

The Scratch Pad



Volume 2, Issue 1

November 2011

Good times and inaugural members at Harvest Party

By Charmaine Slaven, Co-op co-founder and Steering Committee member

Thanks for a great 2nd Annual **Harvest Party and Membership Roll-Out** event! Attendance was fantastic, lots of bartering, pumpkin painting, potlucking, beer slurping, book signing, and square dancing was enjoyed by all! Thanks for helping shape this fantastic community.

Here's some numbers you can all be proud of:

- 62 Inaugural Members were signed up
- 143 pint glasses were sold
- 43 Urban Farm Handbook sold

Big thanks to Joshua McNichols and Annette Cottrell for initiating the Urban Farm Handbook book release to be combined with our Harvest Party, and thanks to their publisher, Emily White of Skipstone Publishing, for sponsoring the bulk of the cost of the event space at the Phinney Center. If you want to purchase a book, we've got them for sale at the Seattle Farm Co-op Warehouse, or order through their website, urbanfarmhandbook.com.

Fantastic work by Backyard Barter in organizing the barter portion of the event, which was very exciting. Lots of goods and services were exchanged! A big pat on the back to Creagh Miller and her team. They also did a great job in adding lots of beautiful decorations. Be sure to sign up at their new website, backyardbarter.org to continue bartering with your neighbors year-round.

Music and dancing was donated by the Seattle Subversive Square Dance Society. The callers, Tony Mates, Gabe

Strand, and myself along with fabulous bands:

- Atlas Stringband (atlasstringband.com)
- Rabbit Stew (myspace.com/rabbitstewstringband)
- Peckin' Out Dough Porterbelly Stringband (facebook.com/pages/Porterbelly-Stringband/173538416064477?ref=ts)
- Squirrel Butter (squirrelbutter.com)

The Seattle Subversive Square Dance Society brings dances to Seattle neighborhoods year-round. Check out more info at oldtimeseattle.com/ssss.html.

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Dean Wenick photo
wenick-photo.com

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Urban farming: not necessarily child's play

By Marj Baker

I was 70 years old when I began urban farming.

My mom had a huge vegetable and fruit garden for years in Idaho. Jim's mom also did lots of gardening in Portland. Many people might not remember the Victory Gardens during World War II, but people raised fruits and vegetables to help support the war effort then. It was also out of necessity due to the shortage of food essentials.

After the war a stigma was set on toiling in dirt. If you had a manicured lawn and sculptured bushes you looked like you had money and prestige. When the hippy era came along in the '60s and '70s many tried commune farming, but often the efforts didn't succeed for long. Now, growing food on the parking strips, in pots on the balconies or in raised gardens—plowing under lawn for beans, peas, tomatoes, and greens—is becoming the norm.



Marj and Jim Baker

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is becoming important again, partly because of the economy and partly because of pesticides and manipulation of seed production in commercial crops for the supermarket. The best way to know how your food is produced is by doing it yourself.

Farming here, at home in the city

Not wanting to move to a farm, we explored growing our own fruit and vegetables, and keeping chickens in the city.

The most helpful resource we found was Seattle Farm Co-op three years ago. We started with chickens and then we tried some fruits and vegetables. I was pretty good at growing other things like native trees and plants, but not familiar with growing anything like vegetables from seed.

Annette Cottrell organized a seed exchange, where we divided seeds from an order from different organic seed companies. She taught me a lot about growing from seed, and about watering systems

Start small, keep it simple, protect your knees

It is important not to take on too much at first. As you learn, you can add more.

It's best not to do things that require kneeling. Get a kneeling pad, or grow raised gardens or plant in pots that are raised off the ground.

Don't be too diversified, but try just two or three crops at first. You will see what is easiest and what you can do best in your yard with your capacity for working with the soil and the sunlight you have.

Test your soil and add amendments when needed. Of course this advice would be good for anyone younger too.

Priorities change over time

For many years I have had ponds, one in the front and one in the back yard. They are small, only 50 to 100 gallons. Water features were very popular when I created them, but they are very hard to keep up. Every year I say, "This is the last year I am cleaning the ponds." They are not part of the organic garden, but are lovely to hear and see.

