

Sprouts: The Good and the Bad

by Annalisa Burke

Are you craving fresh, locally grown produce but feel like it's impossible to get in this brutal Chicago winter? Look no further than your own kitchen window. Growing your own sprouts proves a convenient way to add flavor, texture and nutrition to meals without busting the budget. Low in calories and high in vitamins A, B, C and D, sprouts not only provide a good source of fiber and digestible energy but are also high in lecithin, which can speed up fat breakdown, helping to reduce cholesterol.

Before growing your own sprouts, there are certain things to keep in mind. Buy seeds and/or sprouts from reputable sources. Seeds may become contaminated with *E. coli* or salmonella by animals and/or manure in the growing field or unsafe handling during post-harvest by infected workers. And the warm, moist growing conditions for germinating sprouts contribute to bacterial growth. In order to destroy bacteria and reduce your risk of food-borne illness, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention advises: buy sprouts fresh with the buds on; refrigerate them to slow bacteria growth; and wash them under cold, running water. High-risk individuals, including pregnant women, children and the elderly, should avoid sprouts altogether.

Types of Sprouts

While most people are familiar with having alfalfa sprouts on sandwiches and mung-bean sprouts in stir-fries, a wide variety of sprouting seeds are available: broccoli, radish, sunflower, mustard, onion and soybean. A good source of information about sprout types, nutritional value, uses and recipes is the International Sprout Growers Association (ISGA) www.isga-sprouts.org. Following are some of the ways they suggest serving sprouts:

- use in coleslaw (cabbage, clover, radish)
- add to tossed salads
- try in potato salad (mung bean, lentil)
- try in wraps and roll-ups (alfalfa, sunflower, radish)
- stir into soups/stews when serving (mung bean, lentil)

- mix into pancake or waffle batter (buckwheat)
- top omelet or scrambled eggs (alfalfa, clover, radish)
- use in sandwiches instead of lettuce (alfalfa, clover, radish)

Health Benefits

Scientists have long studied sprouts to better understand their high levels of disease-preventing phytochemicals, and how they may contribute to better health, from prevention to treatment of life-threatening diseases. Major organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, American Cancer Society and Johns Hopkins University, have reinforced the benefits of sprouts with ongoing studies that explore various sprout varieties for their nutritional properties and to validate health claims.

Studies have linked consumption of alfalfa, red clover and broccoli sprouts to a reduced risk of bladder cancer, according to a report last year in *Cancer Research*. The study provides evidence that "eating vegetables is beneficial in bladder cancer protection," Yuesheng

Zhang, MD, PhD, professor of oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, is quoted as saying.

In addition, with their high level of dietary phytoestrogens, alfalfa, clover and soybean sprouts have been found to play an important role in the prevention of menopausal symptoms, osteoporosis and heart disease.

Growing Your Own Sprouts

When purchasing seeds, buy the kind specifically designed for sprouting. A good source for organic seeds that have tested negative for *E. coli* and salmonella is www.johnnyseeds.com. A variety of radish, alfalfa, onion and broccoli seeds can be found—just search under "sprouts."



Continued on page 3

Ask *the* Expert

Dear Laura,
I am a chiropractor who often recommends the following web sites: VitaSearch.com and NaturalNews.com. Have you heard of them?
Name withheld by Healthy Dining editor

Dear Chiropractor,
No, I have not. But because of my passion for sharing quality information (minus the marketing hype) with Healthy Dining subscribers, I asked one of our trusted experts, Michele Turcotte, MS, RD, LDN, to take a cursory look at both web sites and tell us in her opinion which, if either, she would recommend. Here is what she had to say:

First, I'd like to give you a little feedback on www.NaturalNews.com. While it sounds good and provides some insight into alternative therapies, I wouldn't recommend it. The tone is very anti-FDA, anti-scientific, anti-traditional medicine (integrated medicine is best with its balance of both traditional and alternative practices).

The web site promotes "Treating Candida with Garlic Supplements," "Treating Fibromyalgia with Hypnotherapy" and shouts "Low Cholesterol is Linked to Depression and Suicide." It's very "pro-fear" and based on shaky science at best. One has to be very careful making blanket statements based upon single scientific studies.

