



The Dirt

ORCAS FOOD CO-OP NEWSLETTER

Orcas Food Co-op Joins National Co-op Grocers

By Learner Limbach
General Manager

On Wednesday April 6th the Orcas Food Co-op was officially accepted as members to National Co-op Grocers (NCG)! This is a huge milestone that comes on the heels of surpassing multiple impressive benchmarks since we opened our doors less than two years ago, including reaching 1000 member-owners and over \$2 million in sales in 2015.

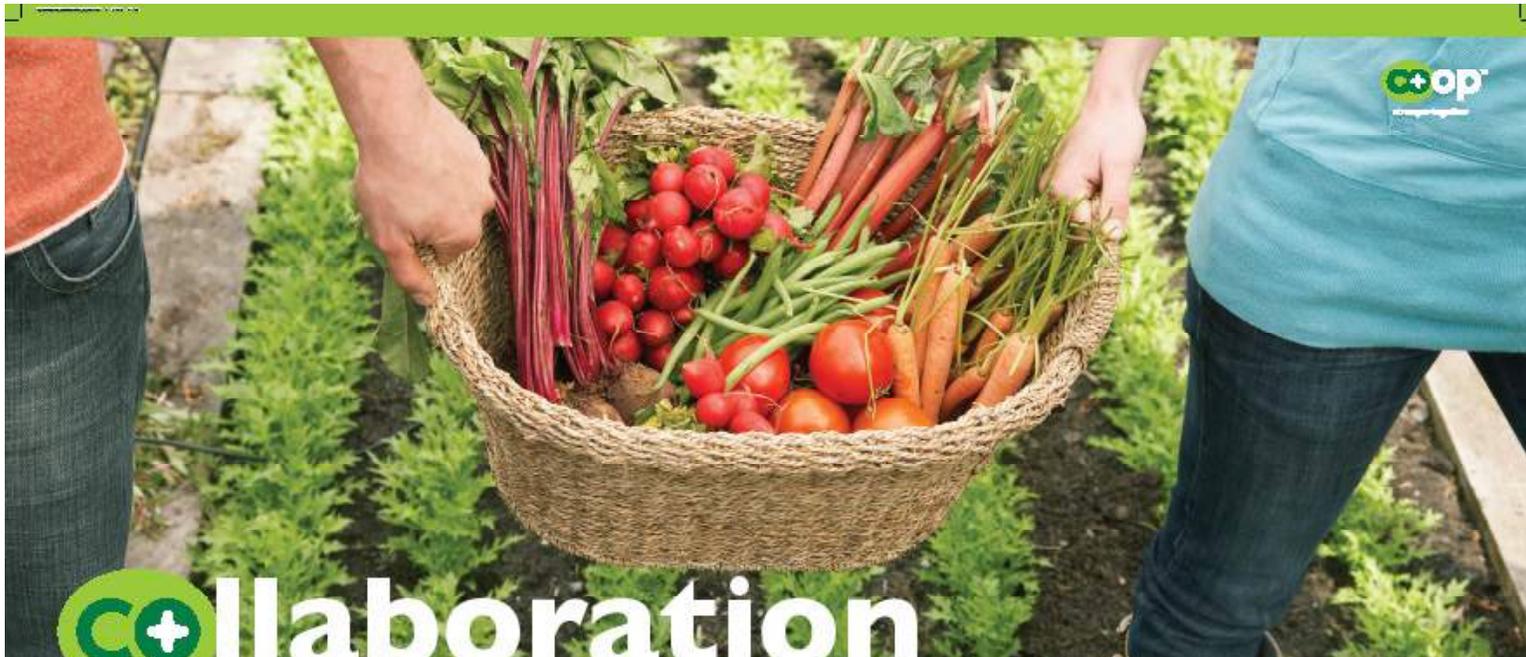
At a Board Meeting on March

23rd, following my recommendation as General Manager, our Board of Directors voted in favor of joining NCG. We were then officially offered membership by NCG on April 6th after their board voted to accept us as members.

