

Locally Produced

Food, Farms & Gardening on the Southcoast

La Honda, Pescadero & San Gregorio

Volume 15



Let's Get Picking & Grilling!



June 2009

Fresh from the Farm

Produce Stands:

Phipps Country Store & Farm— Open daily, Seasonal U-Pick Strawberries Available now. <http://www.phippscountrystore.com>

Pie Ranch – We are open from 12pm-6pm, Saturdays and Sundays. Also, every 3rd Saturday of the month, we host a community volunteer time in the afternoon from 2-6pm, potluck from 6-7pm and barn dance from 7:30-10:30pm. Sliding scale donation \$7-\$15. Lots of fun! 2080 Cabrillo Hwy, Pescadero, 94060; Telephone: 650-879-0995. Website: <http://www.pieranch.org>

Farms and Ranches:

Blue House Farm – Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Fresh locally grown organic produce – also available at Roadside Farm Stand - Ned Conwell and Ryan Casey, 2601 Cloverdale Rd., Pescadero, Phone: 650-879-0704 Email: bluehousefarm@gmail.com; <http://www.bluehousefarm.org/>

Green Oaks Creek Farm – CSA subscriptions-2060 Green Oaks Way, Pescadero, CA 94060, Phone: 650-879-1009 Email: paulandsteph@greenoakscreek.com Website: <http://www.greenoakscreek.com/>

Harley Farms – 205 North Street, Pescadero, 94060, Phone: 650-879-0480, Website: <http://www.harleyfarms.com/> The farm is in full production now, the babies are mini teenagers already and the garden is in full splendor. Coming up we have our farm dinner on June 6th and we'll be at the Golden Glass event at Fort Mason on June 21st benefiting Slow Food USA. It's a fabulous time, tons of great wine and artisan foods! We'll also be at Cetrella on June 30th for their annual dinner featuring our cheese paired with Alvaro wines. It's a good evening and tickets are available directly from the restaurant. Our goat compost will be ready for sale in July. It's fantastic! We have a sh-- list(!) in the shop. If you want to be able to get some pop by and sign up and we'll give you a call when it's ready. The big news though is that 'Our Chloe' will be graduating from Pescadero High School on June 11th. She's worked in our shop for 3 years and has been a phenomenal asset to our farm. Congratulations Chloe! You can always check our web site for up to date news and read our blog or stop by our farm shop which is open every day from 11am to 5pm.

Markegard Family Grass-Fed Cattle: Providing the community with locally born, raised and processed beef - We are accepting orders now for shares of beef and lamb. There is only 3 more weeks to get your orders in for 2009! The meat will be ready in July, when the grass has reached it's maximum level of nutrition. Please contact us and we will send you an order form. doniga@designsbydoniga.com 650 747 0205 www.designsbydoniga.com

Farmer's Markets:

Coastside Farmer's Market – Saturdays, 9am -1pm, at Shoreline Station (east side of Hwy 1, between Kelly Avenue & Hwy 92).

Santa Cruz Farmers' Markets - We have two markets open year round for your shopping convenience. The Downtown Santa Cruz Farmers' Market is open rain or shine every Wednesday afternoon from 2:30pm to 6:30pm. Our weekend market is the Westside Farmers' Market and it operates every Saturday morning from 9am to 1pm.

Around Town with Annie

Berry Season has arrived on the Southcoast! If you're ready for a u-pick outing with your family – stop in at **Phipps Ranch** – their strawberries are ripe and ready for the plucking. If you'd rather have someone else do the actual picking, you can stop in at **Pescadero Country Store** and purchase fresh strawberries, raspberries and blueberries – ready to take home for turning into your favorite fresh fruit recipes. If your mouth is watering for these seasonal explosions of flavor but you don't have the time or talent to make your own goodies, check out the fresh baked offerings at **Norm's Market!** And don't forget you can also purchase **Duarte's** signature Ollaliberry Pie directly from the restaurant. Enjoy!



