

the Co-op

the official newsletter of your community grocery

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE DIXON COOPERATIVE MARKET

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WWW.DIXONMARKET.COM



The President's Corner by Jeff Spicer

Those Holy Week winds are back, blowing down fences and pushing pilgrims toward Chimayo. I guess that means spring is here. Other indications include frozen apricot blossoms, fuzzy hats making way for straw ones and of course, guys with shovels weaving up and down the highway.

It's all quite grand as Jeanne Treadway notes in her article on page two. For those of you keeping score, Jeanne has resigned from her position on the Co-Op board. I feared that perhaps it was my dictatorial, heavy-handed management style that sent her fleeing, but she assured us, her reasons had more to do with her own levels of energy and stamina. We reluctantly accept her resignation, but are quite relieved to learn that she has no plans to abandon the Farmers' Market. You'll be reading more about that next month.

This month, all the excitement is about the Seed Exchange. If you have any interest in gardening or farming, you definitely need to check this event out. Adam Mackie dishes up the dirt on this, our fourth annual exchange, on page three.

Also on page three, Yesca Sullivan tells us what the Watershed group has been up to. Due to limited space, I had to edit her article pretty heavily,

so if you'd like an unexpurgated version, give Yesca a call, or better yet, attend one of their meetings on the third Monday of every month at the Community Center.

If you should get blown toward the Co-Op this month (and let's hope you don't need the wind to send you in that direction) you might notice a few new touches here and there.

First, Nelson has embarked upon a Spring Cleaning Campaign. Seems he's got some things on his shelves that he'd rather were on your shelves. Take a look around the store. Some items will be marked as specials for members only - every day... it'll be kinda like an easter egg hunt for grown-ups. Every week, he'll pick a few new items to get the "special treatment".

Then, on Sunday the 15th (coinciding with the seed exchange), the Co-Op is having a blow-out sidewalk sale. All the "slow-movers" will be out for the hard-core bargain hunters to come and pick through. If you've had your eye on that Meatloaf Helper, but were a little hesitant about spending the 89 cents... now's your chance to score! I've also heard that all those leftover Christmas toys will be out at the sidewalk sale. Little Timmy's birthday is coming up...

Finally, if you've been enjoying getting the Co-Op updates via the Town Crier email network, make sure you get on our list at the store. Gaywynn will be sending out bi-weekly notices (to only those who want them) from our own email system and we will stop pestering Lou (thanks Lou, for testing this out for us).

The Co-Op by laws say we need five board members, and again, if you're keeping score, we need another person to join us. If you've got some time, some energy and an interest in the well-being of the community and the Co-Op, let us know and we'll anoint you as interim 5th wheel.

Now go out and give the wind your finger and then go plant a tree.

AND NOW, A POEM...

*April is here at the right time
Kites are flying
A bird is singing out my window
Easter is here, right around the
corner
Lilacs are blooming
At the Co-op, people are happy.*

— Makeda Vogel

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Fierce Beauty
 by Jeanne Treadway
 Dixon Farmers' Market Manager

My annual bout of spring fever is so intense I cannot decide which mood I'm in. As quickly as I figure out I'm melancholy, my spirits spiral into giddy happiness. Up and down they go, all day long. Of course, contrary winds contribute to these mercurial emotions, as does an undercurrent of worry about early apricot blossoms. Soft, warm breezes, perfumed by a kitten kiss of anise, tease me into believing spring is truly here. Then, furious gusts of frigid air snap branches off trees, throw my garbage can across the portal, and forcefully remind me that winter has not completely lost her grip. I'm not the only one going slightly nuts during this fickle season; everyone and

everything seems skittish. My cats' newly awakened frenetic vitality borders on the insane and I flee outdoors to escape our entangled house-bound energy. Half an hour of rhythmic spading heals some core part of me, soothing and calming those frizzed nerve endings. What is it about digging in dirt that makes me feel so utterly alive? Whatever it is, my thinking clarifies and visions of flowers, butterflies, hummingbirds and heat fill my daydreams. Soon, serious complaints from unused muscles force me to return indoors and the moody cycle repeats.

Noisy squabbles erupt more frequently these days as birds take umbrage over tiny intrusions into their newly delineated territory. Until a few weeks ago, a caucus of crows visited the bird cafeteria; as many as seventeen shimmering black lovelies jostled for millet and sunflower seeds several times each day. Now only two dine. Their almost melodic trilled purrs announce a different relationship; when the feral cat zigzags near the mulberry, the crow couple warns the potential intruder with a nerve-jangling cacophony. No longer is the yard a feeding site they share with all cousins, now it's a nest and the pair takes its protective responsibility most seriously. So too has the scaled quail relationships changed. The covey halved: one group moved west into the chamisa, while the other now lives under a pile of dead branches near the south fence. Each family feeds at different times and neither accepts visits from former clan members.

