PEA SOUP IS A PUBLICATION OF VIROQUA FOOD CO+OP

# pea soup

12

Spring 2020

Earth Day's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ..... 3 Nurturing Little Green Thumbs.... 6 Gardening Basics 101..... 10

#### **Board News & Views**

**Elizabeth Tigan** 

The anticipation that Spring brings is upon us! My favorite e.e.cummings poem talks about the world being "mud-luscious" and after a long winter we are looking forward to mud puddles, grass and GROWTH!

While the Co-op is done with expansion – there is always room for growing into our new space and making the most of it! Last summer we were able to really enjoy our new outdoor space – both our new greenhouse and gardening center as well as our outdoor PARTY area! The folks behind the scenes are working up a full schedule of fun community events for our summer on the patio and that is something that I know my family is looking forward to. We are looking forward to planning our garden and being able to find all sorts of amazing elements to put in the gardens right here at the Co-op.

Another thing we are looking forward to is the influx of fresh produce from our area's beloved and innovative farmers! The other day I realized how lucky we are to have fresh local greens and spinach all year long. In the grey days of winter, I remind myself every day not to take this amazing area and our co-op for granted. The hard working and resourceful farmers of our area have figured out how to keep the greenhouses going all winter and we all benefit. Our co-op is the vehicle we use to encourage and celebrate these farmers! Let's keep the celebration going all year long!

Have you noticed the Bulk Department added dried fruits in bulk bins? We are listening to our member owners and working on making more unpackaged opportunities for you to purchase goods in your own containers or with other minimal packaging options. I know I am not alone when I get excited that I remembered to bring my own bags. I am ELATED when I bring my jars and containers for bulk items. If you need a refresher about using the bulk department – PLEASE don't hesitate to ask. Making sure you have your containers weighed before filling them is a really good start!!

The Board is open to hear about your dreams for our co-op! We wouldn't be here without someone working toward the dream and sharing it with everyone. See you at the Co-op!



L to R: Olive Reynolds, Peter Bergquist, Karen Mischel, Mike Link, Eric Snowdeal, Elizabeth Tigan, Aurora Boyd

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Mike Link, President Peter Bergquist, Vice President Eric Snowdeal, Treasurer Elizabeth Tigan, Secretary Aurora Boyd Olive Reynolds Karen Mischel

The Board meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the Co-op Community Room. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at the meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: vfcbod@viroquafood.coop

#### PEA SOUP PUBLICATION TEAM

Charlene Elderkin Design, Writing, Editing, Advertising Shana Meshbesher Editing, Photography, Design, Writing Bjorn Bergman Research, Writing, Editing Haley Stafslien Photography, Design

#### **ADVERTISEMENTS**

Ad space is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Ad sizes and prices are as follows: 1/8 page: 3.5"w x 2.25"h - \$50 1/4 page: 3.5"w x 4.75"h - \$100 Ad deadline for Summer: April 27 Email: marketing@viroquafood.coop

Pea Soup is intended as a vehicle for communication among Co-op owners and shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice. Ads printed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the VFC.

The Pea Soup is published quarterly and printed on recycled paper. **DOWNLOAD THE PEA SOUP** viroquafood.coop/members/vfc-publications/

Cover Photo Credit: Bjorn Bergman

#### **Table of Contents**

Driftless Organics 4-5
Gardening Projects with Kids 6-7
VFC Garden Center Events 8-9
Gardening Basics 101 10-11
Cheese Madness
VFC News
Give Where You Live
Classes & Events 20-22

#### Earth Day's 50th Anniversary

Jan Rasikas, General Manager

Earth Day was founded by Wisconsin's own Senator Gaylord Nelson on April 22, 1970. According to EarthDay.org, 20 million Americans (at the time, 10% of the total population of the United States) took to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies on that first Earth Day in 1970. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment.

Groups that were working individually against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness and the extinction of wildlife united on Earth Day around shared common values.

Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, urban dwellers and farmers, business and labor leaders. By the end of 1970, the first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts.

Fast forward to 1990, when Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries and lifting environmental issues onto the world stage.

Earth Day 2010 came at a time of great challenge for the environmental community to combat the cynicism of climate change deniers, well-funded oil lobbyists, reticent politicians, a disinterested public, and a divided environmental community.

For Earth Day 2020, Earth Day Network (EDN) has relaunched its flagship platform, *A Billion Acts of Green®* with global activations that aim to mobilize a billion people worldwide for transformative action for our planet. A Billion Acts of Green, the world's largest environmental service project, will serve as a frame for all actions taken on the EDN website – whether it's a petition signed, a cleanup hosted, a climate march registered, etc.