Art by Chris Walker

Our Local Schools



School Meal Program Update from Kathy Webster

We are quickly winding down to the end of the school year. Only two more weeks left as I write! Regina and I and the food service staff have prepared everything from our 6-week menu and received rave reviews. The number of lunches served has been increasing every day, so we must be doing something right. Seriously, we are very proud of our menu and the most important result from it is the students (and teachers) love it and it is healthy, fresh and balanced.

Food Safety at the LHPUSD School Kitchen

Food safety is extremely important at the school kitchen. It is mandatory that safe food handling practices are always followed. All food handlers must complete a food safety course and become a certified food handler every 5 years. The following food safety guidelines are just a few of the basic steps we follow to insure the food and environment are safe and clean.

- All employees wear their hair in a hair net.
- All cooked foods must meet the proper internal temperature (testing with food thermometer)
- All refrigerators must be 40 degrees or below
- Freezers should be set at 0 degrees
- Extremely important--All fruits and vegetables are thoroughly washed. We even had someone ask why we wash some of the organic produce. They assumed, just because it was organic, that it didn't need to be washed.
- Meals are kept hot in special heat bags until served. Cold foods are kept chilled in refrigerators until served.

Recipes, Menus & Health

Picnics, Potlucks & Food Safety

While I've always thought I was sensible about keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold, I found I didn't know anything until after I met Annie and saw her in action. How lucky that I managed to never inadvertently poison Bob or the boys with my total ignorance! Annie worked in catering so she has tons of experience storing and transporting food and food safety.

Food Safety Tips By Annie Fresquez

Always cool cooked foods down before you put them in the refrigerator. When I make a pot of soup or stew in the evening, I know I need it to cool down before I can put it in the refrigerator. I do this by using an ice bath. Fill the sink with ice and water and set the container in the ice bath. It will speed up the time it takes your dish to cool. To speed up the process even more divide in smaller containers.

I often forget to thaw meat or poultry for dinner. A safe and pretty fast way is to put frozen food in cold water in a sealed container. Change water every half an hour to continue the thaw. Defrost food in microwave only if you plan to cook immediately.



When serving cold food at a buffet, picnic, or barbecue, keep these "chilling" tips in mind.

- Cold foods should be kept at 40 °F or colder.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food on ice for serving to make sure they stay cold.
- It's particularly important to keep custards, cream pies, and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Don't serve them if refrigeration is not possible.

Cross Contamination

It's a good idea to keep a separate cutting board for meat and one for veggies. Wash with hot soapy water after use. I really like these Rubbermaid plastic ones you can put in the dishwasher. Choose a color and use only for one specific purpose, like one for meat, one for fruit, one for veggies, etc.



Temperature Rules!

Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy food-borne bacteria.



Food Safety while Shopping - with Flori Curran

When I go grocery shopping in HMB or over the hill for that matter, like to Trader Joe's, I'm always careful when buying refrigerated/frozen foods. When I walk by with an empty shopping cart, I know I can't help but fill it with some enticing refrigerated/frozen foods, so I make sure when I leave the house I bring a cooler with ice or ice packs in it. I don't use the regular hard picnic coolers, they take up too much room in the back of my car that I need for the rest of my groceries. I use the soft canvas type coolers that you can get at Costco or Trader Joe's. When you're done using them, you just can fold them away.

When I buy chicken, I have to remember that raw chicken can spoil quickly so putting it in a cold cooler asap is important. Chicken can be stored safely in the frig at 40 degrees or lower for several days. The amount of time that it can be refrigerated will depend on the freshness of the meat at the time I bought it, the temp that the cooler was while transporting the chicken from store to home and the type of packaging. A lot to consider isn't it?

I buy lotsa fish and fish is so perishable! I make it a point when I buy fish it's the last thing I buy and I immediately put it in my cooler and drive directly home. When I get home I cut up my fish into single serving sizes and vacuum seal it. Air is its worst enemy; so I bought one of the Food Saver Seal-A-Meal appliances and it's been well worth it. It's recommended that fish should never be stored in the freezer more than 6 months after that the taste declines. Fatty fish like salmon or trout doesn't last as long and should be stored no longer than 3 months.

So remember as we head into the summer months and although we love the warm weather it can also be your worst enemy with perishable foods.



