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## News and Views

*Promoting health and protection of the environment through education and the provision of quality organic produce from our farm to your table.*



### News from the Farm:

A little over a week ago Dieter participated in a conference hosted by TRU and Friends of the Garden. His presentation centered around organic land care with an emphasis on using the principles of organic gardening in landscaping. As is usual in these cases, the definition of organic was brought up, mainly in order to clarify the term. Organic as used by many gardeners refers to the specific principles that a farmer/gardener follows. Unfortunately, there are many people, gardeners/farmers included, who feel that just because they don't use chemical fertilizers or pesticides can call their product "organic." This is not the case. Organic farming is much more involved than that. Not only does it mean that one cannot use these chemicals, it is also necessary that the farmer have an understanding of soil composition, crop rotation, the nutrient needs of various plants, and the relationship between pests and plants. It is also necessary that the farmer keep strict records of sales, inputs, and purchases of seeds transplants etc. Organic farmers are inspected every year and must be able to provide a clear audit trail from the time of seed purchase to the sale of that particular item.

Due to the widespread use of the term organic, there has been much concern and confusion among consumers. To this end the government of Canada, in conjunction with organic farmers of this country started to develop national standards. This process started in 2004 and has just been completed with the hard work of many committed individuals. It is now prohibited for a farmer to use the term organic unless he is certified by an approved certifying body. In British Columbia, the Certified Organic Association of B.C will continue to certify organic growers and accredit regional certifying bodies like STOPA (to whom we belong). This entire process will now be under the jurisdiction of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and consumers will have the knowledge and confidence that if they are buying from a certified organic grower that he/she has met the criteria to earn this designation.

dk



### Asparagus

Asparagus grows wild in Europe, the Caucasus and western Siberia and has become naturalized in North America and New Zealand, though its origins are believed to be from the Mediterranean. It has been used since early times as a culinary vegetable and for its many medicinal properties. Asparagus is low in calories, has no fat or cholesterol and is very low in sodium. It is a good source of folic acid, potassium and fiber. Asparagus should be used shortly after picking, but if this is not possible can be kept refrigerated in water, or wrapped in wet paper towel for up to two weeks. Asparagus is usually snapped off and the tough ends discarded, however, if peeled these ends can be used thereby reducing waste.

Due to its delicate flavor, asparagus is best served simply-steamed with a bit of butter or olive oil and lemon.

### Stir Fried Asparagus and Beef\*

1 1/2 lb asparagus	sugar
3-4 spring onions, sliced	2/3 cup beef stock
1 lb sirloin steak	1 Tb sesame oil
2 1/2 Tb cornstarch	1 Tb oyster sauce
3 Tb soy sauce	4-5 Tb peanut oil
1 Tb sherry	2 slices ginger
1 Tb oil	2 cloves crushed garlic

Wash and slice asparagus. Chop onion into small pieces. Slice beef thinly. Make marinade: combine 1 Tb of cornstarch dissolved in 2 Tb water, 1 Tb of the soy sauce 1 Tb sherry, 1 Tb oil and a pinch of sugar. Add meat and marinate for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, mix sauce: combine remaining 1 1/2 Tb cornstarch dissolved in 1/3 cup beef stock, 2 Tb soy sauce, the sesame oil and oyster sauce. Set aside. Heat wok with peanut oil and toss in meat cooking about 1 minute. The add ginger and garlic and cook for 10 seconds. Set aside. Cook asparagus and onions, stir in 1/2 tsp sugar and a dash of salt. Cook, stirring for 1-2 minutes, then add remaining stock, cover and steam for 2 minutes. Add beef, and toss together. Stir in cornstarch sauce and cook til slightly thickened. Serves 4.

\*can use pork or chicken.

The North Shore Business Association is looking for an energetic individual to assist in organizing a Farmers' Market. If interested call Peter Mutrie at 376-2411 or email peter@nsbia.com