



## News from the Shop

- ▶ Good news. We've found a stainless steel bench for the storeroom.
- ▶ Work begins soon on incorporating the fresh herbs into the spiral, making them far more accessible.
- ▶ A working bee is scheduled for this Friday to help cleanup the shop, office, storeroom, backyard. Anyone interested should contact Sarah.
- ▶ The new desk and storage system in the office has been installed and it's magic.
- ▶ The mural design is currently being consolidated and Marrickville Council is looking for an artist for us. Ideas for the mural will be posted on the website.
- ▶ We are looking at ways to make the shop much lighter and brighter.
- ▶ Each Monday we're donating our bargain/cost price basket to the Community Bike Co-Op vegan BBQ. Check out the Bike Co-op at the Nunnery, 40 Forbes Street, Newtown from 4pm on Mondays.

## OUR WISH LIST

- ▶ A paper towel holder in the shop
- ▶ A paper towel holder outside the toilet
- ▶ A blackboard for the wall above the counter area and a system of pulleys to raise and lower the board
- ▶ Two new lightweight noticeboards (800cm high, 1300cm wide) for the front window – they would need some padded material or cork attached for messages and a couple of handles for ease of lifting
- ▶ The dreaded back gate is still in crisis mode and needs some TLC from a handyperson!

If you can help out in any way on these jobs – materials, skills, time – please give Sarah a call on 9519 3374. Remember any voluntary work done for the co-op attracts extra discount shops.

## Bravo Mortdale Public School

Mortdale Public School in Sydney's south has renamed recess as fruit-break as part of its Fruit Fix project, which aims to encourage students to bring fruit as a snack. The school is keen to reduce the amount of pre-packaged foods students bring to school for lunch as well as snacks and is promoting healthy lunches either unpackaged or in grease-proof paper, lunch boxes, and reusable drink bottles. Assistant Principal Susan Crossling says, "This habit led to a great deal of waste that our school sent to landfill and helped make our students fatter faster." The school canteen is also reviewing its packaging.

ST GEORGE LEADER MARCH 8, 2007



### PRODUCT OF THE MOMENT

... In Italy, the wood of the chestnut tree is used to age balsamic vinegar.

## SWEET CHESTNUTS

- ▶ The Chestnut (*Castanea*), a native of the warm temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere, is an important food crop in southern Europe, southwestern and eastern Asia, and also in eastern North America. In southern Europe during the Middle Ages, whole forest-dwelling communities relied on chestnuts as their main source of carbohydrates in the absence of wheat flour.
- ▶ Chestnuts can be eaten boiled, or roasted over a skillet or fire-roasted – the latter being ideal for these steadily cooler nights. If roasting, cut a slit in the top of each nut and heat for 10-15 minutes, tossing occasionally. The nuts must be slit as they tend to explode when roasted. They can also be ground into flour, which can then be used in bread, cakes and pastries. Chestnut-based recipes and preparations are currently making a comeback in Italian cuisine, as part of a rediscovery of traditional dishes.
- ▶ The co-op has just received a delivery of farmer-direct sweet chestnuts from *Castanea Organics*, in Elands, west of Wingham on the NSW mid-north coast. These chestnuts, which were ready to pick three weeks early this year, are of the 'sweet' variety, the type popular in Italy and Turkey.

## REALLY RAW CASHEWS

You may have thought raw cashews were, well, raw. However, in order to remove the skin or shell of the cashew nut, so-called raw cashews are either placed in boiling hot oil for 25 minutes, or in a fire, which makes them easy to shell. We've just received a shipment of organic raw cashews from Indonesia that are truly raw. They are opened individually by hand without heat, which keeps their proteins, amino acids, enzymes and vitamins intact and their oils fresh. These cashews, which are lighter in colour, are the highest grade available. As the oils are fresh and the nutrients undamaged, these cashews have a more rich and "creamy" taste. They're also very close to the kind of cashew trees growing wild in their native homeland of Brazil. And they're chemical-free from farm to the co-op; they're not fumigated or irradiated when imported. Taste the difference!

# NEWS FROM THE SUGGESTIONS BOX

## ► Cranberry Juice.

REPLY We haven't yet found a juice that's 100% juice and organic. We'll keep on searching.