Pacific Trail **Collapsible Cooler**
300 x 300 - 11k
www.aspsshop.net



Custom Koozies & Insulated **Coolers ...**
450 x 450 - 21k
www.qualitylogoproducts.com



Rolling **Collapsible Cooler**
500 x 500 - 102k
www.hotref.com

With all the information available to us online, I decided to do a quick search to see what else I could learn and find other tips to share. From: http://southernfood.about.com/cs/bbqgrillrecipes/a/cookout_safety.htm

Transporting Food

- ⊙ Make sure your cooler will keep foods at 40°F, or plan foods that are less perishable, such as luncheon meats, cheese, peanut butter, etc.. Keep drinks in a separate cooler, since it will be opened more often.
- ⊙ Plan ahead; try to take only what will be eaten so you won't have to worry about leftovers. Don't partially precook meat or poultry before transporting; if it must be precooked, cook until done then chill before packing in the cooler. Pack condiments in small containers rather than taking whole jars.
- ⊙ Put the cooler in the inside of the car rather than the hot trunk, and keep it in the shade at your destination; replenish ice often. If you cook food ahead of time, chill thoroughly before putting it in the cooler. If you take hot food, wrap the dish in aluminum foil and towels to keep it above 140°F; if it's a long trip it may be best not to take a hot dish.
- ⊙ Take-out foods like fried chicken or barbecue should be eaten within 2 hours of purchase or thoroughly chilled before adding to the cooler and transporting."

Keeping Potluck Meals Safe

Specific Suggestions to Keep Your Potluck Meal Safe Four Simple Food Safety Rules to Remember

- Keep hot food hot (above 140° F)
- Keep cold food cold (below 40°F)
- Keep hands, work surfaces and utensils clean.
- Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator over 2 hours!

http://www.foodsafeschools.org/FSAG_CD/Resources/RI/Potluck_Meals_Food_Safety_Fact_Sheet.pdf

Seasonal SuperStar! Asparagus



If you're already growing your own asparagus, you know that its fresh from the garden taste just can't be beat! It's been a fairly trouble-free perennial plant for us. We heard that gophers will travel high and low; over tooth and nail to pillage asparagus, but knock-on-wood, we've been lucky so far! In addition to the familiar green variety, I read in Eating Well Magazine that you can also find white (mounded with soil to shield from sunlight) and purple! Eating Well recommends selecting "firm spears with tight tips and ends that are not excessively dried out." I cut good-sized spears and store them in my frig (in a mason jar with about an inch or two of water in the bottom) until there's enough to make a good serving or two. Asparagus is great roasted, boiled (or steamed), sautéed or grilled. Check out Kathy Webster's recipe below for "Grilled Asparagus."

Grilled Asparagus from Kathy Webster

Even people who say they don't like asparagus (yes, there really are people who don't) love this dish.

1-pound asparagus
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1-tablespoon olive oil
1-tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
1/8-teaspoon black pepper
Cooking spray

Prepare grill. Snap off tough ends of asparagus. Combine all ingredients except cooking spray in a large zip-top plastic bag, seal and marinate 30 minutes. Remove asparagus from bag, and discard marinade. Place asparagus on grill rack coated with cooking spray, grill 5 minutes on each side or until asparagus is done. Yield: 4 servings.

Grill with Flori - Adapted from: Balsamic-Glazed Cracked Pepper Salmon (Clean Eating Magazine)

Salmon Fillets	¼ cup Balsamic Vinegar
Salt & Cracked Black Pepper, to taste	1 T. Honey

Note: Recipe calls for cooking in Skillet in 2T. Olive Oil - I grill it baby! I mix together the oil olive, salt & pepper then season both sides of salmon. Grill fish 1-2 minutes per side. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar & honey. Brush fillets with sauce. Finish grilling until firm and flaky.

Bob Stent's Quick Grilled Eagle Lake Trout

1 large trout, cleaned, deboned, and filleted into two halves with skin left on. Heat grill. Meanwhile, get large piece of aluminum foil. Place fillets skin side down on foil; spray fillets lightly cooking oil (Bob likes to use Olive Oil). Season with salt and cracked black pepper to taste. Place on hot grill and cook until fish is flaky. Eat your fish right off the foil! (The skin sticks to the foil).