The previous iteration of A Billion Acts of Green saw more than 2 billion actions registered. To mark 50 years of Earth Day, they're setting a 2020 goal of 3.5 billion actions taken, logged, and aggregated around the world. Check out the link at: www. earthday.org/take-action-now

What does that mean for

our co-op community? I believe the VFC Mission, that brings us together over quality food, is the heart of environmental activism. As a co-op, we support local organic farmers that base their livelihoods on soil health and humane animal husbandry. Organic farming practices protect the water table, supports complex ecosystems, increases nutrients in our food, and in turn improves the health of our bodies.

The choices we make every day, not just when we shop for food, do make a difference. Grow an organic garden, plant a tree and a pollinator garden. Always carry a reusable bag, use containers from home for bulk foods. Volunteer for a cleanup effort, and support our Reserve and Park system. Ride your bike! And vote for city, county, state and federal representatives that know the importance of a healthy environment and will act on the values we embrace.





# Local Producer Profile Driftless Organics

osh and Noah Engel are the quintessential farmers in the Driftless region. Their farm – Driftless Organics – is located on McManus Ridge in Crawford County and has been supplying the Viroqua Food Co+op with certified organic produce for longer than we can remember.

The Engel brothers started their careers as farmers back in 1993 when Noah was nine and Josh was eleven. They lived on their parent's organic dairy farm and that year they decided to plant a quarter acre of potatoes that included twenty different varieties. As the years carried on, they started planting more and more produce, bought tractors and other farm implements and hired their mother Marta to drive them to the Dane County Farmers Market to sell their organic produce.

Today, with the help of a dedicated farm crew, they grow 100 acres of organic vegetables, fruit and oilseed crops that are sold at



Driftless Organics Sunflower Oil, the "Olive Oil of the Midwest," is low in saturated fats and high in vitamin E, with a nutty flavor that shines in dressings, light sautéing, and baking.

the Dane County Farmers' Market and Midwest grocery stores focused on local and organic food. Some of the main staples that we enjoy at the Viroqua Food Co+op are their five-pound bags of yellow or red potatoes and their delicious fall harvest carrots that we enjoy through the dark days of winter.

For years they had been selling a large portion of their produce through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, but they decided to discontinue this option in 2020 due to the cost of growing such a diversity of crops with a changing climate and increased rain. They are now focusing on growing vegetables that they know will be profitable for their local organic farm.

Beyond growing delicious organic vegetables, they also produce a unique product – culinary sunflower oil. In 2007, Josh started dreaming up a way to diversify their farm income while creating culinary oils that filled a gap in the local food system. After some trial and error, they found that the best fit for the farm was growing fields of sunflowers and producing cold pressed certified organic sunflower oil.

To produce the oil, the Engels plant their black oil sunflower seeds (similar to the ones found in birdseed) in early June when the soil has warmed. From there the flowers grow tall and come into full bloom in August. When you pass over the McManus ridge at this time, the feeling of being greeted by a large field of majestic sunflowers in full bloom is simply breathtaking.

The flower heads dry down and form mature sunflower seeds that are harvested in mid-October with a combine, dried further in grain bins for 6-18 months, then cleaned on the farm. They truck the cleaned sunflower seeds offsite to Botanical Innovations in Spooner, Wisconsin. There the seeds are cold pressed, filtered and bottled. VFC carries Driftless Organics Sunflower Oil in half-pints, pints as well as in bulk.

The Engels dub their organic sunflower oil "the Olive Oil of the Midwest" on their bottle and we have to say it really is! The oil closely mirrors light olive oil – it is low in saturated fats and high in oleic acid and vitamin E. Since it is unrefined, it has a low smoke point of 225°F that is not suitable for frying. It's nutty flavor shines in dressings, pesto, baking and light sautéing.

Next time you see Driftless Organics veggies or sunflower oil at VFC, be sure to pick some up! You can do so knowing that you are supporting a vibrant local farm that is dedicated to organic agriculture.

Sources:

www.wisconsinacademy.org/magazine/fall-2019/wisconsin-table/farming-oil www.driftlessorganics.com/about-us-2/ http://ediblemadison.com/articles/view/sunflowers/c/P3







The Engel brothers started their careers as farmers back in 1993, planting a quarter acre of potatoes when Noah was nine and Josh was eleven. Today with the help of a dedicated farm crew, they grow 100 acres of organic vegetables, fruit and oilseed crops.

# Nurturing Little Green Thumbs

**By Eve Adamson** 

hen my two sisters and I were youngsters, my dad had a great idea. One warm May day, as the three of us stood in the grass of our big backyard watching and wondering what he was up to, he cut 15 six-foot lengths of molding left over from our recent basement remodel, stuck them into the warming dirt of our garden in three circles, and lashed the tops of each together with twine to make three "teepee" forms. Next, he tore open a packet of pole bean seeds and gave us each a small handful. He showed us how to plant them around each wooden stake, and then he watered the soil with the green garden hose, while we ran through the spray.

