Springtime: R-E-L-A-X to Renew

While 99 percent of Americans feel relaxation is important, most spend less than 5 percent of their day in pursuit of it, according to a recent British survey. After you’ve done all of the “must-dos” of your day, you may simply feel you don’t have time for relaxation or, like 62 percent of those surveyed, you might feel guilty doing it. One-third of those polled even said they feel stressed out just by thinking about relaxation! Perhaps, more aptly, they feel stressed out because it’s just one more thing that you’re “supposed” to be doing to stay well. Regular relaxation is as important as proper diet, sleep, and exercise; it’s all part of feeling better, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

A major benefit of relaxation is that it reduces the effects of stress and anxiety. For instance, a recent study revealed that anxiety disorders increase your risk of several aging-related conditions, which might be due to accelerated aging at the cellular level. This cellular aging was reversible when the anxiety disorder went into remission, which suggests sound relaxation strategies may help you avoid this accelerated aging. In fact, you might be aware that your body has a stress response that kicks into gear when you’re facing a real (or perceived) threat. The balance to the stress response is the relaxation response, which is a physical state of deep rest that changes physical and emotional responses to stress.

Researchers now know that by evoking your body’s built-in relaxation response — your innate, inborn capacity to counter the harmful effects of stress — you can actually change the expression of your genes for the better. According to one study in PLOS One: “RR [relaxation response] elicitation is an effective therapeutic intervention that counteracts the adverse clinical effects of stress in disorders including hyper-tension, anxiety, insomnia and aging…”

RR practice enhanced expression of genes associated with energy metabolism…

For instance, deep breathing activates your parasympathetic nervous system, which induces the relaxation response, but taking even 10 minutes to sit quietly and shut out the chaos around you can also trigger it.

If you’re feeling the effects of stress and unable to fully relax, you could try this: 1) Notice and acknowledge your discomfort. 2) Relax and release it no matter how urgent it feels. Let the energy pass through you before you attempt to fix anything. 3) Imagine sitting back up on a high seat, in the back of your head watching your thoughts, emotions, and behavior with a detached compassion. 4) Then ground yourself. Connect to the present moment – feel the earth under your feet, smell the air, imagine roots growing into the earth from your spine. And be grateful.

Our Farming Practices

Our farming practices will take you back to the 1930’s. Our fields are plowed and worked with horses. Our large families provide many hands to do the hoeing and many other tasks that can only be done by hand. Food that was raised in the 1930’s had much better flavor and many more nutrients because farmers were not dependent on the chemicals, pesticides and GMO seeds that most farms use today. Food that has been organically grown doesn't just taste better, but it's also better for you!

We want you to enjoy better health. It is important to know where our food is coming from. Everyone needs a farmer. Who or where is your farmer?

About Us

We farmers (there are now seven participating farmers in our Homer Community) have been raising produce for several years, providing fresh vegetables for Farmers Markets and several of the Ann Arbor food stores. In 2008, we decided to begin a farm share program (CSA). Being a farm share member connects you directly to the farm your food is coming from. We usually offer a couple farm visits during the summer months. A farm visit will not only acquaint you with our farming community, but also offers a glimpse of the efforts made to provide you with good, clean, wholesome food.

We, being of the Amish faith, do not have phones, computers or email, so our communication needs to be by mail, at the farmers markets or through our friends at Arbor Farms. Of course, you are always welcome to come out to our farms.

We welcome you for a farm visit!

What is a CSA Program?

By subscribing to a CSA you are investing in a share of the farmer’s harvest. The CSA farm share program then provides you with fresh vegetables every week. The early harvest begins May 27th, continues throughout the summer, and ends October 9th (for a total of 20 weeks and a cost of $400).

Not only are subscribers getting the freshest food, but they are also showing their support for the small farmer. The program works well for the farmers and members both. The farmer can plan how much to grow. The member knows they have a box of vegetables coming every week. It makes shopping quite simple. It broadens your eating habits, as you will try new things you’ve never had before. It can challenge the cook. A seed catalog to us is like a cookbook to you. Sometimes we like to try new items. So be our guest and enjoy the food.