There are many reasons why joining NCG will help bring more value to our member-owners and our community. NCG brings together over 140 food co-ops throughout the US to strengthen the co-op movement by providing its member co-ops with favor-

Joining the NCG is a huge milestone & another great example of what can be accomplished when people come together as a community

able purchasing agreements and many other benefits ranging from promotional programs to training materials, consulting and professional **Continued on page 4**



collaboration

we're stronger together

www.strongertogether.coop



Summer Store Hours:
 Monday-Saturday 8am-8pm
 Sunday 10am-6pm
 360-376-2009
 138 North Beach Road

Please visit us at our website:
www.orcasfood.coop

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Editor & Design: Rhys Hansen

Opinions expressed in *The Dirt* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Co-op Board, Management, Staff, or Member-Owners. Nutrition and health information is for informational purposes only and is not meant as a substitute for a consultation with a licensed health or dietary practitioner.

Letters to the Editor Guidelines:

Letters must include your name, address, and an email or daytime phone number. Please respect a limit of 150 words. Due to space considerations, we may not be able to publish all letters.

Please send letters to:
 The Dirt: Orcas Food Co-op
 PO Box 913
 Eastsound, WA 98245 or email
outreach@orcasfood.coop

Letter
 FROM THE BOARD

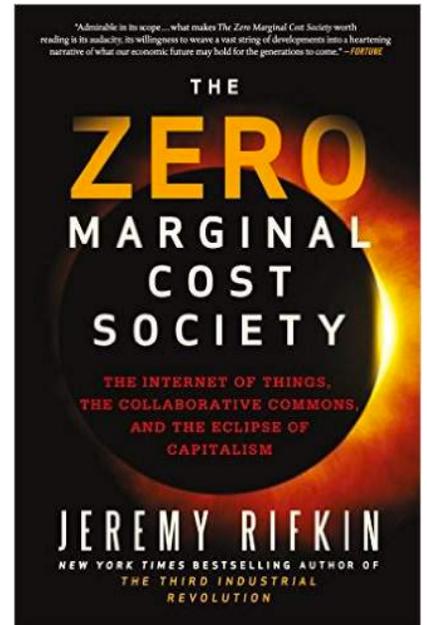
By Grant Heitman
 Co-op Board Member

Only a short winter has passed since I joined the Food Co-operative's Board of Directors. I hope my reflections as a newcomer do justice to the years of work by our founders, leaders, and members. There is still much for me to learn to be of real service to the Co-op, but learning is the greatest reward of the work! I volunteered to serve on the Board because I feel the Co-Operative's principles & practices stand at the leading edge of economic & cultural changes necessary to strengthen our economy and increase prosperity on Orcas Island.

In *The Shield of Achilles* (Knopf, 2002), historian Philip Bobbitt describes a global trend in government: 'Nation-States' are rapidly giving way to 'Market-States'. The transformation is not spoken of explicitly in the media or town halls, but it is moving forward on the ground as communities grapple with what works practically to improve quality of life and build real wealth through sustainable development. Co-operative market systems designed to support peaceful & prosperous communities prove their legitimacy as states apart from existing political systems plagued by gridlock, waste & social discord.

As I understand more about this Co-operative and the dynamic people involved, I am heartened to see so much leadership around economic self-organization and self-governance. These initiatives reshape our economy in a way that creates value and opportunities for a broader spectrum of the community. Co-op employees engage with the Puget Sound Food Hub, The San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild, and local producers to accelerate development of our local market for goods and services in ways that minimize dependency on food distribution cartels and enable fair, sustainable local trade.

In *The Zero Marginal Cost Society* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), Jeremy Rifkin pinpoints the importance of co-oper-

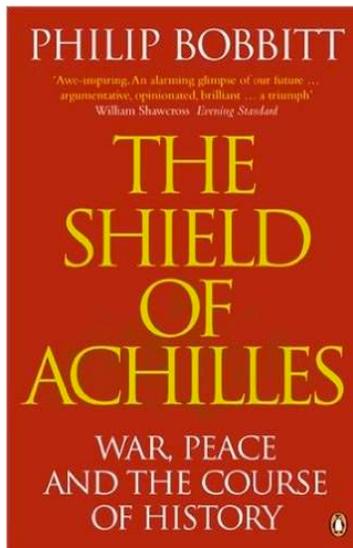


ative enterprise in what he calls the Collaborative Commons: "We are so used to thinking of the capitalist market and government as the only two means of organizing economic life that we overlook the other organizing model in our midst that we depend on daily to deliver a range of goods and services that neither market nor government provides. The Commons predates both the capitalist market and representative government and is the oldest form of institutionalized, self-managed activity in the world." If you accept this idea that what's old is new again, then I propose the time for you to engage in building our common wealth is NOW!