Every day, we went out to the backyard with my dad to check on our seeds. When the sprouts emerged, we cheered. He showed us how to pluck out the weeds and keep the soil moist. As the beans began to grow, in the impressively speedy way they tend to in the rich lowa soil, something amazing happened. Without any prompting or guidance from us, vines sprouting leaves and bean pods began to wind around the wooden stakes until they reached the top. The leaves and tendrils grew thicker and denser, until one day, each of us could crawl inside our little green houses and be completely alone. I remember sitting in the cool dirt, quietly marveling at the way the vines filtered and freckled the bright July sun. It is one of my fondest childhood memories.

Sometimes I would pluck a tender raw bean and eat it. It tasted like spring to me — fresh and grassy. Or, I would collect them in a bowl and bring them into the kitchen, so my mother could make them for dinner. I didn't even mind eating them too much — with a little butter. They tasted nothing like those mushy beans from the can we had to eat in the winter, and those fresh beans prompted me to try the garden carrots, lettuces and tomatoes, too.

There's something about growing things that appeals to kids, and several casual studies suggest that when kids grow their own vegetables, they are more likely to eat vegetables. It was certainly true in my case. Decades later, my own son, who at 14 remains suspicious of most green things, finally became more open minded when his summer camp grew a vegetable garden.

If gardening is the way to get kids to eat more vegetables (not to mention spend more time with you), then why aren't we all doing it? Even if you only have a small backyard plot, or room for a few containers on your deck or porch, you can get growing together.

Gardening with your kids gives them many gifts. They learn where food really comes from. They learn how to work together with others toward a common goal. They learn practical skills. They learn how fresh food tastes. They learn the feel and smell of wet dirt and mulch. And they learn that they have the power to take something as small and full of potential as a seed, and nurture it until it becomes everything it was meant to be. Just like you are doing with them.

Reprinted by permission from welcometothetable.coop.

#### Fun gardening projects with kids

#### Tube garden

Start your seeds and recycle at the same time. Toilet paper tubes are easy for small hands to manipulate. Plant tomato, pepper, pea or bean seeds in tubes filled with potting soil, in early spring. Prop them upright in a tray or flower pot. When the seeds sprout, pop the whole tube into the garden after the soil is warm.

#### Salad in a box

Any window box, bucket, basket or other container with drainage at the bottom will do. Fill it with potting soil and plant a variety of lettuces and spinach scattered over the top. Press into place and water lightly. Keep the soil moist. When the greens sprout, trim off a few leaves each day to include in a salad. For kids who don't like bitter tastes, butter lettuces are a good choice.

#### Mushroom garden

If your child has a daring palate, try growing mushrooms. Many companies sell mushroom growing kits that make it easy to spawn this fascinating fungus in a box at home.

#### **Herb circles**

A round container or a small circle dug out of your sod can become an herb circle. Plant basil, lavender, tarragon, thyme and edible nasturtium flowers in concentric circles. Your child can sample the different smells and tastes, and help you decide which herbs to add to which foods.

#### Flowers and fruit garden

For some kids, fruit is an easier sell than vegetables. Try planting watermelons, cantaloupe or honeydew melons, interspersed with native wildflowers, for a pretty and gastronomically satisfying garden experience.

#### Bean teepee

If you have the space, give your child a magical-seeming, ephemeral playhouse. You don't have to use leftover molding like my dad did; any thin wooden pole or bamboo rod will work. For each teepee, put five or six poles, about 5 to 6 feet long, in the ground in a circle, approximately 3 feet in diameter. Prop or tie the tops together. Plant pole bean seeds around each stake. Water and mulch, then watch as each teepee leafs out, creating a private space just for small people.

#### Salsa garden, pizza garden or spaghetti garden

Devote your garden plot to a food theme kids can relate to. For a salsa garden, plant tomatoes, tomatillos, bell peppers, jalapeno peppers, onions and cilantro. For a pizza garden, plant Roma tomatoes, onions, garlic, basil, spinach or whatever else you like on your pizza. For a spaghetti garden, try tomatoes, onions, garlic, oregano and thyme.

#### **Pumpkin garden**

Two or three pumpkin plants will sprawl and spawn just what you need for Halloween crafts as well as pumpkin pie, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread, and pumpkin puree you can add to applesauce, smoothies, or even chili. Marigolds nestled between the vine make a prettier plot.

Find more ideas for gardening projects with kids and recipes for your harvest at welcometothetable.coop.

# VFC Garden Center Open House

CHARLES IN THE REAL PROPERTY OF

the fit in the continue.

the fill a real march little states

#### April 25 & 26

Join us the last weekend in April for classes, fun and to let your green thumb blossom.



#### kid-friendly classes! participate in gardening classes taught by Wisconsin Master Gardener & VFC Employee, Arwyn Wildingway

#### Saturday, March 21: Seed Starting (free)

Learn tips and tricks for seed starting at home to get some soil therapy before you get in the garden!