Spring fever symptoms must include forgetfulness because I never remember this fierce beauty from year to year. I am surprised to discover poppies growing. Did I plant poppies last fall? I forget that dry, pummeling winds usually follow sweet, drenching rains. The tenacity of tiny elm trees and the tenderness of fruit blossoms invariably split

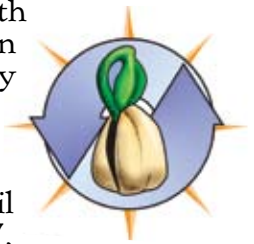
my heart and my skin must parch and redden before I apply sunblock.

Finally, though, April arrives and this topsy-turvy season begins to sort itself out, as much as it ever does. I'll find a few treasures at the Seed Exchange on the 15th and sow them into the little patches I've designated as garden or flower bed. Dixon's farmers and growers will meet on May 2 to decide when to open the market. Patterns and rhythms will shift and spring ruffles will smooth into lusty summer. What a marvel, this explosion of life, this determination of seeds and creatures to thrive. The poignancy of delicate flowers opening too early, capricious winds chilling and tender, and that happy sad moodiness weave the shawl of spring draping our world and warming our winter-weary hearts.

**The 4th Annual Dixon
 Community Seed Exchange**
 by Adam Mackie

The 4th Annual Dixon Community Seed Exchange will be Sunday April 15th, 2007, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Community Center next to the Coop. Last year over 200 growers chose free samples from more than 300 varieties of herbs, flowers, natives, and above all food crops. We had a good supply of donated commercial seed, and best of all many growers brought seeds they had grown themselves, carefully selected through years (even generations) of harvests.

This year we are again looking forward to generous donations from at least two seed companies and to the contributions of local growers. We will not know for



**The Board of
 Directors**

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The Co-Op is open
Monday-Friday
 10am -7pm
Saturday and Sunday
 10am - 5pm
 579-9625

certain about any varieties until they show up on the tables. Some of last year's stars were Greeley onion, Taos red bean, Medanales bolito bean, Peñasco short season corn, white, blue, and yellow meal corns from Acoma. Pepa de Zapallo beans, Salazar chile, Taos poppies, penstemons, and more excellent varieties unavailable from any commercial source.

What will this year bring?

The only way to find out is to join us. There is no charge for admission and the seeds are free. Cruise the seeds, and chat about growing and varieties with your neighbors. Bring some seeds or plant divisions if you have some to spare, homegrown or leftover commercial; you can bring other growing supplies that need a home too, like clean pots and trays. Do not worry if all you can bring is a smile. It is a help if you bring some little zip-loc bags or envelopes to take your treasure home, but we will have a supply available.

And this year we welcome the Dixon Elementary Cheerleaders who will offer baked goods and Norteño specialties to give us energy for all the planting we need to do.

We look forward to seeing you.

Spotlight on Egyptian Onion

The Egyptian Onion is one of my favorite varieties to grow and eat, and is one of the first I got from another seed-saver. It is a perennial, and every year is the first thing to sprout in the garden sending up its welcome green shoots in mid-March. You can snip them for fresh green onions from March to November, or pull the whole plant for scallions. Leave a few in the clump and in summer they send up stalks that bear miniature onions at their tips. As these swell they bend the stalk to the ground and take root, hence their other name "Walking Onion".

Why do I like it? Let me see, easy to grow, entirely hardy, early, tastes good, prolific, looks

dramatic... what is not to like?

The Egyptian Onion is a fine example of a neglected variety that deserves to be much better known....and I will be bringing a large tub of plants to share to the Exchange. Once a part of every homestead's kitchen garden, it can be part of your homestead too. The seed companies and grocery stores do not want you to grow them because you will have a nine month supply of green onions forever.

Watershed Update by Yesca Sullivan

The Embudo Valley Watershed Group meets fairly regularly every month although lately the meetings have been sporadic. The reason for this being that, after about two years of getting together and talking about issues, concerns, problems, ideas, and sharing local knowledge, it is time to move towards the next step in caring for the health of the watershed and the communities that sustain and are sustained by it. Everything that has been discussed in the past couple of years is being developed into a Watershed Management Plan that will essentially be the product of the community for the use of those who have particular needs in the way of improvement or restoration projects. It is intended to be a living document and subject to review and changes by the community as the needs arise. This plan will open the doors to funding sources that may otherwise be difficult for grassroots or small community groups to obtain.

