

Sustainability Sunday Fact Sheet # 9: Remember the Seasons?

My step-grandparents escaped from a concentration camp in Poland during World War II and arrived here to a small community of Polish immigrants rich in two things: Catholicism and gardening. They would grow fruits and vegetables of enormous size and flavor without any pesticides or fertilizer to speak of beside the kiss of good compost. We as a generation have taken an entire step of our culture out of our lives- Not one of us in this room [obvious rare exceptions with-holding] are from "America" were all immigrants, our ancestors are spread all across Europe following a rich tradition of working the earth, raising food and livestock and cultivating a respect for the cycle of food and life. To cultivate by definition is to prepare and work on land, or to develop and improve it or likewise culture. We use to be about doing that; working and improving- agriculture at its root should be an energy efficient capture system just like plants all over the world do all on their own, but agribusiness actually consumes more energy than it produces, drawing on the majority of our water supply and in many cases threatening our survival by depending on mono-crops that are increasingly genetically modified. When you go to the store you're almost attacked by bright colors and "great deals" where food becomes not something created out of love or responsibility but as a product designed to sell instead of nourish. I'm not a believer in simpler or better times, people and things have always been "on the edge" of this or that disaster- you give em tools and damn if they won't break something in their building. However there is a huge and growing sub-culture of organic farmers, of ecologically responsible people and businesses that offer an alternative way of life- that take pride in creating something that is actually sound and good for you, after all the beauty they say is in the work.

One of the hardest challenges to eating organically is the winter; most market's close down in late October and don't open back up until Early Spring. You can shop at places like whole foods and wild oats etc but often their produce really isn't that much better than your average grocery during these months. You can become part of community supported agriculture and find greenhouses that extend growing seasons, or try to construct one yourself, there are also bio-shelters and ground covers but if you live in an apartment these things get a little more complicated. So this week I wanted to teach myself about how to create a way to have vegetables indoors using as many reclaimed materials as I could find. The basics are simple- you need a south facing window, good soil which you can be made by "acquiring some garden dirt" and mixing it 1-4 with good compost but make sure it isn't ripe with clay, drainage, irrigation, and temperature- all the things you would have to worry about anyway. Things like Kale and Radishes can be harvested in the dead of winter, and most veggies won't yield near the harvest you would get outdoors, but you can still make some good additions to your diet and get nutrients that your own hands made while establishing a good routine to add to your life instilling patience and time management. So I'm no expert and this is a learning process for me as well but I challenge all of you to give it a shot, most of these materials can be found, and the even with what I bought I only spent about 20\$ Remember eat as seasonally and locally as possible, eat with others, and be good and generous.

Material list: Milk-crate, mesh wire, plastic, duct tape, card-board, drainage container, aluminum foil, medium gravel or found rock, garden soil/compost, egg carton and paper towel for seed starter, seeds, love.

Seasonal Fruit and Vegetable Guide:

[Artichokes](#), spring and again early fall

[Asparagus](#), spring

[Avocados](#), classically summer, but now harvested year-round

[Basil](#), summer

[Beets](#), year-round

[Blackberries](#), summer

[Blueberries](#), summer

[Bok Choy](#), fall through spring

[Boysenberries](#), early summer

[Broccoli](#), year-round but best in fall and winter

[Brussels sprouts](#), late fall and winter

[Cabbage](#), best in late fall and winter but available year-round

[Cantaloupes](#), late summer

[Carrots](#), year-round

[Cauliflower](#), best in fall and winter but available year-round

[Celery](#), best in fall and winter but available year-round

[Cilantro](#), cool weather herb whose season varies from fall through spring in warm areas and spring and summer in cooler areas

[Chard](#), summer and fall

[Cherries](#), late spring and summer

[Chiles](#), summer

[Clementines](#), winter

[Collard greens](#), year-round

[Corn](#), summer

[Cranberries](#), fall

[Cucumbers](#), summer

[Eggplant](#), summer and early fall

[Fennel](#), fall through spring

[Figs](#), summer and fall

Garbanzo beans, fresh in summer (dried year-round)

[Garlic](#), summer and fall (stored year-round)

[Gooseberries](#), summer

[Grapefruit](#), winter and spring

[Grapes](#), late summer and early fall

[Green beans](#), summer and early fall

[Green onions](#), spring through fall

[Horseradish](#), fall and winter

[Kale](#), best in fall and winter

[Kiwis](#), winter and into spring

[Leeks](#), fall through spring

[Lemons](#), winter and spring

[Lettuce](#), available year-round nationally but best in spring

Limes, late summer and fall

[Mandarins](#), winter

[Mangoes](#), summer

[Melons](#), summer and early fall

[Mint](#), year-round

[Mushrooms](#), spring through fall

[Nectarines](#), summer

[Okra](#), late summer and early fall

[Onions](#), spring through fall (stored in winter)

[Oranges \(Valencia\)](#), spring and summer

[Oregano](#), year-round

[Parsley](#), year-round

[Parsnips](#), fall through spring

[Peaches](#), summer

[Pears](#), fall

[Peas](#) and pea pods, spring and early summer

[Peppers](#) (sweet), summer and early fall

[Plums & pluots](#), summer

[Pomegranates](#), fall

[Potatoes](#), late summer through fall but available from storage year-round

[Pumpkins](#), fall

[Radishes](#), spring through fall

Radishes (daikon, watermelon, other large varieties), fall and winter

[Raspberries](#), summer

[Rhubarb](#), spring and early summer

[Rosemary](#), year-round

[Rutabagas](#), fall and winter

[Sage](#), year-round

[Scallions](#), spring through fall

Shallots, summer and fall (from storage through winter)

[Spinach](#), year-round

[Squash](#) depends of summer or winter

[Strawberries](#), spring and summer

[Sweet Onions](#), spring and summer

[Sweet potatoes](#), fall and winter

[Tangerines](#), winter

[Thyme](#), year-round

[Tomatoes](#), summer

[Turnips](#), fall through spring

[Watermelons](#), summer

[Zucchini](#), summer