Our vegetable garden continues to change, and I think the next few years will be a harvest from seeds we have kept from the year before. I have been able to share heirloom tomato seeds and young starts this year. It's my goal to save seeds from produce either grown here or purchased (especially organic and heirlooms). It's easy to dry the seeds on cheesecloth and save them in marked baggies for spring.

Organizations provide help and resources

I belong to a couple of organic chicken groups, and occasionally I talk to Professor Chicken, but I have learned so much from the Seattle Farm Co-op that I rarely go to other sites or organizations. Buying produce from the Seattle Farm Co-op group and getting products at the warehouse has been especially good.

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Volunteer to get involved and benefit your co-op

By April Smith

Concurrent with membership roll-out, we are also starting a new program to help volunteer coordination. Three volunteer coordinators are taking on different programs.

Noelani Alexander is taking on the warehouse volunteer program. Hillary Kleeb is acting as first point of contact for members who opt to volunteer time as part of their membership fee; she also heads up the warehouse inventory program. April Smith is taking on the warehouse equipment library program, promotion and community event committee, and continuing with the ScratchPad.



Warehouse volunteers: we want members who can commit to at least one three-hour shift per month for at least six months. Choose your own shift day and time after you complete three training shifts with a warehouse volunteer.

Warehouse inventory team: needs three or four volunteers to help with inventory once a month. You will move 50- to 80-pound bags, so you get a workout while you volunteer!

Equipment library: we hope to expand the library so that members have an opportunity to check out equipment and tools. If you have equipment or tools you don't use, consider donating them to the co-op so that members have access to them. Contact April (lolatu2002@gmail.com). We're also looking for a couple of volunteers who can repair and maintain equipment in the library. Set your own regular hours (such as monthly) for doing this work on a consistent basis.

Promotion and events: Throughout the year the co-op participates in community events, promoting Seattle Farm Co-op. If you enjoy talking to the public about urban farming, and want to encourage more people to become involved in urban farming and the co-op, consider joining the promotion/event committee. You don't necessarily need to help at every event, though we won't stop you! We hope to have a pool of volunteers on which to draw throughout the year so that we can continue to attend these events.

In addition to helping your co-op, there are rewards for volunteering, such as warehouse discounts. Consider helping out as time allows so that we can continue to grow and provide the best services to all members and non-members alike. If you want to volunteer, send email to volunteer@seattlefarmcoop.com, letting us know what you are interested in. A volunteer coordinator will contact you.

Harvest Party reaps rewards (cont.)

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Kids' activities and kid-inspiration was provided by our wonderful 4-H club friends. Huge thanks to Nina Finley and Cooped-Up 4-H club. Any youngsters who want to get involved with 4-H, contact the club at greenwallingford.ning.com/group/4hclub.

Two kegs of beer were generously donated by Fremont Brewing. Thank you, Matt Lincecum and Robert Fulwiler (fremontbrewing.com).

Sound system and engineering were kindly donated by Tom Collicott.

Photos were graciously donated by photographer Dean Wenick (wenick-photo.com).

And, of course, our hardworking board members, their tolerant families, and all of the rest of our amazing volunteer crew: Here's to another successful year in developing an important resource for Seattle's Urban Farm Community!

If you haven't signed up as a member yet, membership applications are now available on our website at seattlefarmcoop.com. Print and mail it in with your payment. Or, sign up at the warehouse in person.

Co-op Warehouse Items

Email info@seattlefarmcoop.com to make sure what you need is in stock.