What will I see in my weekly box?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Season: May/June</th>
<th>Summer Season: June/July/August</th>
<th>Late Season: September/October</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Lettuce Broccoli Cabbage</td>
<td>Remaining summer crops,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaf Lettuce</td>
<td>Radishes Beans Bell Peppers</td>
<td>Red Peppers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
<td>Rhubarb Cucumbers Hot Peppers</td>
<td>Hard Squash</td>
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<td>Sunchokes</td>
<td>Strawberries Zucchini Carrots</td>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
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<td>Kale varieties</td>
<td>Peas Tomatoes Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>Watermelon</td>
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<td>Collards</td>
<td>Basil Potatoes Cantaloupe</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zucchini and Summer Squash</td>
<td>Green Onions Sweet Corn Onions</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
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<td>Peas: Snap and Snow</td>
<td>Swiss Chard Summer Squash Egg Plant</td>
<td>Late Greens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Greens</td>
<td>Asparagus Beets Garlic</td>
<td>And wrapping up the garden.</td>
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</tbody>
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Subscribe Now-May 1st. Pick-up information & enrollment forms at Service Counter.
Sugar Maple Sap, or Maple Water, as it is euphemistically called, or Sinzibukwud (the ancient Algonquin word for maple sap) is a strangely overlooked beverage with many unique, fascinating attributes. It may be the most “natural” beverage describable. It is a clear liquid without a trace of stickiness or sediment, but when it is reduced forty times it becomes the maple syrup Americans have cherished since colonial times.

Unlike spring water, which merely emerges from earth and rock, the water in maple sap also passes through the filtration system of a really impressive tree and is infused with the minerals and nutrients that the maple requires to revive from dormancy. An amazing cocktail of bioactive goodness, it’s a delight to drink and to cook with. 100% pure and natural maple water is also known as maple sap and gets its authentic, fresh and delicately sweet flavor from the majestic sugar maple tree.

The earliest known inhabitants of Canada consumed maple water as a tonic. Legend has it that, during a spring of famine, an Aboriginal was watching a squirrel bursting with energy. After noticing that the squirrel drank water from a maple tree, he realized that this was where the squirrel was getting its energy from. Maple water became a food prized by the people of the First Nations and later of New France.

Maple Water is the first seasonal food of the year when it is concentrated into syrup, and a refreshing drink just as it flows from the tree. Maple water has a blush of sweetness, a strong hint of maple flavor and a very soft feel in the mouth. It makes a delicious chilled table water and a lovely medium for brewing green or herbal tea. Use maple water for steaming vegetables and fish, and it imparts a subtle but distinct flavor and sweetness to food. The water can then be rapidly reduced in the pan to make a maple sauce. It is quite enjoyable when used in place of water in making oatmeal and other porridges.

Maple Water is quite rich in minerals (particularly calcium, potassium, magnesium and zinc), vitamins (especially several B vitamins) and amino acids. Not to be confused with maple syrup, maple sap is the clear water that flows naturally out of sugar maple trees. It is an eco-friendly product and contains 46 nutrients that are essential to the growth and protection of the tree.

Maple water has a much more agreeable taste than coconut water and has half the sugar (5g per 250ml) and half the calories (20 cal per 250ml) per serving. It also contains over 46 bioactive nutrients, including phytonutrients unique to tree waters. These nutrients, including electrolytes, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, help boost immune health, aid in the prevention of degenerative diseases and act as a pre-biotic to support digestive health.

For diabetics and children who don’t like vegetables, maple water may be the answer. Studies show that maple sap has an antioxidant capacity, which compares to fruits and vegetables such as broccoli. Moreover, a 2009 Canadian study has revealed that maple water also contains abscisic acid, which is known to be important in the fight against diabetes. Maple syrup contains polyphenols and shows ORAC values which compare to commonly eaten fruits and vegetables such as broccoli. Further research on maple syrup and its original form, maple water, has revealed that both products contain equally important quantities of terpenes, and in particular, abscisic acid, a phytohormone whose health benefits have only recently been discovered.

Abscisic acid in maple water and maple syrup occurs as a conjugate along with certain metabolites at concentrations that are therapeutic, according to the effective thresholds of abscisic acid (ABA) reported in a 2007 US study published in Clinical Nutrition. Vegetable physiologists and botanical researchers have known about the physiological properties of abscisic acid in the vegetable kingdom for a long time, but its health benefits for humans has only recently come to light. Along with other effects, it is known to stimulate insulin release through pancreatic cells and to increase sensitivity of fat cells to insulin, which makes it a potent weapon against metabolic syndrome and diabetes.

Further studies are obviously needed before scientists can more accurately understand how eating maple products affects insulin behavior. Beyond the health benefits, maple water has a delightfully refreshing taste, described as light and thirst-quenching with a hint of maple sweetness. Its smooth and revitalizing flavor will capture your taste buds! It can be consumed

“Research reveals maple syrup contains abscisic acid”, Medical
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General information for 2015 season is on page 2, or visit www.arborfarms.com

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