Co-op Board of Directors

- Lisa Byers- President
- Ken Katz- Vice President
- Annette Bader- Secretary
- Jonathan Wolfson
- Libi Geddes
- Madie Murray
- Peg O'Hara
- Grant Heitman
- Rhys Hansen

WANT TO *Contribute* TO THE DIRT?
 email outreach@orcasfood.coop



NCG from page 1

development.

Being accepted to NCG is not an easy task. In fact the Orcas Food Co-op is one of only a few co-ops across the entire nation to be accepted to NCG since the beginning of 2015. As the general manager, I am very proud of our member-owners, our board, and our management and staff. Joining NCG is a huge milestone and another great example of what can be accomplished when people come together as a community.

So what happens next? I've been told that joining NCG is like opening a fire hose. Thus, the idea is to open it gradually so we don't get knocked over by the flood of information and resources. Below is a rough sketch of the timeline we are following:

2015: Surpass \$2 million sales and other requirements!

January: Submit application

February-March: Review process, site visit

April: NCG Board decision and notification of acceptance

May 1st: Go on contract, orientations

June-July: Training and program integration

August: New purchasing agreements in place

September-ongoing: Begin participation in Co-op Deals and other programs

We have a lot to look forward to, including a far more robust sale program and other programs that bring more value to our members. It will be a while before significant changes are visible in the store in terms of actual programs, sales, etc., but it will be well worth the wait!

FROM the NCG WEBSITE:

"About NCG: The Big Picture National Co+op Grocers (NCG

– formerly NCGA) is a business services and development cooperative for food co-ops located throughout the United States. NCG helps unify food co-ops in order to optimize operational and marketing resources, strengthen purchasing power, and ultimately offer more value to natural food co-op owners and shoppers everywhere.

In the early 1990s it became clear to co-op leaders that corporate chains were aggressively pursuing the natural food market nationally and that these chains had the resources to dominate individual co-ops. Co-op managers in various regions began meeting and forming associations to provide peer support and improve operations by collaborating on activities.

By the late 1990s, regional cooperative grocers associations (CGAs) had gained momentum, and the need for a national coordination of efforts was apparent. Six CGAs developed a plan to form the National Cooperative Grocers Association in 1999. Then in 2004, this entire system was reorganized with NCG acquiring each of the regional CGAs and all member co-ops becoming a direct member of NCG.

NCG immediately accepted responsibility for a wide range of programs including negotiating group discounts on various vendor-provided services, national coordination of a monthly promotions program (now called Co+op Deals), and peer support and development programs.

In 2006, NCG negotiated a national supply contract with UNFI for all members. In 2008, NCG created a wholly owned subsidiary, the NCG Development Cooperative (DC), for the purpose of providing fee-based development services (business improvement, expan-

sion, relocation, and start-up) to food co-ops.

Why Affiliate with NCG?

NCG brings together co-ops to build and support a strong food co-op system and ensure strong, community-owned and -controlled food co-ops now and into the future. NCG:

- Is a strong, unified national presence that gives the cooperative food system increased relevance in a rapidly growing and changing natural foods market.
- Represents enough aggregated purchasing volume to hire and maintain highly qualified staff to build and operate existing programs, to negotiate strong national supply agreements and to launch creative value-added programs for the benefit of food co-ops into the foreseeable future.
- Provides a vehicle that allows resources to be optimized and enables efficient and effective rollout and development of new programs and services.
- Has structures and procedures in place that ensure new programs and services are designed with full consideration of co-op needs and interests. For individual co-ops, NCG provides a wide range of benefits, depending on whether the co-op affiliates with NCG as a member or as an associate co-op. All services are designed to improve store operations by lowering costs or providing programs with direct store impact. NCG co-ops also benefit from a strong and dynamic peer network to draw upon through regional and national meetings, small working or interest groups, and regular information-sharing opportunities."

To read more about NCG visit www.ncg.coop.

By Regina Zwilling
Office Manager

Making the Most of Digestion

Last month I talked about the importance of our microbiome, the collection of trillions of bacteria that outnumber our own cells by as much as 10 to 1. This month, I want to dive into ways to help your microbiome thrive, so that you in turn can feel your best. It all starts with digestion.

The concept of digestion is a fairly simple one. Food goes in the mouth, is broken down and absorbed as it moves through the digestive system (which is little more than a long, hollow tube) and whatever is not used comes out the other end in a matter of hours or days. The reality is much more complex and really quite elegant. Understanding some of the finer points of digestion allows one to optimize the performance of this critical and under-appreciated function that we use 3 times a day, every day.