Bulk Items

Grit
Oyster Shell
Diatomaceous Earth
Bulk Feed (Pastured Sensations or Crying Rock)
Straw and Hay
Pine Shavings

Housewares/Hardware

Waterers
Feeders
DIY Waterer Nipples
Brooder Lights
Brooder Bulbs
Canning Jars and Lids

Books

The Urban Farm Handbook
The Transition Handbook

Feed Brands

Scratch and Peck
Naturally Free (NF) Layer
NF Grower
NF Starter
3 Grain Scratch
OrgCracked Corn
Goat Feed

In Season Farms

Org16% Layer Mash
Org20% Layer Mash
OrgPoultry Starter
OrgPoultry Grower
OrgDairy Goat Feed
OrgAlfalfa Pellets
OrgHen Scratch

Half Moon

Layer Feed Pelleted
Layer Feed Crumbles
Hen Scratch

Items to be carried in the future

Conway Feeds
Apple cider vinegar
Cheese- and soap-making supplies

WORMS FOR SALE As a fundraiser for our co-op, you can now purchase red worms for composting or mealworms for chicken treats. [Find a volunteer worm farmer near you](#) (On the Seattle Farm Co-op Yahoo group page: click **Database**, and then click **Worm Farmers**).

Seniors and urban farming (cont.)

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Prices are good because the co-op buys in large quantities directly from the producer. Often members set up buys of fruits and vegetables from farmers in Eastern Washington, and the produce we have purchased has been wonderful.

Health benefits of urban farming

Reaching and stretching, bending and picking up, sweeping and shoveling are the best exercise one could have. Also, you get to do these things outdoors. The gym offers you exercise, but you pay money for it, and you don't get the extra benefits that gardening provides. What could be a better return than a great harvest of fruits and vegetables for healthy eating as well as a good workout in the outdoors?

Keep it going, and it'll keep you going

Love your body and know your capacity as you grow older. You can still do many things but need to slow down a bit and not take on as much as you used to. Take more time to smell the soil and produce you grow, look at the great foods you can still produce, but not try to overdo. Work a little slower and love what you are doing; don't make it a chore.

You can always buy fruits and vegetables from members of Seattle Farm Co-op, as do many younger people who run out of time to complete large garden projects.

We have had a busy summer and have done quite a bit of canning and freezing, besides caring for our garden, yard, chickens and pets. I just self-published a little chicken book. It is mostly photographs and a little information about chickens. Go to <http://blurb.com> and search for Marj Baker. You can view the whole book online so no need to buy it unless you really like it.

Contact Seattle Farm Co-op and Connect with Members

Email: info@seattlefarmcoop.com

Website: www.seattlefarmcoop.com

Snail Mail: P.OBox 8430
Seattle, WA 98124-5606

Warehouse: Prior to Dec. 3rd -- 1937 Occidental Ave S,
After Dec. 3rd -- 1817 S. Jackson St

Yahoo Group Forum:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seattlefarmcoop>

Maybe you mulched, but it's also time to mineral up

By Jeff Gee

Despite having a variety of soil types west of the Cascades, depleted **mineral content** is a constant theme. We often focus on adding organic matter through mulches and compost to our soils, with minerals an afterthought. As we put our gardens to sleep, autumn is a fabulous time to add minerals and trace elements to planting beds, around shrubs and trees. There is a lot to know about soil testing, amendments and such, but we'll focus on the basics here.

Rain depletes soil of soluble minerals, creating **acidic** conditions that pose challenges to growing a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to their fullest potential. This reality is not limited to gardens. Forage we feed our animals also lacks minerals, requiring us to provide mineral supplements.

In our region, it is not unusual to find soil with a pH below 5. Such acidic conditions impede the micro-biological activity necessary for a healthy soil food web. The result is lower productivity and nutritional quality from our gardens.

In general, a pH between 6 and 6.5

enables **microbial activity** to promote robust veggies, fruits, and forage. Animals that graze on the grasses, leafy greens and bugs around our gardens also benefit, and mineralized soils in the food chain result in healthy animals and beneficial products from them (eggs, milk, meat, and manure).

Mineralizing small gardens and raised beds is easy and simple. Investing in a comprehensive chemical **soil analysis** aids understanding and long-term maintenance of the garden's soil. From these test results, we can understand where we need to mineralize and with which minerals.

Most often, some kind of **lime** is used to improve acidic conditions and mineralize calcium-deficient soils. This leads to the question of what kind of lime: agricultural or dolomite?