#### Saturday, April 4: Garden Planning (free)

A new year means a new garden. Learn how plan your garden around growth productivity and low maintenance. **Saturday, April 25: Make Your Own Herb Planter –** *Garden Center Open House Class* (\$25)

Bring your own container or fill one of ours with your favorite herbs. Great for growing in smaller spaces!

Sunday, April 26: Make Your Own Herb Planter – Garden Center Open House Class (\$25)

Bring your own container or fill one of ours with your favorite herbs. Great for growing in smaller spaces!

#### Saturday, May 2: Transplanting (free)

You've got lovely plants to grow and we want them to thrive. Learn about getting your seedlings in the ground! **Saturday, May 9: Make Mom a Planter (\$25)** 

Just in time for Mother's Day. Give her the best kind of gift: the one that's still living and made with loving care! **Saturday, May 16: Container Planting for Sun or Shade (\$25)** 

Sprin 2020

Is your only garden space on your porch? Learn all about growing beautiful, edible and successful plants in planters!

The growing season is almost here! The VFC Garden Center is excited to offer you all you need to grow your own food in your garden. While you are waiting for the ground to thaw, peruse our large selection of certified organic seeds, spring branches and boughs, and organic growing mediums (compost, soil, and fertilizing soil amendments). Check out the gardening merchandise – tools, pots, seed starting trays and more.

By the end of March we will have spring bulbs and many varieties of certified organic seed potatoes, grown locally by Vermont Valley Community Farm in Blue Mounds, WI. Weather permitting, our greenhouse structure will go up in mid-April with organic seedlings (annuals, perennials, fruits & veggies), shrubs, trees, and more. On Earth Day weekend, don't miss our Garden Center Open House on April 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>. We'll celebrate the Earth and her growing season with workshops, activities for the kiddies and great sales. Just in time for Mother's Day we'll have our popular hanging flower baskets and flowering annuals. True to our buying guidelines, you can count on the VFC to provide local and certified organic products whenever possible. We are supporting the same fantastic local organic growers we have in the past and plenty more, thanks to our new space. We look forward to helping you grow your own great food this season.

# **Gardening Basics 101**

Starting a garden is not as intimidating as it may seem – even for beginners. Use these easy steps to set your first garden up for sucess!

#### Check out our spring **Gardening Classes**

(see pages 21-23 for details)

#### Steps

#### Discover your zone.

Knowing your USDA Hardiness Zone can help you choose the best plants. Simply put, it describes the coldest place a plant can grow. The higher the zone number, the warmer the climate. Find your particular zone at: *https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov* 

#### Learn your frost dates.

Planting too early (or late) in the season can spell disaster for your garden. You need to know the last average spring frost date for your area so you don't accidentally kill plants by putting them out prematurely (rooky move)! It's also good to know your first average fall frost date so that you get your plants harvested or moved indoors before late-season cold damages them. Remember that cold air sinks! Valleys in the Driftless region can frost before other sites, such as ridgetops and open spaces.

#### Site it right.

Starting a garden is just like real estate– location, location, location. Place your garden in a part of your yard where you see it regularly. Out of sight, out of mind definitely applies to gardening. That way, you'll be much more likely to spend time in it. Another major consideration to take in is the sun. Most veggies need at least eight hours of full sun each day. Before digging, call Diggers Hotline (811) to make sure your garden plot is in a safe location, free of underground piping and wires.

#### Choose the right plants.

It's important to select plants that match your growing conditions. This means putting sun-loving plants into a sunny spot, and giving ground-growing vines like pumpkins and melons ample elbow room. Do your homework and pick varieties that grow well in the Midwest and in the space you have. You can get a step up on success when growing veggies and herbs. Start with vigorous young plants from our VFC Greenhouse instead of trying to grow from scratch!

#### **Consider containers.**

When space is at a premium, look to containers. Surprisingly, you can grow many plants in pots, including vegetables, herbs, flowers, fruit trees, berries, and shrubs. If you decide to create a container garden, be sure to use a pot that's large enough for the plant it's hosting and fill it with a great potting mix. Check out the soils sold at the VFC; there are some specially formulated to help organic plants in pots thrive!

# 2020 Cheese Madness \* March 20 - April 4 **Head-to-Head Cheese Sampling**

This time, if you want to win the Specialty Cheese Basket at VFC is hosting our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Wisconsin Cheese Madness! the end of the competition, you must fill out the cheese Desk by the time the first round starts by March 20\*. 20-April 4. Customers are invited to stop by the VFC to cheeses and are matching them up head-to-head, March bracket below & submit it to the Customer Service Below are eight delicious and unique local & regional

Monday and Friday (2-5pm) as well as Saturday (Ilam-2pm). The cheese with the largest number of votes advances on try two cheeses and then vote for their favorite every to the next round.

Service Desk to win a Specialty Cheese Basket. If you miss this part, sample these and vote during the dates below to Participate by turning in a bracket to the Customer help us crown VFC's best cheese this March!

# **Eight-Cheese Bracket**

**Brackets that come closest to predicting the winner of each round** get entered in a drawing to win a Specialty Cheese Basket.

