

Good Food NEWS

How to say "Locally Grown" in many languages

FoodShare was host to a forum about farmers markets this week and among the important questions discussed was what is the impact of Toronto's ever-expanding ethnic diversity on new and existing farmers' markets? Anan Lololi of the AfriCan FoodBasket cited that 69,000 people immigrate to Toronto every year from around the world. It's safe to say that not all of those people will be able to easily find familiar food from home at their local Loblaws or even a farmers market.

But why not? Can't some of those foods be grown right here in Ontario? We know that calaloo, a staple of the Caribbean and Asian diets, grows easily here but if Ontario farmers don't know that, then they won't get it to market. And there are many other crops that don't need to be imported but can be economically grown within a short distance from their market.

The Globe and Mail recently ran an article about people who are recognizing this trend. Maybe the tide is changing...

Farms a growing niche for newcomers

July. 12, 2006. Nicholas Keung

An abundant supply of farmland could offer huge potential to immigrants as our ethnic diversity creates a ready marketplace.

At a time when European immigrants were still settling into rural Canada to grow wheat and potatoes, Sam Kang Shin-Bong bought a 35-acre farm near Newmarket with the aim of growing oriental vegetables.

First, it was supplying Chinese cabbage, bok choy and other agricultural products to Korean and Japanese stores. In 1984, he added a processing business and today, Kang's Kimchi Canada Farm annually produces 40 tonnes of kimchi — Korean pickled vegetables — in 18 varieties for distribution across the GTA.

"There's such huge demand from the growing immigration that I can't really get to all the orders," says the 67 year old. With an immigrant selection system that caters to the labour needs of a "knowledge-based" economy, observers say, the livelihood potential of the agricultural industry has been overlooked by both the government and recent immigrants.

But that may change with the Supporting New Farmers in the Greenbelt project initiated by the University of Guelph's Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, which was awarded a \$62,000 grant from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation in Toronto yesterday.

"Some new Canadians come from rural areas where they farm as a community, as a family, and do have the farming experience. They don't need the training in agriculture but the infrastructural support for a business plan," explains Peter Mitchell, a research associate with the centre in Guelph.

"And there's a growing niche market for these special food items that we haven't explored in the past. It just wasn't on our radar screen."

According to Statistics Canada, the country's total farm population dropped by more than half over a 30 year period, from 1.6 million in 1971 to 727,000 in 2001, with the immigrant share steadily declining from 8.5 per cent to 6.8 per cent. In 2001, more than three-quarters of immigrant farm operators were born in Europe, fewer than 10 per cent in Asia.

That doesn't surprise Kang. "With more and more new immigrants who prefer rice than potatoes, we need to develop ethnic farming. It's just too expensive to import (ethnic food) from other places, given the demands."

"We found our way in farming on our own, and I think a lot of new immigrants can benefit from some government incentives in agriculture," notes Kang, who has been honoured with the Toronto Food Policy Council's Local Food Hero Award.

Iffat Zehra, founder of a program called Community Economic Development for Immigrant Women, says most recent newcomers to the country are disconnected from rural Ontario. Almost all settle in metropolitan centres in Canada. Yet our abundant supply of farmland could offer huge potential to immigrants who come from overpopulated countries where land is at a premium.

"In Canada, the land is available, the market for these foods is available and the human resources are here. All we need is to connect them together."

LB

This week the zucchini is locally grown by farmers across Ontario. In the organic boxes it is from H.O.P.E Organics, farmer Ira Stoll, an Old Order Mennonite.

