More Bounty, Less Waste

Chris Hoffer, Environmental Programs Coordinator

Did you find yourself with more leftovers than you knew what to do with this Thanksgiving? Every year, Americans throw away 25% of the food we buy, adding up to more than $2,000 for many families, according to the National Resources Defense Council. Wasted food also means wasted resources, with a quarter of the country’s fresh water being used on food that goes uneaten. What’s more, food in landfills accounts for 23% of all methane emissions in the US.

But not all is doom and gloom. Everyone wastes some food, but instead of feeling guilty, resolve to make just a few changes in how you buy, store and cook food. You’ll be surprised at what a difference it makes – and you’ll save some money, too.

Shop smarter.

What do you already have on hand for meals this week? Shop your pantry first, and come up with a list of meals for the week to avoid impulse buys. When you do head to the store, buy from the bulk bins to get just the right amount. For perishable items, avoid sales that can lead you to buy more than you have a plan to use.

Right food, right place.

Did you know basil hates being put in the refrigerator? Or that storing onions next to potatoes will cause your spuds to sprout? One of the best ways to keep food from going bad is to know how and where to store fruits and veggies – it’s like companion planting for your pantry. Websites like stilltasty.com or eatbydate.com make it easy to find out how to store everything from kale (in a cup of water, in the fridge) to persimmons (at room temperature until ripe).

Turn recipes into re-use-ipes.

Try making a dish that can incorporate leftovers and whatever else is on hand. Frittatas, stir fries,
Ringing the Bell for a Sustainable Food System

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

We are all familiar with the immutable characteristics that accompany this season – shorter days, colder temperatures and fundraising appeals. As someone who is asked for donations and who also asks others for donations, I have to confess to being somewhat conflicted.

On the one hand, I want to donate to causes I believe in. With my free time at a premium, writing a check or clicking through a few buttons online is often the only way I can directly support the things I care about. In this way, making monetary contributions allows me to participate broadly in building a society that reflects my values. On the other hand, there are many more requests for funds than I can possibly support, and it can be uncomfortable to say “no” to someone who asks me to make a contribution to a cause I deem worthy.

I recently read about a study that did a great job of capturing that ambivalence. The study involved bell-ringers, the kind of fundraising we often encounter during our holiday shopping. When bell-ringers were placed inside store doorways, and did nothing more than ring their bell, most people ignored them. But when the bell-ringers were placed outside the store doors, made eye contact with people as they entered the store, and clearly asked for a donation, two things happened. First, some people chose an alternative entrance to the store, avoiding the whole uncomfortable business. But for those who were still brave enough to pass by the bell-ringer, the number of people who made a gift actually doubled!

Seattle Tilth doesn’t unleash an army of bell-ringers across the region, but we do promote an annual year-end fundraising campaign. This year, we’re asking people to “lend a hand” in accomplishing our mission by making a financial contribution. Our campaign is almost exclusively online – less paper and less cost.

Last year, we received 76 gifts in response to our year-end appeal. And while I am grateful for each and every one of those gifts, I have to believe that there are more people out there who care about the work we do to build an equitable and sustainable food system. The reality is that as a nonprofit we rely on contributions from people who share our values to support this important work. This year, while we can’t intercept you in your daily rounds, imagine that I’m there with my bell as you read through our “lend a hand” email, and let’s see if we can double the number of people who donate.

CHOOSE WINTER WONDER OVER WOE

Continued from page 1

While you’re outside, you’ll notice all the overwintering birds and other fauna joining you in the garden. Winter can be rough for creatures relying on foraged food, so help out your local wildlife by providing fresh water for birds and insects or hanging up suet feeders. See our Garden Hotline’s “Hot Questions” (see page 8) for more tips.

Right now your barebones garden provides a blank canvas upon which to begin sketching your plan for next season’s crops. January marks the peak of seed catalog distribution, so it’s a perfect time to sit down with a hot mug of tea and circle your contenders for next season’s crops. If you’re positively twitching to get started on your summer tomatoes, get a jump start by jerry-rigging your seed starting equipment for indoor sowing in February.

Spring will come whether or not we’re wallowing in winter blues, so plug into seasonal garden happenings this winter and have some fun; before you’re know it you’ll be prepared for a prosperous new garden season!
Feeding Families for a Lifetime

Stephanie Seliga, Just Garden Program Manager

This holiday season Seattle Tilth’s Just Garden program introduces the Garden Drive -- adding a fresh food element to the traditional holiday canned food drive. Although non-perishable canned food may fill hungry bellies, it does not compare in nutrition to fresh fruits and vegetables. And hunger and poor nutrition are year round problems. According to King County’s Communities Count, one in ten King County residents is food insecure.

