



Celina Thymes

Celebrating Fresh, Food, and Farmers

May, 2014

Market News

The 2014 Celina Farmers' Market has officially begun. This year brings with it even more opportunities to buy products and produce from local vendors and to help support the community. Produce, milk, and meat are projected to see large price increases this year as the drought continues in California, which produces well over half of the produce in grocery stores around the country. It is now more important than ever to grow your own food or buy from local farmers. Take it a step further by introducing friends and family to the unique varieties and tastes only a local market can provide.

What's Growing

People often assume that if you eat local, in-season produce winter is the time of scarcity and famine. In fact, winter is the time to feast on the glut of fall and to enjoy preserved garden goodies. Late spring is the true time of sparse pantries and emptying freezers. This is when the garden remains mostly fallow, except for a few cool season crops that can survive an unexpected frost. Fortunately, perennial vegetables get a jump on the season and are the first source of fresh greens when snow may still be in the forecast. Vitamin rich greens are a welcome addition to any locavore's diet, but what about fresh fruit? Shortly after the days begin warming above 50 degrees a curious little patch of red caps begin emerging from the gardens of those lucky enough to have it. The caps unfurl to reveal the contrasting green leaves belonging to rhubarb. Although this relative of spinach is classified as a perennial vegetable, it is used almost exclusively as a fruit. Its early emergence in April means it is baked into pies and muffins long before the smell of apple blossoms drifts through the air or that first juicy strawberry is ready to be picked. Replacing out of season fruit with rhubarb in a recipe may lead to a new family favorite. Just don't eat the leaves. They contain high levels of oxalic acid which can lead to kidney problems and rob the body of calcium. Experience the first fruit of the season at the market.



What's Cooking

Rhubarb Buckle

Servings: 12

Total Time: 85 min



Dough:
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 stick cold, unsalted butter
2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons heavy cream

Filling:
13 oz chopped rhubarb
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Crumb Topping:
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup light-brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Stir together rhubarb, 1/2 cup sugar and lemon zest; set aside. Make the crust: Whisk together flour and sugar in a large bowl. Blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal with some roughly pea-sized butter lumps. Beat together yolks & cream with a fork & stir into flour mixture until combined. Gently knead mixture in bowl with floured hands just until a dough forms. Flatten dough into the bottom of a lightly greased or parchment lined 9 x 13 cake pan or a 9x9 for a thicker bottom crust. Top with rhubarb mixture. Stir together flour, brown sugar, & salt. Add the butter & mix with a fork until clumps form. Sprinkle on top of the rhubarb. Bake for 30 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 & bake for about 35 minutes more or until golden on top and cooked through. Let cool completely in pan on wire rack. Cut into squares & enjoy.



Come Find Homemade and Homegrown Products At The Celina Farmers' Market

**Every Saturday May - October
9 am to 12 noon
in front of the Celina Courthouse**

Come early for the best selection as supplies are limited and vary throughout the season

Do you have something handmade or homegrown to sell?

\$20 & a completed form gets you a spot to sell for the entire season. Stop by the Celina Mercer County Chamber of Commerce office at 226 N. Main St. to pick up an application or download one at the Chamber website on the Celina Farmers' Market page: www.celinamerccer.com

Why Shop Local?

When looking outside, it is easy to see that spring has arrived. Tulips and hyacinths are displaying their vibrant colors against a background of fresh green grass and trees are dappled with swelled buds which open to reveal new, soft leaves. Walking through the produce section does not harbor this same picture of the new spring outside. The strawberry display may be a bit larger and there may be a tiny display of short, rubbery rhubarb stalks, but for the most part the potatoes, apples, lettuce and peppers are all sitting on the shelf in the same place where they resided for the past 4 months in winter. Having a dependable supply of the same staple produce means that virtually any recipe can be created no matter what season is being viewed outside the window. It is difficult for some to leave the display of abundance only to view the sparse farmers' market offerings which display the true menu of spring. Eating in season may at first appear like a culinary sacrifice, but in fact the opposite is true. Letting the seasons set the menu means that only the freshest and most flavorful produce fills each dish and the main ingredients are constantly changing. A few weeks of rhubarb and asparagus recipes are relished only to be replaced with juicy strawberries, crisp cabbage, and spring greens a few weeks later. Not having access to fresh, flavorful tomatoes during the winter and spring means that their appearance in July is a cause for celebration and knowing that the first frosts will bring their demise is comforting when all of the tomato recipes have been exhausted in September. Eating local and in season is not about learning to live with less, but instead learning to welcome each new harvest and to live in the present. Discover the bountiful harvest each season has to offer at the farmers' market.

Interview Thyme

The Bowman Family has been selling produce at the Celina Farmer's Market for nearly as long as the market has been in existence. The Bowman Family Farm began in the 1950's growing crops on a few hundred acres and milking dairy cows. Rue Bowman, along with his wife and brother, took over the farm in the 1980's and ran it as a conventional grain and dairy farm until 2002. At that time, Rue felt the dairy industry was heading in a direction that he didn't want to go so he began searching for an alternative way to make a living on the family farm. One day a neighbor announced that he had a greenhouse on his property that someone could have for the hauling. Rue scrambled to get his truck and Bowman Produce was born.

Over the past 10 years the farm has expanded into cold frames, hot houses, high tunnel grow houses and acres of vegetables to supply plants and produce to farmer's markets in Troy, Piqua, Sidney and Celina, as well as over a dozen weekly CSA members and a few local restaurants. Rue has plans to add a hydroponics systems in the near future for lettuce, herbs and spinach that can be produced year round. Every year he tries to grow something new. This year you will find ground cherries, napa cabbage, bok choy and okra amongst the flats of tomato, pepper and eggplant seedlings. His high tunnel house is already crowded with lettuce, radishes, carrots, spinach, green onions and newly sprouted squash seedlings. In a nearby bed the sweet potato slips are protected from the cool April weather by a layer of plastic and behind them lies almost an acre of asparagus. The cold spring has delayed the asparagus but nearby the rows of rhubarb are beginning to unfurl their large leaves and the peas are up. Two helpers are tucking over 10,000 onion plants into the ground while the tractor and planter put in green beans, red beets and more peas. Rue points to several rows of mounded soil and describes the four varieties of potatoes that are planted, including a blue potato and a purple sweet potato.



Rue admits that not everything they sell at the farmer's market comes from the farm. Market customers have requested produce that cannot be grown in our area, such as tropical fruits and sweet corn. The customers also love the fruits that are purchased weekly from other growers. This produce arrives at the farm late Friday and is delivered the following morning to the market customers at the various markets. "I realize a lot of people come to the market to buy local produce. However, others come expecting to find the same produce the grocery stores sell but with a better quality and often a lower price. We work to listen to our customers and meet their needs. For those that only want locally grown, we work to display the purchased fruits and vegetables separate from what we grow."

Rue's youngest son, Joseph, runs the Celina Market where they sell fresh produce and baked goods the entire season, plants in the spring and mums and pumpkins in the fall. The Celina Farmer's Market runs every Saturday 8-1, May thru October, no matter the weather. Come support local farmers at the market.