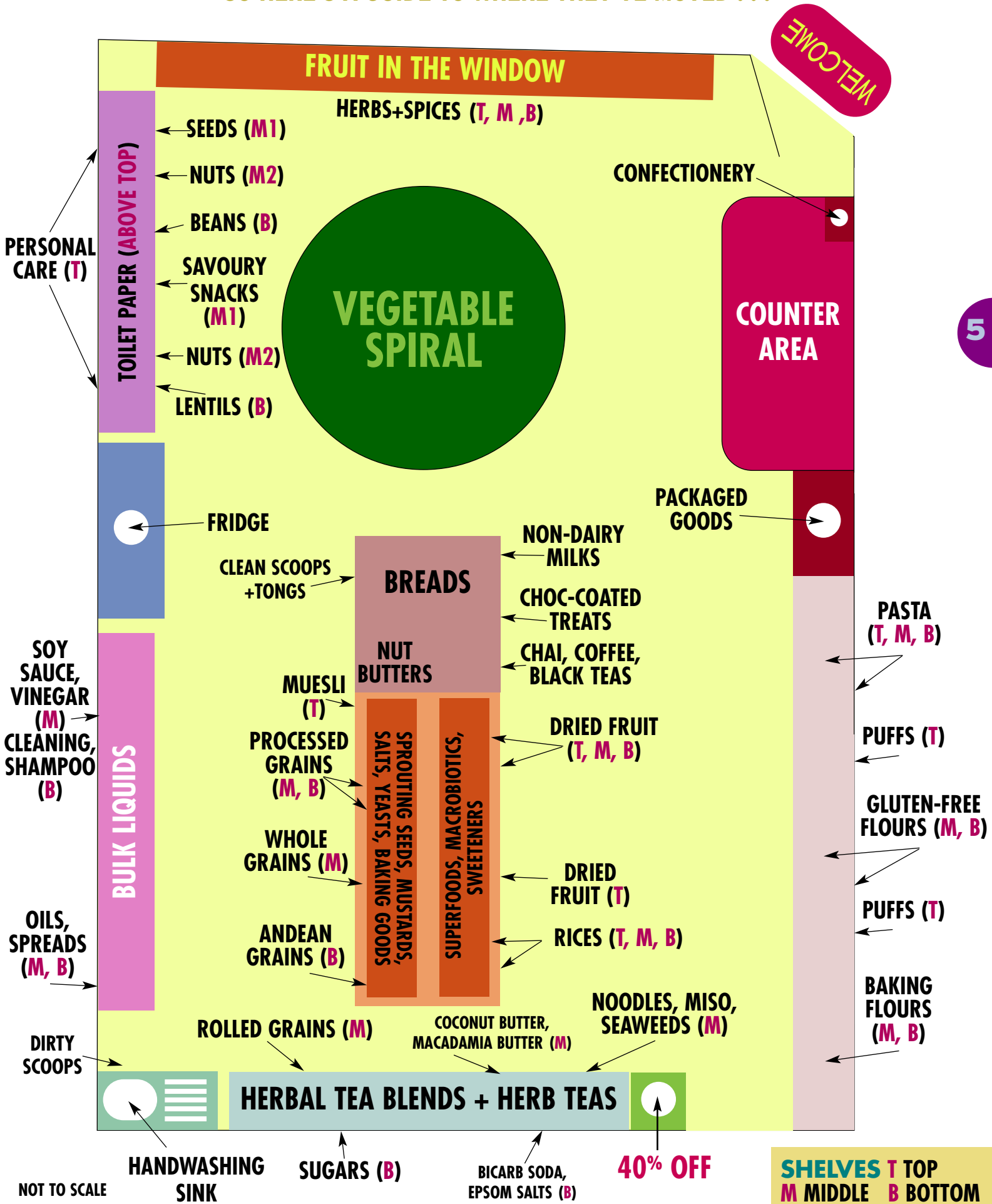
1 Blend all ingredients except gluten flour and spices/flavourings. Add rest of ingredients and form into a soft dough.

2 Form into sausage shapes, roll in foil, or baking paper and string and steam them for 45 minutes.

3 Then pan fry or bake for 20 minutes. Don't overcook as they will toughen.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

SOME OF THE STOCK HAS MOVED SINCE THE GREAT GRAVITY BIN INSTALL OF 2009, SO HERE'S A GUIDE TO WHERE THEY'VE MOVED ...