Our inaugural Garden Drive is raising funds to build gardens for low income families. By providing fresh food, gardens offer a highly nutritious and renewable resource, an empowering alternative to the holiday canned food drive. Faith based and community groups are invited to participate. Our goal is for ten groups to raise $1,000 each, totaling $10,000 to support our garden building program in 2015. Participants in the Garden Drive may stay connected to their fundraising efforts by helping to build the garden they funded, March through September.

Since 2010, Just Garden has helped 150 families and communities grow fresh, local, organic food from their own yards. Each garden comes with essential supplies: wood, nails, soil, seeds and plant starts, as well as hard working volunteers and staff to build the gardens. Just Garden also provides workshops on organic gardening techniques to ensure success.

These days, food choices are complex. If a person has three dollars, he or she can buy a hamburger, a head of organic lettuce or a package of organic seeds. A package of lettuce seeds can produce fresh lettuce every day for a month. At $3 per head for 30 days, that is $90 worth of lettuce! Our Just Garden gardeners report growing an average of $650 a year from their gardens. But the time, labor, education and money needs to be invested up front. That’s what we provide -- and why we need your support.

Do you belong to a faith group, school or community organization that wants to help the community this holiday season? Join our Just Garden Drive and help feed families for a lifetime. Email justgarden@seattletilth.org.
Coop Up Hens & Chicks

Falahah Jones, Eastside Programs Coordinator

Just so you know, I am not talking about Hens and Chicks, plants extraordinaire that you plant on green roofs, in rockeries or in shallow dishes. I am talking about real mother hens and baby chicks that need love, protection and a place to roam.

Hen houses, aka coops, don’t have to be fancy. Coops from recycled materials and funky garden-art might be your aesthetic. You can order a chicken mansion online, hire a local builder or construct one to match your house. The chickens don’t care either way!

What you need to remember is that chickens need space. Crowded chickens are stressed chickens. Provide each girl (no guys allowed in most urban settings) with at least six square feet of inside space and six square feet of outside space. You can build up or build out. You can squeeze your coop into a side yard or site it outside your dining room window for easy viewing. It’s your call.

Your hens are fine dining for raccoons and dogs, so use hardware cloth for the walls of your chicken run. Cover the run. In our rainy climate, a solid roof keeps soil dry for those necessary dust baths. Netting prevents flying predators from swooping down and stealing your beauties.

Realize that chickens don’t always use your coop the way you intend. Some chickens never roost (they prefer to squat in fluffy bedding) or never use the nesting box that you made especially for them (too drafty? too small? too big? too tall?). Some never use the little chicken door but prefer to scoot out the big-people door. Or they poop everywhere but on the poop board that you so cleverly built to slide out under the roosting bars. All these features should be provided, but don’t be bummed if they are ignored or underused by your chickens.

So build a coop with all these suggested features and let the fun begin. And, you can always plant Hens and Chicks on the green roof of your coop to complete the chicken theme!

Chicken and coop questions? Check out our chicken classes at seattletilth.org or contact the Garden Hotline at (206) 633-0224 or gardenhotline.org.

Homemade First Aid

Skin Healing Calendula Salve

Carey Thornton, Educator

If you are lucky, calendula may be blooming in your garden with its cheerful yellow and orange blossoms. Calendula flowers have long been used as a traditional healing medicine as it soothes dry, irritated skin. Calendula can help regenerate skin cells when applied to a scratch or burn. You can harness the power of calendula and make a simple skin healing salve at home.

CALENDULA INFUSED MEDICINAL OIL

• Harvest open flower heads of Calendula officinalis. Dry in a single layer in a dehydrator or very warm, ventilated room. Dry the flowers quickly to retain their bright color and medicinal properties. Flowers should be completely dry and crispy to the touch.

• Loosely pack a jar with dried flower heads so it is ¾ full. Fill the jar with olive oil and cap tightly. Let calendula steep in oil out of direct sunlight, giving it a little shake whenever you pass by. After 3 to 4 weeks, strain and then bottle the oil.

CALENDULA SALVE

• Prepare several 1 to 2 ounce pots or jars to hold your salve. Remove lids and place jars on a piece of cardboard to absorb drips.