It's a membership based site (nearly 3,000 members) so one does not get completely unbiased information. I'm also wary of "miracle treatments, foods, drugs." You have to be especially careful when only some of the site is 'okay' because not every consumer/user/site visitor will have be able to differentiate between what is good information and what is "too good to be true."

The other site, www.VitaSearch.com, seems at first to be questionable. But, from what I've gleaned, I actually like it much better! I prefer its Nutrition and Integrative Medicine orientation. When you search here under a term like Vitamin E, you get a wide variety of clinical studies that pop-up under their Healthnotes section. Such references and journals as *Clinical Toxicology*, the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, and the *Lancet* are well respected in the scientific community.

You can search Expert Interviews or Weekly Updates. I did a basic search under the keyword 'vitamins' and searched expert interviews. The following was the first to pop up: an article entitled "Cognitive Decline, Aging, Homocysteine and B Vitamins" and the expert interviewed was Katherine L. Tucker, Ph.D.

from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University - extremely impressive. And they begin the 'Expert interview' with a background of her education.

I prefer this site because it is more scientific and less opinion-based. Blogs are for opinions. Web sites that provide nutrition/health information need to be unbiased. The 'weekly updates' are short scientific blurbs sorted by issue and provide a summary #, topic, keywords, reference and then a short summary of the science/findings.

I did not exhaust each site so naturally my findings are based upon the limited research that I did, which again, is somewhat incomplete. I just think that between the two, www.VitaSearch.com is much better. Surprised? I was too actually.

Michele's specialty areas include diet in diabetes care and heart disease, weight control, vegetarianism, oncology, and all aspects of nutrition in complementary care. Her priority lies in educating the public about living and eating well to improve quality of life. Her passion is to promote wellness and disease prevention through both traditional and alternative approaches. Every individual is unique and can make a difference in how they look, feel, and function through adopting a healthful diet and engaging in regular physical activity. Michele enjoys giving classes and lectures, writing articles, and researching the diet and lifestyle patterns of other cultures. www.APerfectPlate.com

Q Dear Manners Please,
Though the current accepted widespread custom is to shake hands upon meeting someone, I would prefer refraining from doing this for health reasons. What would be the best approach for me to take? I'd prefer not having to explain my motives or make a big deal about it upon each encounter. Ron

A Ron, the best approach is to make an honest short simple statement without going into details. "Excuse me for not shaking hands but I really can't. Thanks for understanding." Then go on to saying "It's a pleasure meeting you, tell me how long you've worked for this company," or something along those lines. If you shift the subject to the person you're greeting, they'll not think another second about your not shaking hands.

The other possibility is to hold something in your hands, like a beverage glass, book, folder or small handbag. But, by doing this, it makes it look like you are not introduction savvy. *Manners Please*

Patricia A. O'Brien of Manners Please has been designated a Certified Etiquette Consultant by The Protocol School of Washington, a leader in Etiquette and Protocol. Her interest in etiquette was sparked by the lack of common courtesy exhibited nationwide on a daily basis.



SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Matthew Fox, 31
Resident of Skokie
Business Analyst - Arc Worldwide,
affiliate of Leo Burnett

The editor of Healthy Dining recently sat down with one of its longtime volunteers. This is what he had to say.

Matthew, how did you learn about Healthy Dining?

I was searching online for a local cooking class and ran across the Healthy Dining website.

What prompted you to become a Healthy Dining volunteer?

I really feel the need to give back to the community. The more passion I saw displayed by Healthy Dining volunteers, the more interested I became in helping make this newsletter even better!

Why is healthy eating important to you?

Hearing about the health-related problems so many people experience as they age was certainly one impetus. Having parents who deemed health of high importance and growing up as an athlete having to push my body constantly also had a profound effect on me. Having the right fuel for my endeavors has always been a challenge!

Do you have a favorite grocer?