# Round Blue Cheese

Swiss Valley - Mindoro, WI

Friday, March 20 • 2-5pm

Sartori - Plymouth, WI

Gorgonzola Dolcina

Friday, April 3 • 2-5pm

Finals - Part 1

**Mindoro Blue** 

#### \*Turn in a completed bracket to VFC Customer Service Desk by Fri

day, March 20<sup>th</sup> (when the sampling and competition starts) to be eligible to win!



### **VFC** News

#### Viroqua Montessori School Receives National Grant for School Garden

Organic Valley has been proudly working with National Co-op Grocers (NCG) stores and the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) to offer school kids a chance to grow their own organic food. For every Organic Valley product purchased in an NCG store during August 2019, \$1 was donated to the NFSN (up to \$15,000). At the end of the month, the three NCG stores with the highest Organic Valley product sales each got to choose a school to receive a NFSN donation to its school garden program.

In fact, Viroqua Food Co+op was a lucky winner and selected Viroqua Montessori School to receive one of the grants! Working together as co-ops do, we were able to make a real change in our communities. Watch for more information in the spring when the school can break ground!



#### **Congratulations to the 2020 Microloan Recipient – Driftless Provisions**

We are pleased to announce that Driftless Provisions is the recipient of the 2020 VFC Microloan of \$2,855.

Driftless Provisions is an artisan dry-cured salami business owned and operated by Ryan Wagner and Justin VerMeer in Viroqua, Wisconsin. As with many startup food businesses, Driftless Provisions has gone through a variety of growing pains. They currently have their salamis made by a private label brand in the midwest using sustainably raised pork. In the future, they are striving to open their own production facilities in the Driftless region as soon as they are able. In the meantime, they are focusing on growing their business through story-telling until they can secure the capital to take the next step with their business.

With this loan Driftless Provisions is purchasing a label printer, which will reduce the cost and headache of making labels for each batch. Additionally, they are purchasing photography equipment to help them continue to tell the story of their salami on their website and social media.

VFC is excited to support this growing local food business and we invite you to support them as well by

#### Go Paper-Free with Emailed Receipts from VFC

Do you want your VFC receipts sent to your email? This option is now available to any VFC Owner who wants to reduce unnecessary paper use and make tracking VFC purchases easier.

So, how do you get your VFC receipts emailed to you? Go to our website and click on the "opt in to emailed



picking up a Driftless Provisions salami next time you are in the meat department. We currently offer Driftless Provisions salami in six different flavors.

The VFC Microlending Initiative aims to strengthen small, local farms and businesses that are part of our local food system and create opportunities to improve their operations by offering one-year interest-free loans of up to \$3,500 to local food businesses.

receipts" button on the front page or let a cashier know you would like your receipts emailed. Be ready to provide us your email address! If you don't start getting your receipts within a week, check your junkmail and add *serversms@viroquafood.coop* to your contact list.

Questions? Email Bjorn at: outreach@viroquafood.coop

#### **VFC Customer Service Leadership Team**

Viroqua Food Co+op congratulates Deborah Ecklund on her promotion to Customer Service Manager and Rose Wildhack to Assistant Customer Service Manager. Here they are to tell you a bit about themselves:

#### **Deborah Ecklund**

Hello Co-op Shoppers! I am very pleased to accept the role of Customer Service Manager and to have Rose at my side.

When the Co-op first opened in 1996, I'd walk with my friends to the little store after school. We would volunteer by sweeping up and repacking bulk items, like dried fruit. I was very proud to volunteer enough hours to earn a discount on my bags of Barbara's Jalapeño Cheesepuffs. It was a big deal for my 13-year-old self!

I have worked at the VFC since 2007. I started as a baker after being a stay-at-home mom with my twin sons. I was very happy to bake cookies all day, earn a paycheck, and not eat them all myself! After my daughter was born, I transferred to Customer Service. I worked as a cashier for several years before taking on the role of SOD (short for Supervisor on Duty). I was what is referred to as a "weekend warrior," ensuring smooth operations on the floor during our busiest days.

Years later I became the Assistant Manager – a new position created to meet the growing needs of the Co-op. Our team worked well together to bring us through the expansion, adding three more check-out lanes, developing new processes behind the scenes and ensuring good customer service. Now that we've made it through the expansion and the Co-op has settled into the space, we're working on new services such as the Co-op Community Room classes and the Co-op Explorers program where we give tasty produce treats to children.

Throughout the years I've enjoyed getting to know our Co-op community, welcoming curious visitors and familiar VFC locals. Whether they're passing through, coming to stay, or have been here for generations, I love to hear how people come to the Driftless. I'm impressed with the passion of our community, striving to make the world better, or at least our little corner of it. People may have differing opinions on what that looks like, but we have values that we agree on – like treating each other with dignity and respect and keeping our environment clean so our children will thrive.