• Warm one cup of medicinal oil (see instructions above) in a double boiler or in a small pan over very low heat. Add 1 oz. grated beeswax and stir to melt. Use the same ratio to make a bigger batch. Carefully pour the liquid salve into prepared containers and let harden before closing lids.

• Add personalized labels with ingredients and hints for use. Keep a jar in your first aid kit, in the garden shed, one in your purse and give a few as gifts!

If you make these recipes, please share pictures and stories with us on social media.
Fire Cider: Boost Your Immunity

Carey Thornton, Educator

Dark days of winter can have us feeling frumpy, tired and cold much of the time. Use this indoor time to make something tasty and good for your body. The ingredients in this winter tonic are warming to the constitution and will get you revved up to take on the world.

Garlic and onions are natural antiseptics in keeping germs at bay, while boosting your body’s immune system. Horseradish is great for clearing out sinuses and keeps your digestive system on track. Ginger does all that stuff too, plus helps relieve symptoms of respiratory infections and coughs.

Raw apple cider vinegar has been linked to many health benefits, from aiding digestion to fighting cancer, lowering risk of cardiovascular disease and even supporting insulin function and low blood sugar. Honey has myriad benefits, don’t even get me started…

All these ingredients are delicious when mixed together and can make a healthful tonic. You can drink small portions of Fire Cider when you feel you’re “coming down with something”– either straight or diluted with water. Try adding this concoction to your salad dressings, using it to finish soups or other savory dishes, or as a hot sauce-type condiment. Pro tip: it tastes great in a homemade bloody Mary.

Variations: You can change up the proportions to taste. Add other immune boosting or medicinal herbs that you like including citrus fruits, parsley, rosemary or fresh turmeric.

FIRE CIDER
Adapted from Rosemary Gladstar’s Recipe

**Ingredients**
- Onions
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Horseradish
- Cayenne pepper, or other hot red pepper
- Apple cider vinegar
- Honey (optional)

**Supplies**
- Large jar with lid
- Knife and chopping board
- Metal strainer

**Instructions**
- Chop onions, garlic, horseradish and ginger into 1/4 inch sized pieces. Add ingredients to the jars, loosely filling up 3/4 of the way to the top.
- General proportions should be 1 part each onion, garlic and horseradish to ½ part ginger. Add about 1/3-1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper or a chopped up hot red pepper.
- Fill the jar with raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar. Cover tightly, give it a little shake and let steep for 4 weeks out of direct sunlight. Shake your jar periodically while thinking happy, summery thoughts.
- After 4 weeks, strain out the solids and sweeten to taste with honey, if desired. Bottle tightly and use indiscriminately throughout the winter.

Auction Raises the Roof

You saw, you imbibed, you BID! Thank you for joining us at our Gala Auction on October 18 at Historic Hangar 30. This airplane hangar was transformed for an elegant evening filled with intrigue, excitement and tantalizing flavors. We were honored by the generosity of everyone who attended and helped raise $153,000. Stories from Seattle Youth Garden Works participants Choega, Dayjah, Luis and Nick touched us all — you truly inspire us!

We want to give special thanks to our sponsors Essential Baking Company, Herban Feast and Seattle Children’s Hospital and our in-kind sponsors City People’s Garden Store, Skip Rock Distillery, Finnriver Farm and Cidery, and Starvation Alley Cranberry.

We’ll see you next fall for Gala Auction 2015!
Garden to Table
Pumpkin Pie Goes on Vacation, Celebrate Butternut Squash

Courtney Czapiewski, Community Kitchens Northwest Intern

Take a break from the traditional pumpkin pie this winter and give butternut squash a chance to shine! Rich butternut squash has a subtle sweetness that is amplified by the maple syrup and brown sugar in this tasty dessert. This pie is packed with wonderful, warming spices -- the perfect cold weather treat. Winter squash has great sources of immune-boosting vitamins A and C, both of which are especially important during flu season. Save the seeds from inside the squash -- they can be roasted for a crunchy snack later.

Creamy Winter Squash Pie
Makes 1 pie, 8 servings

Ingredients
1 medium butternut squash
¼ cup maple syrup
¼ cup brown sugar
3 tablespoons tapioca starch
⅛ cup whole milk
2 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and grated
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 ready-made pie crust

Instructions
• Preheat oven to 375°F.
• Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Peel, seed and dice the squash and add to boiling water; cook 10-15 minutes, until tender when pierced with a fork.
• Drain squash, transfer to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth (this could be done by hand with a wooden spoon or potato masher). Add remaining ingredients and blend until fully incorporated.
• Pour filling into prepared pie crust and cover with foil. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes, then remove foil and bake for 35-45 minutes longer. The pie will be done when it is lightly browned around the edges and the center is set.
• Let pie cool to room temperature, then slice and enjoy!