Many people probably think that digestion begins in the stomach (if they think much about digestion at all!), where a powerful acid (hydrochloric acid) and a variety of enzymes start to liquefy the food you eat. The process of digestion actually begins before a single bite of food passes your lips. The smell, sight, and even mere thought of food triggers production of saliva, which contains enzymes to start the process of breaking down food (mainly starches).

Saliva also helps the food slide smoothly down the esophagus to the stomach. The mechanical process of chewing (something many of us do too little, if at all) also helps break down the food into smaller pieces. When we swallow, the food transitions down the esophagus into the stomach. Muscles in the stomach mix the food with digestive acids and enzymes, breaking it down into small molecules that move to the small intestine.

The small intestine is where most of the absorption of food takes place.

It is also where our helpful gut bacteria reside and aid in the process of digestion and absorption of food. If food is not thoroughly digested in the small intestine, it can lead to irritation of the gut lining, causing it to become permeable (aka, Leaky gut syndrome). If our gut lining becomes permeable, too-large molecules of undigested food pass through, causing inflammation and over-reactive immune responses. This in turn leads to most of the auto-immune and other chronic diseases that are so prevalent in our world today.

An important note about the digestive system seems appropriate here: It is designed to digest and assimilate what we eat. So every time one takes a bite of food that is refined, denatured, full of industrial chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, or inflammation-promoting industrial fats, your digestive system will work really hard to incorporate that into every cell of your body. That is its job, and it's very good at it. And once these undesirable substances become part of your cells, part of your basic makeup, it can be very challenging to dislodge them and flush them from your body.

Eating gives your body the materials it uses to build muscles, bones, hormones, skin, and every other part of yourself. Our bodies are in a constant state of breaking down and building up, and eating is the opportunity to give our bodies the highest quality building materials we can. Even if we provide the highest quality local, organic, fresh foods we can find, if we can't efficiently absorb the nutrients due to poor digestive function, then we are not getting everything we can from our food.

So what are some ways to improve your digestive function?

1)As I have said so many times, and will continue to say, eat REAL FOOD. Not refined and denatured food, or plastic-wrapped edible food-like

substances (cheese slices, anyone?). I have been saying to avoid/eliminate processed foods, but that is not quite accurate. Maybe next month I will tackle the distinction between refined/denatured and processed foods, and why it is important.

2)The human tongue can detect 6 distinct tastes: sweet, sour, salty, astringent, bitter and pungent. Our society is very heavily skewed towards just two of these flavors, sweet and salty. Having a complete spectrum of tastes at each meal can help you feel more satiated and ensure you are meeting your full nutritional needs. For example, bitter, pungent and sour foods all trigger the production of saliva in the mouth, and also signal the rest of the digestive system to start producing digestive enzymes and acids.

3)Bitter tastes in particular are important to trigger the production and release of bile, to aid in the digestion of fats. Bile is produced in the liver, and stored in the gallbladder. If you have had your gallbladder removed, it is extra important to help your liver make bile, since it cannot be stored without the gallbladder. Bitter tastes come from some leafy greens such as dandelion, nettles, and arugula. You can also make or purchase bitters, which are alcohol-based extracts of bitter herbs.

We currently have a line of excellent bitters from Urban Moonshine that I use on a regular basis. This is also a great time of year to wild-harvest some of the most nutrient-dense greens around: nettles and dandelion. And they are FREE!

4)Bitter tastes stimulate the metabolism and help absorb nutrients, two important functions of the digestive system.

5)One more great benefit of bitter flavors: they help control your sweet tooth. By balancing out our flavor

spectrum, we reduce our craving for sweet tastes.

6) Sour flavors come from some of my favorite foods: fermented foods! Include a couple table-spoons of sauerkraut or kimchi with each meal, drink a cup of plain kefir, use plain yogurt in your smoothies, eat sourdough bread. The process of lacto-fermentation creates nutrients that are easily absorbed by the body, lactic acid and enzymes which aid in the digestive process, provides a rich source of beneficial bacteria, and much more. The sour flavor, like bitter, also helps trigger enzyme and digestive juice production and aid in transitioning our taste buds from so much sweet to a more balanced flavor profile.