Two of Annie Fresquez's Favorite Grilling Recipes:

Martha Stewart's Chicken Kabobs



© istockphoto.com/Adam Dodd

Prep: 30 minutes
Makes: 6-8 servings

- ½ cup teriyaki sauce
- ½ cup honey
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 red bell peppers cut into 2 inch thick pieces
- 1 large sweet onion, peeled and cut into wedges
- 1 ½ cups whole fresh mushrooms
- 1 ½ pounds boneless chicken breasts

In heavy plastic bag, combine the teriyaki sauce, honey, garlic and ginger. Add red bell peppers and onion, then cube the chicken and add to the vegetables. Mix everything together and refrigerate and marinate for 4 to 24 hours.

Preheat grill for medium high heat and lightly oil grate. Place meat and vegetables onto skewers, alternating as wanted on the skewers, ensuring a small space in-between each item. Grill over medium high heat for 10 minutes, turning as required.

GRILLED SKIRT STEAK TACOS with RAJAS con CREMA

From: Jeanne Kelley's Blue Eggs and Yellow Tomatoes

Rajas con crema are roasted green chiles stewed in cream. The rich Mexican condiment is perfect with red chile rubbed steak, but it also makes really good tacos when paired with black beans and warm corn tortillas. A skirt steak is a long, flat cut of beef from the flank. The flavorful cut is sometimes labeled "fajita steak" since it is often used to make fajitas. Some markets label the dark green chiles as pasilla peppers.

Yield 12 Tacos; 4 Servings

Rajas

4 poblano chiles
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, sliced
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1/3 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
or 1 teaspoon dried, crumbled
Salt

Steak

1 tablespoon mild ground red chile
(such as ancho, California, or New Mexico)
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 pound skirt steak
1 dozen corn tortillas, warmed
Chopped fresh cilantro

To make the rajas: Char the chiles over a gas flame or under a broiler until blackened and charred on all sides. Transfer the chiles to a bowl and cover with plastic, allowing the peppers to steam while cooling. Peel, seed, stem, and slice the chiles.

Heat the oil in a heavy, medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until tender and golden, about 15 minutes. Stir in the garlic and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the chiles and ¾ cup water, and cook until the onion and chiles are very tender and the water evaporates, about 8 minutes. Stir in the cream and oregano and bring to a simmer. Cook just until the chiles are coated with cream, about 1 minute. Season with salt to taste. (Can be prepared to this point up to 3 days ahead; refrigerate. Reheat in the microwave or by stirring over medium heat.)

To prepare the steak: Combine the chile, cumin, and salt in a small bowl. Sprinkle both sides of the steak with the chile mixture, rubbing it into the meat with your fingertips. Preheat the grill to high heat. Grill the steak until it is still pink in center, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer the steak to a cutting board and cut it across the grain into thin strips. To serve, divide the meat evenly among the tortillas. Top with the rajas, sprinkle with cilantro, and serve.

My favorite warm tortillas: Place a tortilla directly over a gas flame until it is very lightly charred at the edges, about 5 seconds. Turn the tortilla and lightly char the second side. Wrap in aluminum foil to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. Use the tortillas immediately or place the foil-wrapped tortillas in the toaster oven and keep warm.

Bob Stent's Grilled Venison

Bob processes his annual harvest by completely boning out the meat then slicing it into thin slices for vacuuming sealing and freezing. After thawing, the venison is marinated at least 8 hours in our favorite multipurpose marinade (below). He grills it for a very short time over a hot fire – he likes it rare. I like my pieces grilled a bit longer, so the marinade caramelizes more on the outside and the meat is more cooked on the inside.

Marinade: ¼ cup oil

1 T. Cracked Black Pepper

2 T. Soy Sauce

6-8 cloves minced Garlic

2 T. Lemon Juice

4-5 Green Onions, Sliced

Mix ingredients together in desired marinated container or ziplock bag. Add 1-2# of venison. Marinate at least 8 hrs, turn meat or bag occasionally.