New Leaf Grocery store is a great concept, I just don't live close enough to fully enjoy it. I tend to really enjoy local market/ethnic stores like Caputos, Vallis, or Marketplace near my house. Recently they started to stock organics which makes them even better!

Are there any other health-supportive publications you'd like to turn Healthy Diners onto?

I think there are plenty of opinions on health supportive publications out there. I would rather tell people to stay away from a few sources which seem like they are legit though they are not.

Kevin Trudeau is one example. Though he has produced many best-selling books, some trusted health professionals I've spoken with are very concerned about many of his recommendations. Other than that, anything that promotes an "all or nothing" solution should be taken with a grain of salt.



Are there any tips or resources that you'd like to share with Healthy Diners for saving money and/or time while still eating healthfully?

Buy in bulk and prepare large meals that you can eat throughout the week. Also, rotating items that are expensive with inexpensive ones throughout the week can save a bundle!

How do you spend your free time when not volunteering for Healthy Dining?

I do quite a bit work with the adventure racing world, public speaking, and trying to keep up on current events.

Is there anything you'd like to share with someone who might be reading this interview?

Come to Healthy Dining events. Hopefully, we'll get a chance to meet!

Any dreams or goals that you'd like to share with Healthy Dining readers?

It would be amazing to see more community driven activities among people regardless of their background, income level, race, creed, etc. People coming together to do more community cooking, sharing, experiencing—that would do wonders.

Sprouts: The Good and the Bad continued from page 1

While you can buy specially designed germination kits for growing sprouts, you also can grow them using household items. For example, you can create a simple sprouting apparatus by using a wide-mouthed jar, a piece of plastic mesh or cheesecloth and a rubber band. First, clean all equipment. Sanitize your jar by cleaning it in your dishwasher.

Place about a tablespoon of seeds in the jar and rinse them thoroughly. Put the piece of mesh or cheesecloth over the mouth of the jar, and secure it with a rubber band. Drain the seeds. Make sure the seeds are damp, but not standing in water to prevent mold growth. Repeat this process of rinsing and draining at least twice a day.

Within two to seven days, you should see the seeds sprouting. At this point, you can put the jar by a sunny window, so the sprouts get enough light. Harvest the seeds once they have at least two leaves. If you let them sprout too long, the roots become more hairy and may develop an unpleasant texture. Sprouts can be kept in the refrigerator for two or three days.

Growing sprouts at home will ensure you get the freshest product while allowing you greater control of the process. They also cost a fraction of the price of store bought.

For a complete list of local resources to find sprouts, visit www.LocalHarvest.org. Enter "sprouts" in the name/description/product section coupled with your ZIP code, and you'll be on your way to growing your own sprouts.

RECOMMENDED READING

"The Complete Guide to Growing and Using Sprouts: Everything You Need to Know Explained Simply - Including Easy-To-Make Recipes" Back-to-Basic (Paperback - September 2009) *

"Microgreens" by Eric Franks and Jasmine Richardson (Paperback - April 2009) *

"Almost Meatless: Recipes That Are Better for Your Health and the Planet" by Joy Manning and Tara Mataraza Desmond (Paperback - March 2009) *

"Sprouts and Sprouting: The Complete Guide with Seventy Healthy and Creative Recipes" by Valerie Cupillard (Paperback - July 2007)