We have a great Customer Service team, who are always striving to make your time at the Co-op a pleasure. Our



Rose Wildhack and Deborah Ecklund

team loves to learn names – and yes, the numbers too – of our VFC shoppers, because you are our friends and neighbors. We learn about our community non-profits so we can promote and support them – with your help – for the *Give Where You Live* program. I'm very proud of all that we have accomplished and am excited to see where our next steps will take us.

#### **Rose Wildhack**

I moved from homeschooling in Pennsylvania to attending second grade at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School in 2004 and stayed until 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I attended both Viroqua High School and Youth Initiative High School. It was great to have the opportunity to experience so many different kinds of schooling. We are lucky to have so many options in such a small community.

After graduating I moved to Madison and worked at Jamba Juice on State Street. I loved working there, and really enjoyed making healthy juices and smoothies for people. About a year after I started I became the Manager. When a new chapter of my life began, I moved back to Viroqua, to raise my beautiful son Ezzekiel.

I joined the Customer Service team at the Viroqua Food Co-op last October and have loved every day of it. There is something so special and unique about this community and I feel that being a part of the Co-op is a great way to see even more of that.

I am very excited about my new position as Assistant Manager, and can't wait to keep giving it my all!





Treatment foster care allows children with complex needs to be raised in a family environment while receiving intensive support, supervision, and the opportunity to heal and grow.

#### Contact us about becoming a foster parent today! www.family-works.com | 800.660.9204

SMALL AGENCY | BIG IMPACT



#### www.ethos.green Solar Power Simplified

Call us for a free consultation to see if solar power makes sense for your home or business.



Local Reliable Expert Install/Service

State Grants for Homes & Business Federal Tax Credits

Local low-interest financing options

Cut your electric bill and cut carbon - be part of the solution

729 N Main Viroqua 608.637.3797



#### Residential • Commercial New Construction • Remodel

Licensed & Insured

Call today, we show up! 608.538.3009





#### WINTER IS THE NEW SPRING.



YEAR-ROUND INDOOR GARDENING! www.mikepalen.towergarden.com greenliving917@gmail.com



Paintings.Jewelry.Textiles.Pottery.Photography.Wood.Metal

**1st THURSDAY Guest Artist Receptions 5-7 pm** Dinner following at Rooted Spoon Kitchen Table. Call 632-2120 for reservations March 5th: Julius Parrish - Paintings April 2nd: Gary Galger - Photography May 7th: Winding Road Tour Artists

217 S. Main St + Viroqua + 608.637.6918 + www.vivagallery.net



#### GIBSON CPA & Law LLC Tax return preparation Accounting and Payroll Estate planning Business and Family Law 124 W Court St Viroqua, WI









What does **Rural Living** mean to you?

For details visit www.vernoncom.coop



Like a river, keep your life force flowing with an adjustment from Dr. Paul.



Quality of Life Chiropractic 801 E. Decker St. Viroqua, WI 54665 (608) 637-6767





#### Laura Poe Mathes, RD

Viroqua Nutrition Counseling Holistic nutrition counseling and traditional foods classes

EMAIL FOR MORE INFO



Nutrition Counseling

#### Gift Certificates Available

224 East Court Street, Viroqua, WI 608-637-7600

viroquahealingarts.com



## "Round Up" for Local Nonprofits to Make a Bigger Impact Give Where You Live



#### **NOVEMBER 2019**

**Bethel Butikk Food Pantry** VFC staff present a \$2,033 check to Deb Tewalt of the Bethel Butikk Food Pantry.

This community food pantry is sponsored by Bethel Home & Services, plus 18 local churches which provide food and monetary assistance to eligible families.



#### DECEMBER 2019

**Kickapoo Valley Reserve** VFC staff present a \$2,545 check to representatives of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

The KVR Educational Programs offer hands-on environmental learning opportunities that promote positive environmental values to people of all ages.



#### JANUARY 2020

Living Faith Food Pantry

VFC staff present a \$2,923 check to Pastor Dale Toltzman, Director of the Living Faith Food Pantry.

LFFP distributes 6,000 pounds of food each week to 160 area households and has been recognized by Second Harvest Food bank as a leader in the distribution of fresh produce.

#### **2020 Give Where You Live Spring Schedule**

March April Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School Viroqua Farmers Market May June Vernon Trails Community Hunger Solutions

Visit www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach for a complete schedule.



#### Treat yourself to a weekend of creativity! Saturday & Sunday, May 30 & 31

The Winding Roads Art Tour, taking place Saturday & Sunday, May 30 & 31, welcomes and invites you to adventure through the hills in and around the Viroqua area with our self-guided tour to meet with artists in their studios.

Now in its fifth year, the Winding Roads Art Tour was created to showcase and celebrate our area's abundance of local artists to visitors from all over the Midwest and beyond. A vibrant arts culture is essential to the thriving of any community, perhaps especially so in rural areas that require more creativity when it comes to drawing visitors to enjoy the offerings of our small towns.