7) Pungent flavors such as ginger, coriander, hot pepper, turmeric and fennel all help with boosting metabolism, aiding digestion and can decrease inflammation. Incorporate any or all of these flavors into your cooking in their fresh and/or powdered forms.

8) Take your time to eat in a relaxed, calm manner. Very generally speaking, we have 2 major branches of the nervous system, the autonomic and the somatic nervous systems. The autonomic system is further divided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. The sympathetic nervous system is designed to help us in times of stress, ie fight or flight. When this branch of the nervous system is active, our bodies are not able to digest food. The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) is known as our "Rest and Digest" nervous system. This is the one we want primarily dominant when we eat. So eat mindfully, consciously, and slowly. Don't stare at a screen. Think about and enjoy the food you are eating.

There's a short list of ways to get started on improving your digestion to get the most out of your food.

Island Grown in the San Juans Has a New Look for Spring

By Amy Plant
San Juan Islands Agricultural Guild

Look out for products bearing this lovely new logo at the Food Co-op and elsewhere, and check out the members online at islandgrownsj.com.

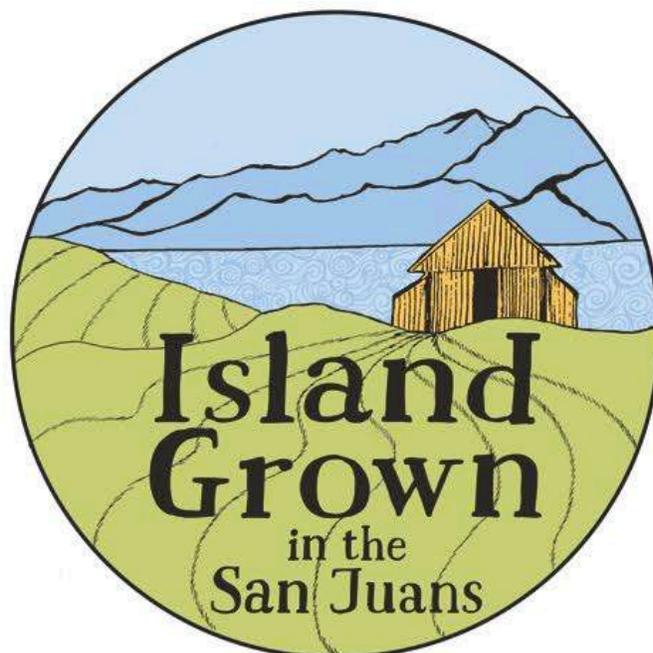
Buying Island Grown products or eating at an Island Grown restaurant, ensures that you are keeping your money circulating within our local economy and supporting our home-grown businesses. Not only that, Island Grown is also a way of ensuring that you are supporting farmers who employ earth-friendly practices. Livestock are treated humanely; harsh chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, GMO feeds or plants are never used and good methods are employed to preserve our precious water, soils and wildlife.

Restaurants and grocery store members such as the Orcas Food Co-op, pledge to buy at least 10% of their ingredients from local farms and 95% or more of the defining ingredient within an Island Grown value-added

product is grown or harvested in San Juan County.

Members also receive great benefits to assist their marketing efforts, such as social media support (be sure to like our facebook page!) low cost advertising, online profiles and the opportunity to participate in fabulous foodie events. The kitchen at Brickworks on San Juan Island is also being used at a greatly reduced cost by Island Grown members who wish to develop value-added products. We are seeking a commercial kitchen on Orcas for the same purpose, so please let us know if you have any leads! And watch this space for information on the new up and coming Value-added Food Producers Co-op!

If you are a consumer within our local food system, we encourage you to join the movement! Sign up as a supporter of Island Grown and proudly display the new logo on your car, window or chest! Stickers are free, T-shirts, tote bags and flags are also available. Help spread the word about this fantastic initiative that helps to sustain our unique islands' food and farming culture. islandgrownsj.com



**Shop
Island
Grown in
the San
Juans and
know that
you are
supporting
your local
economy**

3% Thursday: COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAY

Shop May 19 to support The Orcas Senior Center

Our community shopping day for May will benefit Orcas Island Senior Center. They provide programming and support for the elders in our community. Funds will be used to purchase healthy snacks for activities and classes.

The Mission Statement of Senior Services Council:

To assist seniors age 60 and over to recognize and deal with their needs and to provide a spectrum of services through a multi-function agency which will serve the recreational, intellectual, social, physical and mental needs of seniors regardless of race,

creed, or national origin.