Winter Fun Facts

Hong Chhuor, Communications Coordinator

EAT SEASONALLY
‘Tis the season for cruciferous veggies like broccoli, cabbage and kale. They’re an excellent source of vitamins A, C, K and other nutrients. Eat up!

SLEEP SOUNDLY
It’s tempting to post one last tweet before bed, but Harvard sleep researcher Stephen Lockley finds that “blue light” emitted by electronic device screens interfere with your circadian rhythm and melatonin levels – put them away an hour or two before bed to get better ZZZs.

WASTE NOT
Every Thanksgiving, Americans waste about 400 Statues of Liberty’s worth of turkey by weight, says Jonathan Bloom, author of American Wasteland.

BOOST YOUR VITAMIN D
Our bodies need the sun’s UVB rays (which cannot penetrate glass) to produce enough vitamin D to support bone, immune system and general health. According to Harvard Health Publications, diet alone is rarely sufficient. Here in the Pacific Northwest, we only get enough sun during the summer months -- so be sure to pick-up some vitamin D supplements.

STAY ACTIVE
Go outside on a dry winter day and breathe fresh air. Visiting a garden can help create your own oasis of calm in the city. Seattle has a number of carefully planned winter gardens as well as natural areas featuring winter blooms and wildlife sightings. Just a 30 minute walk through one of these gardens will enhance the synthesis of brain serotonin – boosting your mood and possibly helping to combat the winter blues. Find a list of local gardens on our blog.
Hot Questions from the Garden Hotline

Keep Birdies & Plants Alive in Winter

Laura Matter, Garden Hotline Coordinator

Q. How do I attract wildlife to my garden this winter?

A. The first and best thing to do to make your garden wildlife friendly is to create a diversely planted habitat. Plant in layers, from groundcovers all the way up to the tallest trees your property can support. Include plants that are native and plants that not only produce food but also provide shelter and nesting sites. Do your homework and learn what different animals need for habitat. Feel free to leave some dead flower heads with seeds intact for birds to chow down on. If your garden is lacking features that would offer great habitat, make plans now for what you can plant next season. You can supplement with feeding stations such as hummingbird feeders and suet feeders to get birds through the season. Place them where you can view them from the house so you can enjoy the bushtit's flash mob feeding frenzy on the suet feeder. Use hot pepper suet and black oil sunflower seed to avoid attracting rats and squirrels to the feast. Keep two hummingbird feeders filled during freezing weather so you have a fresh replacement to hang on your way out the door in the morning. Be sure to keep all feeders clean.

Q. How do I take care of my plants during freezing weather?

A. If you have not already done so, the kindest thing you can do for the plants in your yard over the winter is to mulch the ground around them. Mulch moderates soil temperature, keeping the temperature more consistent. Around trees, shrubs and perennials add a one to two inch layer of wood chip mulch, keeping the mulch away from the base of woody stemmed plants. In the veggie garden use compost, leaves or straw instead. It is crucial to make sure that your plants are getting adequate water during the winter. Plants under trees, the eaves of a building and potted in containers on porches are at risk for drying out (counterintuitive in our wet winters). Dry soil and freezing weather is a bad combo, leading to desiccated plant tissue. Any plants you have outdoors in pots should also be protected. Since their roots are above ground they suffer the effects of freezing temperatures more than plants in the ground. Wrap large pots with burlap and set the smaller pots in a large container of leaves, straw or compost to heel them in. Later, when the weather warms you will have the materials you used available to employ in other ways in the garden.
Two-for-One Membership

From now through Dec. 31, sign-up for or renew your Seattle Tilth membership and give a favorite gardener the gift of membership for FREE! Throughout the year, you’ll both receive discounts on classes, invitations to special members-only events and our print newsletter. Sign-up at seattletilth.org or complete and mail us the form below and be sure to include your friend’s name and contact information.

Show Off Your Style

Pick up one of our 100% organic cotton t-shirts or totes and show off your good taste!

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Find all this great Seattle Tilth stuff and more at seattletilth.org or stop by our office at 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Suite 100 to stock up.

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