



NEWS TO GROW ON



A seasonal newsletter of the Connecticut Farm Fresh Cooperative Association

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Local Farms Do Good for CT's Economy, as Well as its Health

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture estimates that farming contributes \$3.5 billion a year to the state's economy and is responsible for 20,000 jobs. This summer, the number of certified farmers' markets has climbed to 125, with 468 farmers participating. About \$3 million passed through CT farmers' markets last year (\$774,237 in WIC/Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers and \$2.3 million in cash). The markets bolster local economies, improve community health, and bring diverse groups of people together through a shared social space.



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On July 11, Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky, above left, conducted his first official listening session in Litchfield County. He has said that consumer dollars spent on local food represent about 1 percent of what they spend in total. If that could go up to 4 or 5 percent, it would dramatically increase the bottom line for farmers, increase the amount of land used for farming, and the number of people who farm.



Inside this issue:

- Seasonal recipes
- This issue's theme: Fruits of the summer
- Virtual visit to the farm
- **Even more good reasons to buy local. . .**



Food photos courtesy of foodnetwork.com

Five-Ingredient Summer Sauces



-- Dana Angelo White

In the dog days of summer, there's no need to steam up the kitchen, just whip up one of these delicious pestos/sauces, and turn your salad, pasta or grilled meat into a feast. This quick and delicious seasonal salad idea comes from Dana Angelo White, registered dietitian, culinary nutritionist, local food junkie, stalker of farmer's markets and all-around great cook.

(See Dana's blog at healthyeats.com)

Liven up your summer menus, without gobs of extra calories and fat. Here are 5 totally different sauces bursting with seasonal flavors — each with 5 ingredients or less.

This fresh take on pesto is delicious atop pasta, chicken or fish.

Arugula Pesto

Yield: 1 cup

Ingredients:

- 3 cups fresh arugula
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 cup toasted pine nuts
- Juice and zest of a lemon
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. each, kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Combine arugula, garlic, pine nuts, lemon juice, zest, salt and pepper in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Pulse until smooth. With the machine on, slowly pour in olive oil. Blend until smooth. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to one week.

Nutrition Info (per tablespoon):

- Calories: 76
- Total Fat: 8 grams
- Saturated Fat: 1 gram
- Total Carbohydrate: 1 gram
- Protein: 0 gram
- Sodium: 36 milligrams
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Fiber: 0 grams



Tzatziki Sauce

Yield: 2 1/4 cups

Ingredients:

- 2 cups nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 large English cucumber, chopped or grated*
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 tablespoon white vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped mint
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Combine ingredients in a bowl and mix well. For best results, allow to chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

**If you choose to use grated cucumber, allow to drain on a paper towel before adding to the yogurt to remove excess liquid.*

Nutrition Info (per tablespoon):

- Calories: 14
- Total Fat: 0 grams
- Saturated Fat: 0 gram
- Total Carbohydrate: 1 gram
- Protein: 2 grams
- Sodium: 23 milligrams
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Fiber: 0 grams



Gremolata

A garnish more than a sauce, this traditional topping for Osso Bucco also gives a lemony flare to roasted potatoes. Gremolata-Topped Oven Fries

Ingredients:

- 1 cup packed fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Zest of 2 lemons

Directions:

Combine ingredients in a small bowl, toss and serve.

Nutrition Info (per teaspoon):

- Calories: 1
- Total Fat: 0 grams
- Saturated Fat: 0 gram
- Total Carbohydrate: 0 gram
- Protein: 0 gram
- Sodium: 1 milligram
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Fiber: 0 grams



Chimichurri Sauce

Yield: 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 3 cups fresh green herbs (a combination of parsley, oregano and cilantro recommended)
- 6 cloves garlic
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper or more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon each kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Combine ingredients in a bowl and mix well to combine. Allow to sit for 30 to 60 minutes at room temperature before serving.