The purpose of our tour is larger than just giving artists a chance to sell their work. We hope it benefits our entire community by highlighting the important role of artists and collectively celebrating local art as a way to keep our community on the map and help our rural economy flourish.

On the tour weekend, restaurants, cafes and shops are flooded with hundreds of art-appreciating visitors from out of town. The entire city feels the energy and enjoys the benefit of artists coming together to celebrate this place as an arts community.

This year, the tour will feature many returning artists as well welcoming new artists to the event. Our group of 37 artists has a diverse range of mediums including ceramics, fiber, photography, furniture, jewelry, basketry, sculpture, painting and paper mâché.

Our artists also have a wide range of life experiences. One of the exciting parts of a tour is learning the details of each artist's story from the artist themselves. The act of stepping into the studios and landscapes where the artwork comes alive creates a meaningful connection to the art objects that tour goers bring home.

Learn more about this year's artists on Instagram (@windingroadsart) and Facebook (Winding Roads Art Tour). Printed guides will be available at VIVA Gallery on Main Street, Viroqua in May. Find more information, including a map and virtual guide, on our website: windingroadsart.com

Thank you to our sponsors and supporters! We look forward to seeing you in May.



Susan Johnson, Textiles



Anne Butera, Watercolor



Joe Schwarte, Wood Furniture



Diane Splinter, Painting



Charna Schwarts, Ceramics

# **Events Calendar**

For details, visit our event calendar at: www.viroquafood.coop/about/events

#### March 2020

#### Give Where You Live Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

Round up at the registers any day this month to contribute to this nonprofit.

#### Saving for Owners Owner Discount Days

Save 15% off all wellness products **March 10-12** 

#### Co-op Community Room Class Make Your Own Fermented Beverages

Incorporating more fermented foods into our diets can help us with digestive ailments, improved immune function and more. In this class, learn about the nutritional benefits of fermented beverages. Laura demonstrates how to make four different beverages: kombucha, water kefir, beet kvass, and lacto-fermented ginger ale. Participants get to try each beverage and take home the recipes and a grocery list for making these foods at home. Tuesday, March 17, 6-7:30pm **Instructor: Laura Mathes** Cost: \$20 VFC Owners/\$25 Non-owners Register by March 15, limit 12!

#### Keeping It Frank! Demystifying Curry

VFC Cook Frank Wildingway breaks down the spices & variations of curry to make it quick and easy in your home kitchen, along with a side of flatbread! Free samples & recipes for attendees. Monday, March 9, 3:30-4:30pm Co-op Community Room FREE – Register by March 7, limit 15!

#### In-store Savings Wellness Wednesday

10% off all supplements, homeopathic & herbal formulas from the wellness aisles. Wednesday, March 18

#### Free Film Screening The Biggest Little Farm

THE BIGGEST LITTLE FARM chronicles the eight-year quest of John and Molly Chester as they trade city living for 200 acres of barren farmland and a dream to harvest in harmony with nature. Featuring breathtaking cinematography, captivating animals, and an urgent message to heed Mother Nature's call. Thursday, March 19, 6:30pm Co-op Community Room FREE Movie & Popcorn!



#### In-store Event & Drawing 2020 Cheese Madness

We're sampling 8 delicious and unique, local & regional cheeses. Come sample and vote for your favorite cheeses as they go head-to-head in our Cheese Madness competition, March 20-April 4. *Fill out a bracket and turn it into the Customer Service Desk by March 20.* If you get close to selecting the winning cheese, you will be eligible to win a Specialty Cheese Basket after the competition is complete!



Sampling: March 20-April 4 Mondays & Fridays, 2-5pm Saturdays, 11am-2pm See details on page 12-13

#### Free Gardening Class Seed Starting

Join WI-Master Gardener Arwyn for this free class and learn the basics of how to start your own garden plants. Saturday, March 21, 11am Co-op Community Room Cost: FREE!

# **Events Calendar**

For details, visit our event calendar at: www.viroquafood.coop/about/events

#### April 2020

#### Give Where You Live Viroqua Farmers Market

Round up any day this month.

#### Free Gardening Class Garden Planning

A new year means a new garden. Learn how to plan your garden so it can be beautiful, productive, and low maintenance with WI-Master Gardener Arwyn. Don't get frustrated – get educated with Arwyn! Saturday, April 4, 11am Co-op Community Room Cost: FREE!



#### Co-op Community Room Class Spring Cheese Boards

Prepare and sample breakfast & brunch cheese boards, just in time for Mother's Day & springtime gatherings! Saturday, April 4, 1:30pm Instructor: VFC Cheese Monger Sarah Cost: \$10 VFC Owners/\$15 Non-owners Register by April 2, limit 15!