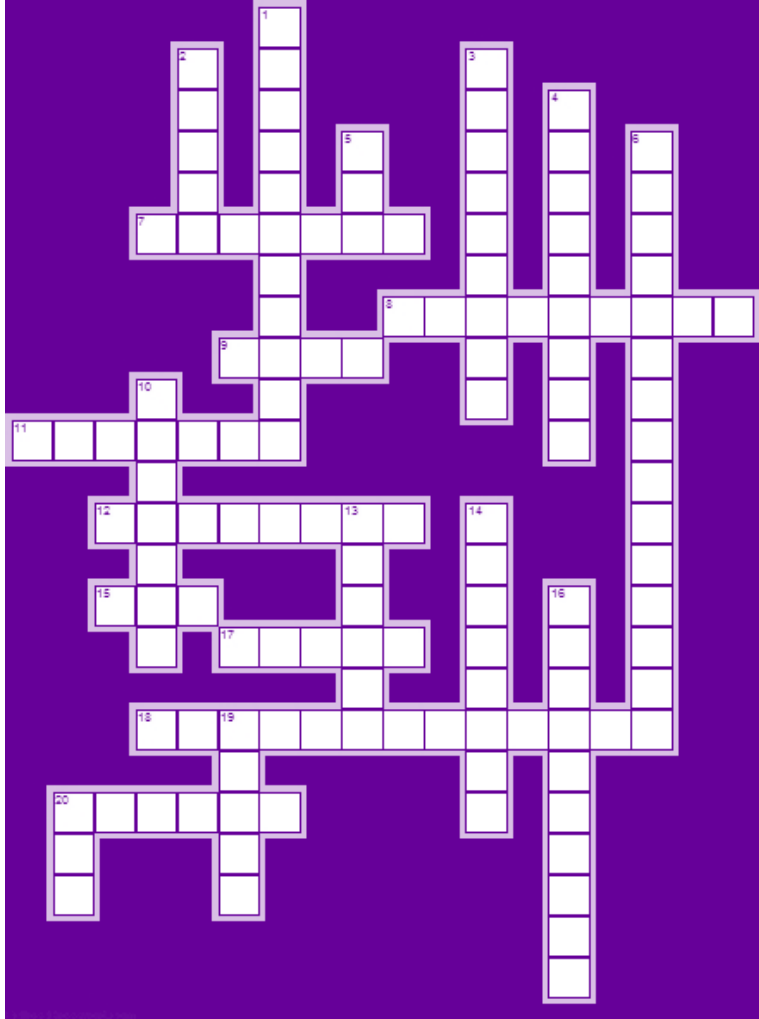
"Cooking with Sprouts" by Tarla Dalal (Paperback - January 2007)

"Sprouts" by Kathleen O'Bannon (Paperback - February 2002)

* Available for pre-order at Amazon.com.

Special thanks to Ingrid Clark, Nutrition Intern, for article research and Jennifer Vimbor, MS, RD, LDN, CDN (founder of Nutrition Counseling Services) for reviewing and fact-checking the information. www.ChicagoNutritionist.com

Crossword Challenge



Across

7. A molecule made up of amino acids that is needed for the body to function properly
8. An organized social movement and market-based approach to empowering developing country producers and promoting sustainability
9. Habitual nourishment
11. Any of various fat-soluble or water-soluble organic substances essential in minute amounts for normal growth and activity of the body and obtained naturally from plant and animal foods
12. Someone who eats food grown or produced locally or within a certain radius such as 50, 100, or 150 miles
15. Do-it-yourself
17. The ripened seed-bearing part of a plant when fleshy and edible
18. Author of *In Defense of Food* and *The Omnivore's Dilemma*
20. A certificate that may be redeemed for a cash discount

Enter and Win

Be the first Healthy Dining subscriber or volunteer to complete the crossword puzzle and win. To enter, mail the puzzle, your name, mailing address, and the answer to the tie-breaker question (below) to

Healthy Dining
c/o Laura Bruzas
151 North Brainard Avenue
La Grange IL 60525

The winner will receive a set of six Kate Grenier Designs Planet Earth Magnets. \$18 value. www.kategrenier.com

Tie Breaker Question:

How many ounces in a gallon?



Down

1. One who normally maintains a vegetarian diet but occasionally makes exceptions and eats meat or fish
2. The parts of grains, fruits, and vegetables that contain cellulose and are not digested by the body
3. A health professional with special training in nutrition who can help with dietary choices
4. The process by which living organisms obtain food and use it for growth, metabolism, and repair
5. A relationship between weight and height that is associated with body fat and health risk
6. America's first foodie
10. A unit of energy-producing potential equal to this amount of heat that is contained in food and released upon oxidation by the body
13. A set of instructions that show how to prepare or make something, especially a culinary dish
14. Worker or customer-owned business that provides grocery items of the highest quality and best value to its members
16. Foods that are unprocessed and unrefined, or processed and refined as little as possible before being consumed
19. An electric pot that cooks food via the slow cooking method
20. Community Supported Agriculture



Marshall the "mellow" rooster perches on top of a chicken run that Nellett covers with plastic sheeting to provide shelter from the snow and wind.