Our Backyard Gardens & Orchards

Here it is June already! The growing season has awakened and is hitting full stride. Our gardens are filling with new life as seeds are germinating into plants and plants are growing to fill the garden beds. My eyes never tire of looking at the garden – the new green vegetable plants accented by blooming flower buds of orange, white, purple, red, blue and pink. The whole color wheel is in living color right before my eyes, painted by Mother Nature.



A slow walk through the garden at lunchtime can yield a colorful lunch: red sails and the spotted flashy troutback lettuce, a couple bright red radishes, a green onion's tasty white bulb, some freshly-shelled green peas, stopping to pull up a bright orange carrot, finishing with a small handful of fragrant fresh red strawberries

Flori's Bright Lights Swiss Chard plants are out of control, growing daily by leaps and bounds. We learned Duarte's has created a new use for swiss chard: While having dinner there one evening, Ron Duarte told us about the new tamale recipe they tried out using the chard leaves in place of corn husks – he said they were delicious. His inventiveness went on even further as we saw on our dinner entrées; there was the swiss chard again! The stems and what looked like a bit of leaf were sautéed with green and yellow zucchini, maybe onion? a bit of tomato? Whatever the actual combination was, it was very tasty and colorful too – eye appeal earned it an A++++. Submitted by Sandra Stent

Did you know??? (Taken from SF Chronicle, 5/24/09, Section G, "Digging in" by Patricia Yollin)
"During World War II, when the nation was called upon to grow victory gardens, people knew how. ...40% of the produce consumed in the United States in 1943 was grown at home." "The National Gardening Association released a study in March indicating that 37% of US households will grow vegetables, fruit, herbs or berries this year – a 19% increase from 2008. And 21% of food gardeners are first-timers."



Budding Chefs, Farmers & Gardeners



Spot the Difference

Sean and Lucy are planting seeds in the garden. Can you spot 10 differences between the two pictures?



www.thekidsgarden.co.uk © 2009

Meetings & Events

La Honda Winery is hosting the Vintners Festival on June 13 and 14 with tastings of some of their award winning wines along with Michael Martella Wines and Kings Mountain Vineyards. The Art Gallery/Marketplace features local artists Rebecca Holland, and Bill Sorich as well as local merchant Norms Market in Pescadero with his olives and pasta sauces. Local gal Monique with her wonderful soaps. Live music. \$10 for the day at La Honda Winery only; or \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door for an imprinted wine glass and access to all of the participating Santa Cruz Mountain Winegrower Association Member Wineries all weekend long! <http://www.lahondawinery.com/> 2645 Fair Oaks, Redwood City, 94063 650.366.4104 Fax 650.366.4137; e-mail us: info@lahondawinery.com

Permaculture Design Certificate Course

Learn regenerative and holistic land management principles to integrate directly into your life. Along with learning sustainable practices, participants will play a key role in creating a demonstration center for Permaculture in our area. Early Bird Discount ends June 12th!

2-Week Intensive Permaculture Design Certification Course
Tunitas Creek Ranch, Half Moon Bay, CA
Monday, July 13 - Saturday, July 25, 2009

For more information visit http://www.conexions.org/wordpress/?page_id=247
Contact us at 650.938.9300 x18 or permaculture@conexions.org

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Postal Service: Locally Produced
TomKat Ranch
PO Box 726
Pescadero, CA 94060

E-mail: locallyproduced@earthlink.net
Website: <http://www.locallyproduced.org>
Telephone: (650) 879-2147

Newsletter Staff: Alexis Detwiler, Annie Fresquez, Flori Curran, Sandra Stent, Kat Taylor & Kathy Webster

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****Other Information:**

If we at TomKat Ranch have surplus produce to share, we plan to harvest it ourselves, package it ourselves, and then make it available for sharing. That way, we feel we can control the impact on our land and the quality of our gift. Also, there's that liability issue always to think about and we are wrestling with how to be careful, generous and safe, all at the same time. Your ideas are welcome. And Please be careful if you decide to interact with others you may meet through the newsletter. A meeting in town versus at one's home might be more comfortable for everyone. Just food for thought...