FIELD TO TABLE

a project of

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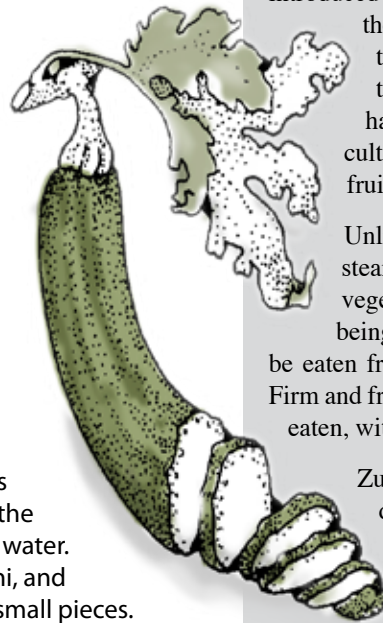
recipes

ZUCCHINI AND GREEN BEAN CURRY

Serves 4

- 1/2 lb Fresh string beans
- 1/2 lb Fresh zucchini
- 1lg Onion
- 1tb clarified butter or margarine
- 1t Cumin
- 1 t Coriander
- 1/2 ts Turmeric
- 1/4 ts Chili powder
- 1/2 ts Garlic powder
- 1/4 ts Dark mustard seeds
- Salt, to taste

Wash the string beans in water. Snap the stems off. Break beans into 2 inch long pieces. Clean the zucchini thoroughly under some running cold water. Cut and throw away both ends of each zucchini, and cut into small rounds. Peel and cut onion into small pieces. Over a medium heat saute the onion in butter or margarine. When the onion is soft, add mustard seeds. When seeds start jumping, add turmeric, cumin, and coriander powders. Saute onion again until it is fully covered with spices. Add string beans first. Mix and cover them for 4 minutes. Then add zucchini next. Stir the pan. Add chilli powder, garlic powder, and salt. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Serve hot or warm as a side dish.



featured this week: Zucchini

Zucchini, like all summer squash, is native to the Americas and was introduced to Europe during the time of European colonization of the Americas. An improved version of zucchini was re-introduced into the United States by Italian immigrants in the 1920s. It can either be yellow or green and generally has a similar shape to a ridged cucumber, though a few cultivars are available that produce round or bottle-shaped fruit.

Unlike the cucumber it is usually served cooked, often steamed or grilled. Zucchini is commonly thought of as a vegetable, however, by strict definition, the zucchini is a fruit, being the swollen ovary of the zucchini flower. Its flower can be eaten fried or stuffed, sautéed, baked, or even used in a soup. Firm and fresh blossoms that are only slightly open are cooked to be eaten, with stems and pistils removed.

Zucchini are traditionally picked when very immature, seldom over 8in/20cm in length. Mature zucchini can be as much as three feet long, but are often fibrous and not appetizing to eat.

Zucchini is one of the easiest vegetables to cultivate in a temperate climate. As such, zucchini has a reputation among home gardeners for overwhelming production, and a common type of joke among home growers revolves around creative ways of giving away unwanted zucchini to people who already have been given more than they can use.

The zucchini fruit is low in calories (approximately 15 calories per 100 g fresh zucchini) but contains useful amounts of folate (24 mcg/100 g), potassium (280 mg/100 g) and vitamin A (384 IU [115 mcg]/100 g).

Field to Table's Honey Zucchini Bread

Yields 1 loaf

- 1 egg, beaten
- 3/4 cup Field to Table's honey (or brown sugar)
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2-1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1-1/2 cup baking powder
- 1 tsp orange rind, grated
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp grated ginger root
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1-1/2 cups grated zucchini
- 1/2 cups sunflower seeds (hulled)

Beat egg slightly in large bowl. Add honey, oil and vanilla and mix well. Combine flour, baking powder, orange peel, baking soda, ginger, and salt in medium bowl. Add dry ingredients, zucchini and sunflower seeds to honey mixture and mix until well blended. Spoon batter into well-greased 9x5x3 inch loaf pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour or until a wooden toothpick inserted near centre comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes in the pan and then remove and cool on a rack.

by any other name...

- Cucurbita pepo - Latin
- Zucchini - Italian
- Abobrinha - Portuguese
- Courgette - Dutch
- Cukinia - Polish
- Kadou - Iranian
- Zucchini- German
- Calabacín - Spanish
- Courgette - French

DELIVERIES

for the week of: July 25
orders are due 5 pm Tues. July 18

for the week of August 1st
orders are due 5pm Tues. July 25th



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