Our goals:

1. Maintain the value and dignity of seniors, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, to maximize their contribution of life experiences to each other, our youth, and our communities.
2. Support provision of services to seniors and their caregivers



Community lunches provide opportunity for conversations and connections



Enjoying a feild trip out to Doe Bay with Orcas Island Senior Center.

by the Senior Services Division of San Juan County Health & Community Services Department. Assist staff in implementing and operating senior programs in a manner which is legal, ethical, fiscally responsible and fulfills program specific standards for grant funds and private donations.

3. Operate accessible vehicles with which to provide specialized transportation services to seniors and disabled in our communities.
4. Develop and operate Senior Center facilities on each major island for the provision of services and programs aimed at increasing quality of life for seniors, their caregivers, and the community as a whole.
5. Provide a non-profit corporate umbrella for Island Advisory Committees which identify and endeavor to meet local needs and service gaps.

CO-OP Events

3% THURSDAY: COMMUNITY SHOPPING DAY:

ORCAS ISLAND SENIOR CENTER
May 19 All Day

Co-op

3% of the Gross Sales on this date will be donated to the Senior Center. Shop big on this day and show your support!

SEAWEED WALK

WITH RYAN DRUM

July 4 9:30-1:30

Location to be announced

Join renowned instructor Ryan Drum for this informative workshop on seaweed and water plants in the San Juan Islands. Ryan Drum has over 35 years of experience teaching about medicinal and edible plant life in universities and workshops around the world. Please no dogs or children under 8 years.

\$30 Members \$25 Public

GAME NIGHT

May 24 6:00-8:00PM

Co-op Commons

Join us for our monthly game night. Bring your favorites or try something new!

HAVE AN IDEA FOR A GREAT CO-OP WORKSHOP? KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS A GREAT TEACHER? WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. EMAIL

OUTREACH@ORCASFOOD.COOP
WITH YOUR IDEAS.

By Xoe Chue
Produce Clerk

Spring is starting to lighten up with blossoms and clear out the grey skies. For many of us spring is time to clean house, shake out the dust of winter. Having lived in small spaces for many years, spring is about minimalism- tossing away the junk. This special detox is often accompanied by a dietary one. There are many ways to do this; juice fasts, sugar detox, allergen cleanses, but what about just a light spring cleaning for our detoxifying organs?

Our bodies are constantly purifying us of the bombardment of unseen toxins creeping in from all angles; food, air, water, moods! Detoxing is simply giving our bodies a rest to catch up with the onslaught of unavoidable pollutants and nourishing it in return. I am not talking fasting here- just nice things we can occasionally do for the skin, liver and lymph systems that keep us purified and healthy every day. The organization of a good detox should serve to lighten the load on the organs and treat them to a relaxing day off- great practice for mothers day!

First, this should be simple. Don't think detox is right for you? How you feel when you wake up in the morning is a direct indicator of your detoxification systems. Our bodies are natural cleaners, with a little help, we can get the job done more thoroughly. Start with breath. Deep breathing from exercise or meditation will help move toxins more easily as well as manage any extra stress.

Cleanses should be intuitive to your own style. Don't starve yourself and impair your liver- detoxing requires proteins and fiber! Organic produce like beets, seaweed, brown rice and broccoli are great detoxifiers. Smoothies and other highly complex and blended foods actually overwhelm our internal cleansers- remember not to leave any dirty dishes for them to clean up later! Stick to simple foods and drink plenty of water. Think of it as a sort of breakfast in bed, spa kind of day to show gratitude for the organs that raised you.

Second, detox shouldn't happen only once in a while. You can do small cleanses of your liking every day. When it comes to nutrition, extremism is usually a hoax. Spring cleaning with

moderation and basic whole foods shouldn't just happen once a year. These habits will help much longer than a one-week detox program which may actually stress out your system and leave a long list of repair chores for your organs. Here are some simple tonics to help your body process the trash:

Dandelion tea:

1/4 cup raw dandelion root
1/4 cup roasted dandelion root
1/4 cup dandelion leaves (make sure they are from non-toxic source)
raw honey to taste
Infuse herbs in a jar overnight, strain and enjoy this blood and liver tonic

Classic detox:

1/2 tsp turmeric
1/2 tsp ginger
1/2 lemon
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
Maple syrup or stevia to sweeten
Boil two cups of hot water. Mix in sweetener and lemon just before you drink it for an immune and liver booster.