RAISE *the* ROOST

Chicagoans who raise chickens in backyard reap benefits of natural pesticides, fertilizers and the incredible, edible egg
by Juliet Martinez

Chicago's organic gardens are not just producing fruits and vegetables anymore. These days some urban gardens are also producing eggs.

Small flocks of chickens, it turns out, are not only legal in Chicago, but they replace pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. They also provide fresh eggs and even create a surprising sense of community around them.

Linda Nellett knows all about this. The knowledge management professional started her Northwest Side flock with three hens in the summer of 2007.

"I'm an organic gardener, and I had heard that chickens can eat waste from the garden and produce good fertilizer," Nellett says. With a huge grin, she adds, "The eggs are good, too."

When she started, she says, she didn't really know how to build her own coop or where to get the supplies she needed. But the task was made much easier by going to one site (<http://www.omlet.us>), which allowed her to order the coop, feed, and even her first three hens.

"It was expensive," she says, but, "a low-effort way to get started."

She now has six chickens, one of them a rooster, in two Eglus, or chicken houses. She says owning chickens has benefits both practical and intangible.

"They are great for the garden, eating the weeds and bugs," she says. "And you literally cannot get fresher eggs. You know what went into them; you can raise them organically if you like."

And rather than sidelong glances from her fellow city-dwellers, owning chickens has brought her nothing but good relations with her neighbors.

"It's important to live near animals in a community," she says. "It connects you to the natural world and to the reality of life and living."

Nellett says that her next-door neighbor from Croatia regularly comes over to feed the chickens treats from her garden. People bring their kids to visit and feed her chickens, too.

"If you care for them well, they actually help build the community," Nellett says. "I have more positive interactions with my neighbors now than I did before."

Madiem Kawa echoes this sentiment regarding the chickens she owns in the Woodlawn neighborhood on the South Side.

"In this neighborhood you have a lot of people who are from the South," she says. "It brings back a lot of memories. Some of the kids here have never seen a live chicken before, so they enjoy seeing them up close. The chickens liven things up."

The IT professional and master gardener got her two hens from a friend who was paring down her flock of four. The Bantams, or small-sized hens, live on Kawa's porch in a rabbit hutch, and each give her an egg a day in the summer. She says she lets them roam free in the garden when the weather is warm.

Kawa sees the chickens as both beneficiaries of and contributors to her organic garden.

"My vegetables are organic. I use some of that to feed the chickens as well, so they are also organically fed. And I use their poop in the compost bin," she says. "It makes really good compost."

Beyond the eggs and fertilizer they provide, she says, "They make nice pets. I enjoy having them around. I'm in the yard a lot, and I really enjoy watching them. They make the garden more vibrant."

But as Kawa and Nellett can attest to, there is a lot of hard work when it comes to raising chickens in the backyard. Both caution that the chicken coops must be kept clean. Nellett says the Eglu has a removable tray that makes it easy to clean. Kawa has a similar arrangement in her hens' rabbit hutch, but she laughs, "They poop 100 times a minute and you have to keep up with it!"

Nellett says the hardest part for her is getting up at dawn to let the chickens out of their coop in the winter. "In the summer they can sleep with their door open, but in winter the door is closed, and in the morning they need to get out to their food and water."

But they agree that the effort is worth it. From having chickens turn bugs and weeds into breakfast and fertilizer, to building relations with their neighbors, city life has never been so sweet for these organic gardeners.



Nellett's chicken Tuck into the avid gardener's kitchen scraps.

