



Alfalfa
House

NEWSBULLETIN

News from the Shop

► The storeroom has a new stainless steel table, with plenty of room underneath for storing bulk food sacks. So no more lifting bags from bins. And it's clean and more hygienic and easier to keep that way.

► The shop has two new Shop Coordinators (at right) – Monika Baumann and Dave "I-can't-wait-for-summer" Harris.

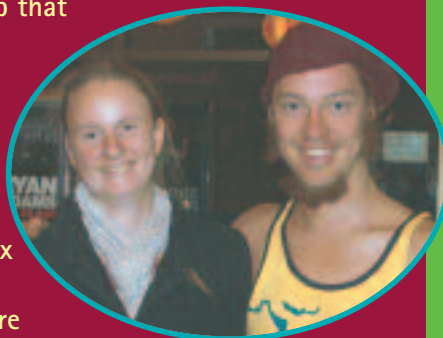
► The office has a new fax machine.

► We've noticed some more new faces in the shop over the past few weeks, perhaps in response to the very favourable recent *Sunday Life* two-page spread on us. If you're one of our many new members reading this eNews, a big welcome.

► If you have a spare two hours, *particularly on the weekend*, and feel like playing at Alfalfa House just come in and help us make chai, LSA, refill bins and jars, wash bags so we can reuse them, collapse boxes and make sure our fruit and veg look bountiful. And remember each two hours you volunteer is worth a 25% discount shop.

► A special farewell to Sarah: we wish you well in your new adventures.

The Shop+Office Crew of Adam, thetwoDaves, Dom, Gab, Lara, thetwoLisas, Monika, Nat, Paul and Stevie



Why aren't there any tomatoes?

It's probably one of the most asked questions. The simple answer is: because it's not in season.

We define in-season in Sydney as that which is either grown in the Sydney bio-region, ie, the greater Sydney basin, or that which could be grown in this bio-region at a particular time of the year, in other words what would and could typically be grown in this climate. So in winter, chances are you won't see squash, cucumbers, tomatoes and zucchinis in the shop. The co-op isn't always totally strict about this, however, an appreciation of in-season eating informs the Stock Coordinators as to what to focus on. For instance, if we were strictly seasonal, we wouldn't stock bananas and other tropical fruits at this time of year, as they are brought in from Far North Queensland.

There are various reasons why the co-op favours a seasonal focus. Clearly, it's better for us to be eating in season, both nutritionally and taste-wise. Why suffer through a largely tasteless six month old cold-storage apple when in a few months you can have a freshly-picked crisp one. Sure, thanks to modern transport we could eat just about anything at any time of the year. Just because we can buy imported mangoes in the middle of a Sydney winter, does it mean we should? Besides, if we can buy everything all year round, our tastebuds would have nothing to relish from season to season. We'd be less inclined to appreciate the pleasure of enjoying the arrival of the new season, simply because there wouldn't really be seasons, at least as far as food shopping goes. We'd never get to experience anything anew.

Then there's the effect eating out-of-season has on our physiology. Would you eat a cold cucumber soup on a wet winter's night? You'd most likely feel even colder. Equally, would you eat a roast of parsnips, swedes and Jerusalem artichokes, if you could get them, on a bed of buckwheat drizzled in a dark miso sauce on a 40-degree summer day? Fruits, salads and that cold cucumber soup would be far more appealing. Various disciplines, including Macrobiotics and Ayurvedic medicine, also favour eating as much as possible that which is grown locally and in-season. Eating in-season foods suits us physically and energetically because they balance the climate: they cool us physically and mentally in summer and warm us up in winter. Seasonal foods also promote seasonal dishes: winter vegetables make for hearty soups, stews and roasts, while summer fruits and vegetables lend themselves to salads, wraps and light soups.

By shifting our focus to locally-grown in-season produce, the co-op is encouraging more sustainable agricultural practices, an important co-op objective. It means we can support farmers within and closer to the Sydney basin, which means fresher more nourishing food, less transport and better prices for farmers and cheaper prices for us as consumers. More

What do you think?

It's been more than five years since we ran a member survey. Things have certainly changed a lot in that time. So in order to get a better idea of what you think of the co-op and what we could be doing to make things better, we thought we'd ask you again. Those on our email list will have received a pdf of the survey. If you didn't, there are printed surveys in the shop. When you've completed it, bring it in to the co-op and place it in the box at the counter. Or you can post it to 113 Enmore Road Enmore 2042 or fax to 9565 5053. And as an added incentive, there's a draw for a \$100 Alfalfa House voucher.