Raw honey alkalinizer:

Mix one cup hot water with 1/2 cup Braggs Apple Cider and plenty of raw honey. This will energize your detox.

Local Producer OF THE MONTH

From their website:

Land Stewards Brent & Maggie have operated Lopez Island Vineyards since 1987. We specialize in unique high quality estate grown organic grapes; Madeleine Angevine & Siegerrebe!

Our connection to our community is part of who Lopez Island Vineyards is: not only are we partially community owned, but our harvest each year is accomplished by a strong turn-out of community members who come to harvest grapes for a few mornings each fall. Having now raised our family, built our own home and now having a thriving, small scale vineyard



Brent and Maggie Charnley planted their first 3 acres in 1987.

and winery, we look outward to other passions in life. We look to ways to lower our impact on the environment in the way we run our winery, our

home and our lives. We find that learning and growing and experimenting gives us challenges that make our lives more interesting. We always try to carry the hope of the future in everything we do.

**Lopez Island
Vineyard is the May
Local Producer of
the Month.**

**\$2 Off all wine
through May 31**

Produce UPDATE

By Rhys Hansen
Produce & Marketing Manager

Rhubarb is my absolute favorite vegetable. A herald of spring, I know that when the shoots start peaking out of the ground spring weather is on its way.

Rhubarb has been in cultivation for over 3,000 years, beginning in China (where rhubarb root was valued for medicinal purposes) and moving to Europe in the 14th century. Rhubarb did not come to the United States until the 1820s.

Traditionally, rhubarb is paired with strawberries or other sweet fruits in treats, but it is also excellent in more

savory applications. The high acidity pairs well with pork or chicken dishes and is a great base for a chutney. Try pairing earthy lentils with the sharpness of rhubarb and the sweetness of roasted beets for a filling meatless Monday meal.

Rhubarb also freezes better than almost any other produce item without any loss in quality. It pairs well with overripe peaches and plums in crisps and cobblers over the summer and so I always stock up in the spring and fall when it comes into season.

To freeze, cut off any remaining leaves (they are poisonous!) and any browning or split ends. Chop into 1-inch chunks. No need to lay out on a tray, these can go straight into whatever container you like. They will keep up to a year, and can go straight into your recipe with no additional preparation. Enjoy!



LOVELY LIBATIONS - What we are drinking this month

Editors Note: Yes, we featured these two beverages last month as well, but we loved them so much we wanted to highlight them again while they are still available. Don't miss out!

**Lindeman's
Oude Kriek Cuvée René
Vlezenbeek, Belgium
7% ABV, 750 ml**

In order to produce Oude Kriek Cuvée René, whole cherries (including pits) ferment in a Lambic that is at least six months old in huge 10,000-liter oak barrels called foudres. After six months, this traditional Kriek is bottled in corked 750 mL bottles where it undergoes a secondary fermentation or "Bottle Conditioning".

Oude Kriek has been brewed by the Lindeman's brewery since 1961, renamed Oude Kriek Cuvée René in 2007, and imported into the US for the first time in February of 2016 (yep, last month). It is highly coveted by gourmands in Belgium who lay it in their cellars, sometimes for years. Hazy ruby red in color with a delicate pinkish head. Beyond the strong aroma of fresh whole cherries lies Brett defined

barnyard aromas.

This union of barnyard funk and cherry aromas promise an invitingly complex dryness to the drinker. Plenty of pucker for traditional Lambic lovers and those just venturing into the world of unsweetened Lambics.

**Oude Kriek
Regular: \$11.99
Member:
\$10.99**



**La Collina Lunaris Secco
Emilia-Romagna, Italy
100% Malvasia**

Cooperative Agricola La Collina is an amazing story that is too long to tell here but here are some highlights.

12 idealistic young men started the commune in 1975. They were Italy's first certified biodynamic producer. The co-operative farm grows vegetables, vines, fruit, cereals, fodder; they also have livestock: oxen and pigs. They process all these products to obtain wine, flour, pasta, meat, poultry, sausages and honey.

On top of that the Co-op is run as a rehab facility for young adults in recovery from drug addiction. The wine itself is fantastic with notes of apple blossoms and citrus. The creamy bubbles give it an unexpected elegance for the price point, and the dry finish makes it perfect for any occasion.



**La Collina
Regular: \$19.99
Member: \$17.99**