## ► Taheebo (good for infections and lowering blood sugar levels).

REPLY We discontinued this herb some time ago as it wasn't selling.

However, members can order bulk quantities (min. 100g) of herbs and spices, including ones we don't stock.

## ► Dandelion leaf.

REPLY We hope to stock this soon.

## ► Tissues.

REPLY We've decided not to stock tissues and instead encourage hankies.

## ► Paprika.

REPLY It's been hard to find an organic source, but we'll keep on it.

## ► Koji (a starter for making amazake, a fermented rice sweetener).

REPLY Looking into it.

## ► Could the co-op email a list of what seeds to plant in the month?

REPLY Just go off what's on the shelves. What we have in stock at any one time is right for the current season.

# New food grant offered to activist groups

Throughout the year many community and activist groups hold workshops, conferences and public forums to promote self-education, and community awareness. These events often involve a meal, snacks, and tea and coffee.

At its March meeting, the co-op's Management Committee (MC) received a proposal from co-op member, Lara Daley, suggesting we grant \$100 worth of fruit+veg and/or groceries to such groups to help them meet the cost of food at those events.

Lara argued that supporting groups with similar philosophies and objectives as ours was part of the co-op's objective to 'stimulate community development, foster community spirit and promote sustainable living'. "Not only would the grant help such groups reduce their costs, it would also raise the co-op's profile as a community-based alternative food source and generally promote a greater awareness of organics and wholefoods," says Lara.

Submissions should be made to the Co-op Manager, Sarah Cook, who will present them for discussion at the monthly MC meeting. If the monthly grant isn't awarded in any given month it would be rolled over to the next month.

# Before you donate that plastic bag . . .

In the last few weeks, the second-hand jar drawers near the fridge have become home to a veritable legion of plastic bags, no doubt deposited by well-meaning shoppers keen to extend the life of their bags. A few years ago, the co-op decided to no longer allow plastic bags to be left at the co-op for re-use by shoppers. It was for two reasons: one, the co-op can't guarantee the donated bags are food-quality so they aren't appropriate in a bulk-bin food store; and second, we wanted to discourage the supply and use of plastic bags. (The latter can now be recycled at least in the Marrickville Council area.)

So, if you're in the mood to donate some of your pre-loved containers, make sure they're either good quality washed glass jars or good quality plastic liquid containers, for example, shampoo or detergent bottles. Check out the signage on the drawers if you're not sure.

## RECIPE OF THE MOMENT *from Jann French*

# Raw Cacao Brownies

- 2 cups raw cashews
- 1 cup Medjool dates
- 1/2 cup raw cacao nibs
- 1/2 cup Mesquite pod meal
- 1/2 cup of raw nuts of your choice
- 1 vanilla bean
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- Process nibs in blender or coffee grinder (and set aside)
- Using blender or food processor chop cashews with salt and vanilla bean until very fine
- Add other nuts and chop not quite so finely
- Add dates and blend
- Add cacao and mesquite meal, blend until smooth
- Pat into squares or roll into balls or a shape of your fancy
- Eat before everyone else does



Option: Leave out the Mesquite meal for an equally delightful treat that's less like a brownie and more like a chocolate fruit nut slice. Bonus two recipes in one!

## WHAT'S NEW

- **EARNEST BEAN UNPASTEURISED TOFU**  
Made from specially-grown organic soybeans by a small Tasmanian family; comes in plain (500g and 375g) and smoked (300g)
- **SUNNINGDALE FLAXSEED OIL**  
Biodynamic flax from a central Victorian farmer
- **ORGANIC DRIED PEACHES + NECTARINES** from the renowned Brooke-Kelly farm in Young, NSW
- **UNSHELLED NEW SEASON ORGANIC ALMONDS**
- **IVY HOME ORGANIC MILK**  
Pasteurised, unhomogenised milk from south-east Queensland in a glass bottle (1 litre) and **IVY HOME ORGANIC FETTA CHEESE** also in glass jars (200g)
- **ORGANIC MESQUITE POD MEAL**  
Organic sweet flour from Argentina

## Feed the newsletter

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](mailto:feedback@alfalfahouse.org)

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