Nutrition Info (per tablespoon):

- Calories: 48
- Total Fat: 5 grams
- Saturated Fat: 1 gram
- Total Carbohydrate: 1 gram
- Protein: 0 gram
- Sodium: 13 milligrams
- Cholesterol: 0 milligrams
- Fiber: 0 grams

Virtual Visit to the Farm



Belltown Hill Orchards

Belltown Hill Orchards, set in the scenic, rolling hills of South Glastonbury, is one of the town's oldest and largest farms, still owned and operated by the Preli Family which founded it. In 1904, Louis Preli emigrated from Northern Italy to the area, to work with his uncle hewing railroad ties from the giant chestnut trees which once dominated the area. By the age of 20, Louis had saved enough money to purchase seven acres of land. Here he made his home, raised a family and grew a variety of crops and livestock for his own use while continuing to make railroad ties.

A few years later, several more acres were added, atop Belltown Road, and hence the orchard got its name. This land was all wooded and Louis with some help had to clear it all by hand. Strawberries and peaches were then planted and sold to wholesale markets.



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When Louis' son, Donald, was old enough, he was able to help plant more fruit trees, and as he became an adult, the orchards were then passed on to him. More acreage was purchased in the 1980s, which brought the total acreage to 120, planted in diverse crops. The Pick-Your-Own operation was introduced, and the Preli family continued to work together to keep their traditions strong.

In the 1990s, the orchards were passed down again, to Donald's sons Don Jr. and Michael, the present owners. A wind machine was placed inside the orchard, the 1st in the state, to help prevent frost damage in the spring. A vineyard was planted, "Perelli Vineyards" and named in honor of their Grandma Preli. One of the expansion projects of the 90's was the addition of the bakery, where Donna Preli serves as head baker. Today, 150 acres of land are farmed by the Preli brothers, including the former Scaglia Farm, which is under preservation by the Connecticut Farmland Trust. In keeping with the orchards' century-old tradition, the orchard thrives today, thanks to the extended Preli family, including Don and Michael's wives, sisters, and numerous relatives.

The apple does not fall far from the tree in this family!



Peach-Orange Marmalade



9 large ripe peaches, preferably freestone
1 large navel orange sugar

Cut orange, peel and all, into eight pieces and then slice thinly. Just cover with water and simmer 30 minutes.

Meanwhile dip peaches in boiling water, then cold water, and slip off the skins. Stone and cut into small pieces.

Add orange to peaches and measure. For every cup of fruit, add 3/4 cup of sugar. Bring to the boil and then simmer until liquid falls off a spoon in heavy drops or sheets--about 1 to 1-1.2 hours (take care, it can burn!). You can also use the microwave. Pour into large bowl, cover with plastic wrap and microwave until the syrup thickens, testing (take care when you remove the plastic) every few minutes. For stove top or microwave, cooking times are a bit uncertain. It depends on how juicy the peaches are. Don't leave! Just keep testing.

Pour into **sterilized** glass jars and cover with melted paraffin. Use all precautions you would use for any jelly, jam or marmalade.

Use with toast, or even, if not too thick, as an awesome sauce for vanilla ice-cream.

Reader Louise Spirer contributed this recipe and writes: *I thought for your late summer issue, you might like to include this recipe which came down to me from my mother--and since I am about to turn 81, this is obviously an OLD recipe. It does use one non-local fruit, but it's the peaches that are the stars. Try it, you'll love it!*



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Heirloom [AIR-loom], *noun*



An heirloom is a plant that has been passed down within families of farmers and gardeners, from generation to generation. To be considered an heirloom, a plant must be open-pollinated. Saving, planting and sharing heirloom seeds helps protect biodiversity, assuring that one pest or disease cannot wipe out a species.

In the mid-1900s, large seed companies began selling seeds that were bred to meet the needs of large farms, suited to mechanical harvesting and shipping (for example, tomatoes that don't bruise when crated cross-country) These are not standards that produce the ripest, tastiest fruit, as local farmers know. Enjoy an heirloom tomato today!

Submissions welcome:

We'd like to include photos taken by our farmer's market visitors next issue. Please email your pictures to the editor, aliceely@optonline.net, and include your name, phone number and the name of the market where you took the picture. We'll publish our favorites, with your name if you like, in an upcoming issue.




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