Urban Chicken Resource

Basic Backyard Chicken Care Workshop
Offered by Angelic Organics Learning Center
Saturday, March 21, 2009
Register at <http://www.learnconnect.org/>
or call: 773.288.5462

Online Resources

Back Yard Chickens:

www.backyardchickens.com

Web destination for in-depth information on "raising, keeping and appreciating" chickens. Originally designed for urban chicken owners, this site includes discussion boards rich with information and answers to questions.

The City Chicken:

<http://home.centurytel.net/thecitychicken/index.html>

This site features a "chicken tractor" page that shows a huge variety of mobile enclosed chicken coops and runs. It's an excellent place to get ideas for a coop of one's own.

Chicago Chicken Enthusiasts:

<http://groups.google.com/group/chicago-chicken-enthusiasts?hl=en>

This group was created by Martha Boyd of Angelic Organics Learning Center. Though open to all interested parties, you must apply to be a member.

Urban Chickens:

<http://www.urbanchickens.net/>

This is a blog that focuses on urban chicken ownership. It offers a lot of peer support and expert advice for new chicken owners.

My Pet Chicken:

<http://www.mypetchicken.com/>

Juliet Martinez is a freelance writer and editor living in Chicago. Her small flock of chickens consists of two Barred Rocks and a Bantam who just started to lay.



PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH SINCE 2003

Healthy Dining c/o Laura Bruzas
151 N. Brainard Ave. La Grange IL 60525

312.666.9979
Laura@HealthyDining.org
www.HealthyDining.org

Healthy Dining is an all-volunteer community education and outreach effort geared to health-minded, eco-friendly individuals and families living and/or working in the Chicago-area.

A \$12 subscription includes

- Four quarterly e-newsletters and a steady diet of weekly e-blasts chock-full of bite-size, easy-to-digest morsels of practical information, upcoming local events, simple recipes, conservation tips, and special subscriber-only special offers that support healthy living
- Access to local experts and registered dietitians who answer your questions free of charge
- The opportunity to send your announcements to fellow subscribers and volunteers
- 10% off purchases at Ethical Planet

Subscriptions expire 12.31.09.
Visit HealthyDining.org for payment options.

Volunteer Team

Founding Editor/Publisher
Laura Bruzas

Webmasters
George Kollar
Mark Fackler

Creative Director
Judy Higgins

Contributing Writers
Annalisa Burke
Dorothy Hernandez
Juliet Martinez

Copy Editors
Linda Wedenoja
P.J. Osborne
Dorothy Hernandez

Nutrition Advisors
Marla Brodsky, RD, LD, CNSD
Michele Turcotte, MS, RD, LDN
Jennifer Vimbor, MS, RD, LDN, CDN

Etiquette Expert
Patricia A. O'Brien

Volunteer of the 1st Order
Matthew Fox

Volunteers at Large
Fran Horvath
Lesley Craig
Tye Hayes

For information on Healthy Dining's "Healthy Dining on a Dime" program, Lunch & Learns, or Four Healthy Dishes in Under an Hour cooking class,* call 312.666.9979. For Healthy Dining's upcoming events, go to HealthyDining.org.

* Gather your family/friends together and create a private cooking class - \$30.00/person – minimum of eight people - maximum of twelve

* Bonus: The class is free for the coordinator! All proceeds benefit Healthy Dining.

Available Now

2009 CSA Shares

*Local, Certified Organic Produce
Picked Fresh Each Week*

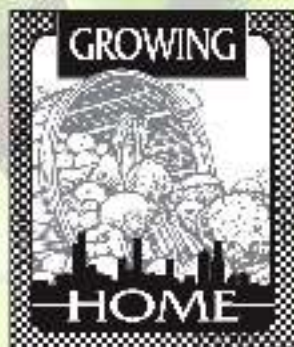
4-week Spring and Fall Shares start at \$125

18-week Summer Shares start at \$480

Pick-up sites throughout Chicago

Visit growinghomeinc.org.

*100% of the proceeds from CSA Shares
benefit our training programs
for needy Chicagoans.*



Growing Home is a non-profit with a mission to operate, promote, and demonstrate the use of organic agriculture as a vehicle for job training, employment and community development.

growinghomeinc.org | info@growinghomeinc.org | 773.549.1336