In soils west of the Cascades, **magnesium** is readily present. Dolomite lime is calcium magnesium carbonate ($\text{CaMg}(\text{CO}_3)_2$), whereas agricultural lime is calcium carbonate (CaCO_3). Usually it's best to apply agricultural lime, especially if a soil test was not conducted.

General awareness of **trace elements**— often consumed as a human dietary supplement—has risen in the past decade. For our soils, trace elements are as essential as any other nutrient. Liebig's Law of the Minimum states that growth is controlled not by the total amount of resources available, but by the scarcest. This is where trace elements come in and benefit the whole system.

Trace elements are as easy to apply as agricultural lime, often improving yields vastly.

Trace elements and mineral products originate from a variety of sources. Products like Sea Crop®, produced locally in Tokeland, are derived from the ocean. Products like

Azomite®, from a volcanic outcropping in Utah, originate from volcanoes. Glacial-sourced products include glacial rock dust. Other popular soil amendments, such as green sand and kelp meal, also contain trace elements.

These nutrients are not limited to soil applications. Many are approved by the FDA as a mineral supplement for livestock and pets. Results tend to be animals that grow well, are healthy and resistant to disease. Both Sea Crop® and Azomite® are FDA-approved for animals. Seattle Farm Co-op can special-order minerals for your farming needs.

Autumn, like spring, is an excellent time to test soil and apply minerals. The biological activity is still very active this time of year, yet slowing as we enter the colder winter months. Working these minerals into the soil and growing a cover crop or spreading mulch greatly aids springtime planting.

And remember, minerals and trace elements are not limited to soil applications. They are an excellent additive to both active and finished compost. Mineralizing compost can greatly reduce having to mineralize the soil, and minerals provide the compost's microbes with nutrients necessary for healthy function and reproduction.

SCOR



Putting in a good word for the wasps of autumn

By Sarah Moore

Last spring I wrote about slugs, which were everywhere and very much on my mind. On sunny days in autumn, much the same could be said about wasps. Like slugs, these creatures are feared and disliked, yet are fascinating to observe.

There are many fantastic solitary wasps, but the most obvious and troublesome types of wasp at this time of year are social wasps, which live in groups that reach their peak size in early autumn

Unlike bees, which are fuzzy and gold, yellow jackets and paper wasps have smooth bodies and clear, yellow-and-black coloration. The difference in fuzziness holds important clues about the lives of these two kinds of insect.

Bees' hairs attract and collect pollen, which they transfer to special parts of their legs. They carry this pollen home to their larvae, which eat it for protein.

Wasps' larvae are primarily carnivorous, feeding on insects, spiders, and in some cases meat. The adults capture this food and bring it home, often collecting enough flies and caterpillars to be serious garden helpers.

Yellow jackets nest in the ground in colonies of up to 5,000. They fly out to defend their nest against attackers or those with the bad luck to mow the lawn over them. Yellow jackets eat meat. They are often pests at picnics; though rarely sting unless they're in immediate danger.

The smaller, slender paper wasps are rarely aggressive, at least in my experience. They build nests in eaves and overhangs of all kinds. I have a colony in my greenhouse, where I have stood directly underneath, watching workers groom and feed their babies, without being stung.



These wasps frequently drink nectar; they may help distribute pollen while doing so. I have brushed them off of fruit before picking it, and I've found them to be quite docile

The bald-faced hornet is black, robust, and builds football-sized paper nests in trees. They can be very protective if you step too close. I have never been stung, but they have dive-bombed and collided with me in warning. I don't doubt they would escalate to stings if needed.

Afield, collecting wood for their nests, they are much less aggressive. You can stand a meter from one and watch her industriously backing up as she gathers splinters of wood to chew up for paper.

In late fall, wasp colonies die off, except for the next year's queens. These queens breed, and then find crevices to hide in until spring. They often crawl into siding on houses, or into cars through slightly open windows. When wasps turn up in weird and scary places, they are often queens looking for safe, overwintering hideouts.