CINNAMON

Although there are more than 50 different species of cinnamon, there are just two main varieties commonly used: Ceylon cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*) and Chinese cinnamon (*Cinnamomum cassia*, *Cinnamomum aromaticum*). The former is native to Sri Lanka, as the name suggests, and is the 'true' cinnamon. The part used is the inner bark of the shoots of a tropical evergreen tree of the Lauraceae family. Cassia, or Chinese cinnamon, grows in China, Indonesia and Vietnam. It produces a greyish-brown powder as opposed to Ceylon cinnamon, which produces a yellowish-brown powder. The latter is more expensive and it has a milder, sweeter flavour. (The name cinnamon is derived from a Greek word meaning 'sweet wood').

Cinnamon is sold either ground as a powder or as quills or scrolls (strips of bark rolled into each other). The best varieties are pale and parchment like in appearance. Ground cinnamon has a stronger flavour than the quills, and can stay fresh for up to six months while the scrolls last longer. Both should be stored in a cool, dark, and dry place.

Cinnamon has been used medicinally since ancient times, as well as for magical, religious and culinary purposes. The Ancient Egyptians included cinnamon in their embalming mixture. In Ancient Rome, where cinnamon was highly-valued both for medicinal and culinary purposes, it was considered more precious than gold and silver and, as such, was regarded as a gift fit for emperors. In the first century AD, Pliny the Elder valued cinnamon at 15 times that of silver. The Roman Emperor, Nero, burned a year's supply of cinnamon at his wife's funeral – an extravagant gesture, signifying the depth of his grief. In China, cinnamon was used traditionally as incense in temples, and is highly valued in purification rituals even today. It is believed to increase concentration, whilst encouraging a peaceful, calm state for ritual work or meditation. During the Middle Ages, cinnamon was mixed with cloves and warm water, and placed in



the sick rooms of victims of the Bubonic Plague.

Arabs once traded cinnamon and other spices along the old caravan trade routes, from whence it was shipped to Europe. By the 18th century it was the Dutch who monopolised the cinnamon trade. Today, cinnamon's use is



CINNAMON QUILLS

widespread and it can be found as an ingredient in everything from toothpaste to coffee. Cinnamon is used as a flavouring in soft drinks, teas, hot chocolate, biscuits, cereals, granola bars, puddings, pastries, cakes, pies, and donuts. It is also a common ingredient in many Indian curries. In herbal medicine, it is often used as a flavouring to improve the taste of the tonic.

The medicinal properties of cinnamon were recognised by ancient Greek and Roman healers, such as Dioscorides and Galen. In medieval times, it was an ingredient in medicines for sore throats and coughs. Traditionally, cinnamon has also been used to alleviate indigestion, stomach cramps, intestinal spasms, nausea, flatulence and diarrhoea, and to improve appetite.

In Korea and China, cinnamon has been traditionally used to treat diabetes. Western herbal medicine also now

recognises the anti-diabetic property of certain compounds in cinnamon. It seems they have an ability to increase insulin sensitivity by enhancing insulin receptor function and increase glucose uptake. Cinnamon is also a good source of chromium, an essential trace mineral that augments the action of insulin. Adding half a teaspoon of the powder to breakfast cereal may help to keep blood sugar levels stable.

Cinnamon is also a carminative (relieves flatulence and soothes intestinal spasm and pain), a spasmolytic (reduces or relieves smooth muscle spasm), a mild astringent (constricts mucous membranes and tissue), and an aromatic digestive (helps digestion through its pleasant taste and smell).

Key therapeutic uses for cinnamon include treating digestive weakness, dyspepsia, flatulent colic, nausea, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, and insulin resistance. Other indications may include the common cold, bronchitis, coughs and sore throats. Research also indicates a role for cinnamon in improving cognition, especially memory and information processing. And German studies claim that cinnamon suppresses bacteria associated with urinary tract infections and the fungus that causes yeast infections such as candida. But it

seems that our forebears in Ancient China were way ahead of us regarding cinnamon's positive effect on brain function, and even medieval peasants knew about its disease-fighting properties centuries before we did!

Caution should be exercised using cinnamon medicinally in pregnancy and breastfeeding, in gastro-oesophageal reflux, and in patients taking anti-diabetic medication. Cinnamon may cause unwanted effects in sensitive individuals.

● ALFALFA STOCKS cinnamon bark quills and ground cinnamon

Elaine Parry is a qualified and accredited naturopath, medical herbalist and clinical nutritionist. She practises at The Buddha Bar Healing Clinic, 434 King Street, Newtown. If you have any questions relating to this column or to herbal medicine or nutrition in general please contact her (elaine.parry@gmail.com).

FEED THE eNEWS

This eNews is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members. All regular contributors are co-op members. Feel free to join them and send your tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to info@alfalhouse.org.

The eNews is edited and designed by Stevie Bee, Information Coordinator, for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd

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