#### Savings for Owners Owner Discount Days

15% off all Cheeses April 7-9

#### Keeping It Frank! Vegetable Stir Fry Made Easy

VFC Cook Frank Wildingway demonstrates the easiest basics of making a delicious vegetarian stir-fry. Free samples & recipes for attendees! Monday, April 13, 3:30-4:30pm Co-op Community Room FREE - Register by April 11, limit 15!



#### In-store Savings Wellness Wednesday

10% off all supplements, homeopathic & herbal formulas from the wellness aisles. Wednesday, April 15

#### Co-op Community Room Class Easy DIY Cultured Dairy

The culturing process of fermented dairy products provide lots of nutrition and probiotic bacteria, which makes them more digestible for many of us. Learn about the benefits of consuming cultured dairy products with Laura who demonstrates how to make three different fermented dairy items: yogurt, kefir, and crème fraîche. Participants get to sample several fermented products, and take home the recipes and grocery list for making these foods at home. Tuesday, April 21, 6-7:30pm **Instructor: Laura Mathes** Cost: \$20 VFC Owners/\$25 Non-owners Register by April 19, limit 12!

#### VFC Garden Center Garden Center Open House

Kids activities, planting workshops, plant sales and more – do not miss this! Saturday, April 25 & Sunday, April 26

#### VFC Garden Center Make Your Own Herb Planter

If you aren't ready to start a garden or simply have limited/smaller spaces in order to grow plants this year, this class is for you! Bring your own container, or purchase one from VFC. Class price includes soil and instructions (herbs are not included, but will be available at class for purchase).

Saturday, April 25, 11am Sunday, April 26, 11am Cost: \$25, plus plants Register at the Customer Service Desk



#### May 2020

#### Give Where You Live **Vernon Trails**

Round up any day this month.

#### Free Gardening Class **Transplanting**

You've got lovely plants to put in your garden – we want them to thrive! WI-Master Gardener Arwyn will talk about tips for successful transitions so come learn about getting your new seedlings in the ground safely. Saturday, May 2, 11am VFC Garden Center FREE!



#### VFC Garden Center Make Mom a Pretty Planter

Just in time for Mother's Day. Give her the best kind of gift: the one that is still living and made with loving care! Saturday, May 9, 11am VFC Garden Center Cost: \$25, plus plants Register at the Customer Service Desk

#### Keeping It Frank! Polenta So Simple!

Folks should get on board with how easy this grain is to make – it's nutritious, affordable, quite filling and delicious! Come hang with Frank and sample his eggplant caponata with polenta, plus take home recipes to make this easy dish in your own kitchen. **Monday, May 11, 3:30-4:30pm Co-op Community Room FREE – Register by May 9, limit 15!** 

#### Co-op Community Room Class Intro to Wine Tasting

Learn about how the wine world works with Todd Wohlert, one of our favorite vendors! Sample international wines, enjoy a fun night out with your neighbors, and delight in the delicious cheese pairings that are included with the tasting!

Thursday, May 14, 6-7:30pm Instructor: Todd Wohlert Cost: \$10 VFC Owners/\$15 Non-owners Register by May 12, limit 15!



#### Savings for Owners Owner Discount Days 15% off all greenhouse plants

May 15-17

#### VFC Garden Center Container Planting for Sun or Shade

Is your only garden space on your porch? Get some hands-on learning experience as you build your own container(s). Bring your own or purchase one from VFC. Grow beautiful, edible and successful plants in planters! Class price includes soil and instructions. Saturday, May 16, 11am VFC Garden Center Cost: \$25, plus plants Register at the Customer Service Desk

#### Co-op Community Room Class Fermented Vegetables 101

Adding in more fermented foods to our diets provides many health benefits, as well as allows us to put up our harvests while keeping the nutrients in the vegetables intact. In this class, Laura demonstrates three techniques for fermenting your own vegetables at home: sauerkraut, kim chi, and lacto-fermented pickled vegetables. Participants get to try these items, and take home recipes and receive a grocery list to make them at home.

Tuesday, May 19, 6-7:30pm Instructor: Laura Mathes Cost: \$20 VFC Owners/\$25 Non-owners Register by May 17, limit 12!

#### In-store Savings Wellness Wednesday

10% off all supplements, homeopathic & herbal formulas from the wellness aisles. Wednesday, May 20



609 N Main St, Viroqua WI 54665 **Open Daily 7am - 9pm**  PRESORTED STANDARD U.S. POSTAGE **PAID** LGI

## owner discount days

#### MARCH 10-12 TUESDAY-THURSDAY

15% off

#### **Wellness Products**

Includes CBD products, vitamins, herbal remedies, homeopathics, supplements and more!

#### APRIL 7-9 TUESDAY-THURSDAY



#### **All Cheeses**

From cow to sheep to goat, artisan to ordinary, our local & imported cheese selection is outstanding! MAY 5-7 TUESDAY-THURSDAY



#### **Plants & Seeds**

Let VFC help your garden grow with everything from organic seeds to locally-grown starter plants!