Wasp nests in exposed areas are not reused from year to year. In winter, after a colony has died, its nest can safely be removed. However, if you leave it, it won't attract wasps in future years. Nevertheless, wasps do tend to favor the same types of locations, so an overhang or especially good branch may attract colonies year after year.

I don't know if wasps will ever be popular in the way lady bugs or butterflies are, but I'd like to put in a good word for them. They eat many pest insects, and unless their nest is disturbed, they make interesting and productive neighbors.



Preserving for Festivities

By Meg Brown

The summer harvest is over. Your garden beds are tucked safely to sleep, or protected from, the upcoming winter. Cover crops and garlic are in.

Now what?

Party season is coming up before you know it and I have 3 great canning recipes to pull you through. They make a thoughtful, homemade host gift. Hosting your own party? Bring on a cheese plate and some of your own preserved deliciousness. The ingredients are all readily available this time of the year and if you are really lucky you'll have some of them from your harvest.

If you aren't familiar with canning please consult a reliable resource such as [USDA Guide to Home Canning](#), your local cooperative extension office (for Washington State [here](#)), [Pick Your Own](#), or [Fresh Preserving](#). Always follow safe canning practice!

Three canning recipes sure to delight your guests include:

Spicy Carrot Relish/Slaw

(adapted from [...a crafty balance](#))

Yield: about 8 pints

This is delicious on cream cheese and crackers. Also wonderful when added to Bahn Mi sandwiches.

- 18 carrots
 - 4 green peppers (I used 1 big poblano, 5 or 6 jalapenos and 6 smaller sweet peppers)
 - 4 red peppers (I used 2 red peppers & 1/2 head green cabbage)
 - 2 onions
 - 1/2 cup salt (pickling salt)
 - 3 cups sugar
 - 6 cups vinegar (must be 5% acidity)
 - 2 T mustard seed
 - 2 T celery seed
 - 2 T coriander seeds
1. Grate carrots in food processor.
 2. Seed and thinly slice all peppers. Gloves. Wear Gloves. Really. Thinly slice onions & cabbage. Mix together with salt in a large bowl.
 3. Drain vegetables. There will be a lot of fluid. Put remaining ingredients into a large pot, and add vegetables.
 4. Process in boiling water bath for 15 minutes. Check to make sure jars have completely sealed. Yield: 8 pints-ish

Figgy-Lemon Chutney

(adapted from [Tigress in a Pickle](#) as inspired from [Jellies, Jams & Chutneys](#))

Yield: 3 half-pints

A chewy, spicy, and sweet chutney that is perfect to fancy up a grilled cheese or add some pop to a cheese plate.

- ½ pound red onion, diced
 - ½ pound lemons
 - 4 & ½ ounces dried figs, chopped
 - 4 garlic cloves
 - 1 & ½ inch piece of ginger, peeled
 - 4 dried chilis
 - 1 jalapeño
 - 7 ounces sugar
 - 1 tablespoon brown mustard seed
 - 1 tablespoon salt
 - 1 cup white wine vinegar
 - ½ cup port (optional)
1. [Prepare jars](#).
 2. Juice and seed the lemon, saving juice.
 3. Scrape all the flesh from the lemon rind- compost that. Dice the cleaned rind/peel.
 4. Peel garlic and ginger. Mash it up with the dried/fresh peppers however you like. I used a mini-prep.
 5. Mix everything except the port into your pot (including the lemon juice). Heat slowly until sugar melts than turn heat up and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer until thickened. It took me about 30 minutes. You'll know it is done when the chutney parts a bit when you swipe a spoon through it.
 6. Add port and stir for a few minutes until thickens up a bit again.
 7. Place into prepared jars leaving ¼ inch head space. [Hot water bath process](#) for 10 minutes.
 8. Flavor will be best after a few weeks of resting time.



Preserving for Festivities (cont.)

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Apple, Onion and Ale Relish

(adapted from [Jennifer MacKenzie's The Complete Book of Pickling](#))

Yield: 7 half pints

This is fantastic with a sharp cheese on a cheese plate!