VACANCY ON THE BOARD

There is a vacancy on the Management Committee at the moment. If helping make co-op policy appeals, why not join the board? To find out more either come along to an MC meeting (details are on the News page of the website (www.alfalfahouse.org/news.htm) or email the committee (mc@alfalfahouse.org).

importantly, we directly encourage and support the use of non-hybridised, open-pollinated, heirloom organic seed. This takes multinational seed companies out of the loop, prompts producers to save their own seeds and helps protect a diverse seed base.

And last but not least, there's the issue of "food miles" or how far our food has travelled from farm to dinner plate. This is where seasonality meets locality. If we're ever going to come close to a truly sustainable agriculture, we're going to have to source more and more of our food locally as well as in-season.

The Stock Coordinators believe the co-op has established a measure of trust when it comes to what we stock compared with what might be available from suppliers. More and more shoppers expect that much of what we stock is in season and hasn't travelled half-way round the world. We do our best and while that may be largely true for fruit and veg, because we only source from Australia and occasionally New Zealand, we still import a number of grocery lines because we don't grow them here. However, that is slowly changing and whenever we can, we jump at the chance to stock a local version of the imported product.

One request: the co-op relies on its members for ideas and suggestions. It's not only a right to suggest, it's a joy; a rare thing these days. So if you know of a regional and clean (ie, chemical-free) version of something we stock or a cheaper supplier, please tell us, either via the Suggestions Box near the breads or via email (either groceries@alfalfahouse.org or produce@alfalfahouse.org).

Lisa Durante, Dave Tilley and Stevie Bee

F+V CORNER

What's good in fruit+veg

- ▶ Pumpkins – just picked and rich in colour. Look out for FD Jarrahdale and FD Triamble, an old variety, good for those thick hearty soups.
- ▶ Mandarins – Imperial and Ellendale
- ▶ FD* Rocket
- ▶ FD* Lemons – they look a bit knobbly, but it's what's inside that counts
- ▶ and of course, Apples. Sundowner, with its tangy sweetness, is the pick.

* FD = FARMER DIRECT

Dave Tilley

WHAT'S NEW IN THE SHOP

- ▶ Organic coconut flour from the Solomon Islands, can be added to cakes, pancake mixes, smoothies.
- ▶ Inana's very popular Date Cakes have gone organic. They're still making the conventional date cake, but now there's an organic version. It's a bit smaller and slightly darker and sells at the same price.
- ▶ Roasted pepitas – non-certified organic, from Chinchilla, Queensland
- ▶ Roasted pepita butter – non-certified organic, freshly-ground
- ▶ Biodynamic rolled oats (Aus)
- ▶ Organic sushi rice (Aus)
- ▶ Organic leatherwood honey from Tasmania
- ▶ Sunnycreek Jams – organic, from Australia, choose from plum, cocktail berry and apricot
- ▶ Organic kelp seaweed in strips from the Maine coast of north-east USA
- ▶ Ghee – made locally from organic Tatura butter "in tune with the moon"
- ▶ Tiligerry planting seeds – organic, non-hybrid seeds from a Farmer-Direct farmer in Port Stephens
- ▶ Unheated, organic honey (Aus) and though it's not creamed, it looks creamy due to its high-propolis content.

RECIPE OF THE MOMENT

from Veronika Judge

Orange cake



Vegan, gluten-free

- 3 cups grated carrot
 - 3 tbsp ground linseeds
 - 1 1/2 cups rapadura or sugar
 - 2 whole oranges cooked, cooled, blended
 - 1/2 cup ground almonds
 - 125ml sunflower oil
 - 2 cups brown rice flour or 50/50 polenta/brown rice flour
 - 3 tsp baking powder
- pre-heat the oven to 170°C or 150°C (fan-forced)
- mix almonds, flour, sugar and baking powder in large bowl.
- in another bowl mix other ingredients and let sit until mixture is a wee bit goeoy
- fold wet mixture into the dry; combine, then pour into a greased or lined round 20cm cake tin.
- bake 1 hour or until golden on top and springy to touch. (A skewer should be coated in sticky, not wet cake.)

This cake is very moist and will keep in an airtight container for more than a week. It's very good straight from the oven but it will fall apart; if left to cool it will slice easily. Reduce water from oranges with some rapadura and pour over the cake. Sprinkle with slivered almonds.

OPTIONS:

Vary with poppy seeds, pepitas, lemon, sultanas etc.
Omit sugar and douse cake in maple syrup or similar but note that liquids in the mix will take the cake longer to bake so turn the oven down and cook for longer.

feedback
YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Love the bright colours in your newsletter as well as the diverse topics covered. The recipes have been interesting and using ingredients that are widely available but not necessarily used that much in the home kitchen – such as sago. Thanks Alfalfa Crew and best in the future.

Velouria

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO
feedback@alfalfahouse.org

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

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