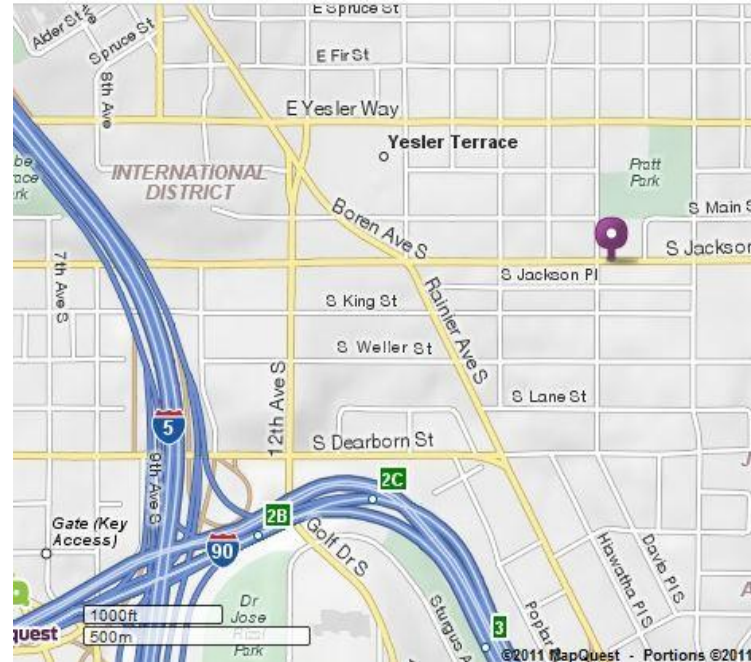
- 4 cups chopped onion (I used red onion)
 - 2 tablespoons pickling salt
 - 1.5 cups packed brown sugar
 - 1 tablespoon mustard seeds (I used yellow)
 - ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 - 1 cup cider vinegar
 - 2 cups tart soft apples, peeled and chopped (I used a mix of golden delicious and cameo)
 - 1 cup dark ale (I used [Ninkasi Sleigh'r Double Dark Ale](#))
 - 4 cups tart cooking apples, peeled and chopped (I used granny smith)
 - 1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
 - 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1. Combine onion and salt in glass bowl and let stand (covered) at room temperature for 2 hours.
 2. Drain onions in a colander lined with cheese cloth. It is easiest to do this a bit at a time as you'll want to drain and rinse them very well.
 3. Then drain and rinse them again. Allow to drain in colander until you are ready to use them. Squeeze out excess fluid.
 4. Combine sugar, mustard seeds, cinnamon, nutmeg and vinegar in a large-ish pot. Over medium heat, bring to a boil and stir till sugar dissolved. Increase heat and add onions, ale and the soft apples.
 5. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to keep at a low boil. Cook 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until apples are starting to break down and sauce is beginning to thicken.
 6. Add cooking apples and bring to a boil again. Then reduce heat to keep at a low boil. Cook about 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until apples start to soften slightly.
 7. Ladle into prepared jars and leave ½ inch head space. Refer [here](#) to get detailed info on how to properly prepare and process your jars.
 8. Process 10 minutes in hot water bath.

We're Moving!!!

We've just signed a lease on a new location! We'll be moving on Dec 3rd, 2011.

New location is very centrally located at 1817 S. Jackson St. Seattle WA 98144

(entry 1/2 block behind Jackson in Alley - S. Jackson Pl).



The new location will feature a heated office for our volunteers to work on the computer. Feed storage will utilize a large garage with industrial shelving. Two covered carport structures for hay/straw storage. Pull up access for loading & plenty of street/alley parking for our members.

We will be sharing the space with several cool projects:

Biodiesel Fuel Co-op (Dirty Hands Co-op)
<http://biolyle.blogspot.com/2007/10/dirty-hands-coop-uses-bio-pro-190.html>

Cascadian Edible Landscapes <http://www.eatyouryard.com/>

Amaranth Urban Farm <http://www.amaranthurbanfarm.com/>