During the last meeting the topic focused around what goals were desired in a management plan. Of course, the first thing that came up was that this plan should not be left to collect dust on some shelf in some office (or cubicle) in some building in some city somewhere.

Fair enough, this plan needs to be utilized, and the only ones who can make sure that this happens, is us. So..... how can this be? Well, it was also brought up that most plans are too technical, dry, and boring for the average layman to read. This plan should be written so that the local high school students can utilize it for science and watershed education projects, farmers and landowners can use this to discover resources and techniques for improvement projects on their own lands, and the average community member can use this to network with agencies and other entities that can provide technical or other assistance for problem solving. This is no simple task since most data and information that is already available is presented in a very technical manner.

Of course, maintaining the agricultural base of the community became the prevalent topic of conversation, as usually happens. What can be done with land to maintain the agricultural integrity that has, throughout history, been linked to the watershed? Several suggestions and concerns came up around this topic. These include:

- Apples and chile are not enough and other crops were suggested such as grapes for wine, dry land farming crops, berries, winter green housing projects.
- In the interest of keeping the water within the watershed.... Water the grasslands as a beneficial use to the environment. Grasslands slow, store, and absorb water as it flows across the landscape.
- Even small, kitchen gardens are beneficial and help to preserve an agricultural environment.
- Use modern technology to market kitchen gardening. Value added products.
- Integrate agriculture into the economics of the entire

cont. on page 4

APRIL EVENTS

1st - First Sunday

10% off at the Co-Op for members

7th - "Carpetbag Brigade" performance
in Peñasco at El Puente Theater

8th - Easter

11th - Food Buying Club orders due

15th - Seed Exchange!! 10am-2pm

16th - Pay your taxes

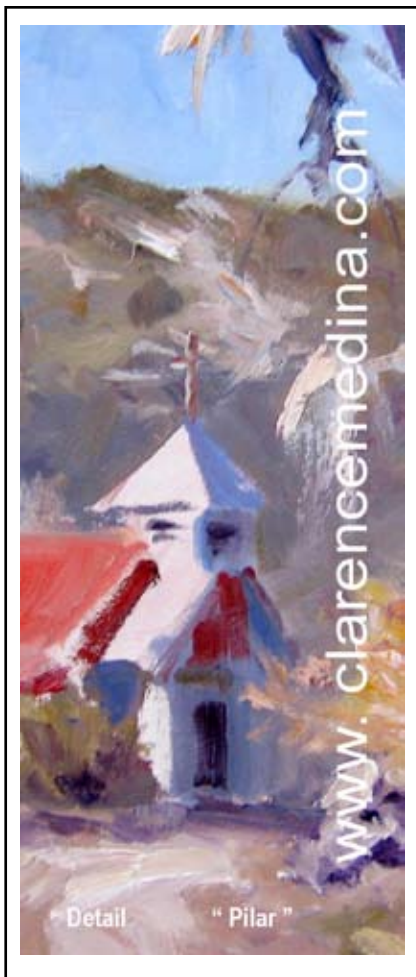
16th - Watershed Meeting 10am at
EVCC

20th - Food Buying Club Orders Arrives

22nd - Earth Day!

26th - Co-op Board meeting 7pm at the
store

Got something you want to
put in the newsletter? Drop it
off at the store or email it to:
jeffspicer@dixonmarket.com



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community. Find markets such as local restaurants and grocery stores that aren't already maxed.

- School programs such as a school vegetable garden... possibly part of the summer program or youth program.
- Farm to school program.
- Acquire community equipment (tractor, bobcat, chipper)

There is a huge emphasis on agricultural education, in these discussions, and how it should be approached. It was suggested that the word agriculture implies "working the land" and that the term "food education" should be more widely used as it is more comprehensive.

Social change is inevitable as technology and development move forward. The challenge is to direct this change, as a community, towards positive land stewardship and the preservation or regeneration of family agricultural values.

The intent of the Watershed Management Plan is to address non point source pollution in the watershed. Non point source pollution is pollution that comes from an unknown source. In the case of the Rio Embudo, it was found to exceed state surface water quality standards for turbidity and sedimentation. The watershed groups in the watershed have been looking at possible sources of these pollutants and, throughout the process, have been addressing the concerns and needs of the watershed as a whole. Some of the potential caused of non point source pollution that were discussed are:

- Highly erosive landscape. Northern New Mexico rates the highest on earth in terms of erosion.
- Agricultural runoff
- Arroyo and drainage function, lack of vegetation in drainages
- Irresponsible ATV use (in arroyos)
- Human intervention in natural cycles ie. channelization of the Rio Embudo and Rio Grande, removal of vegetation, poor development.

Although the plan itself is intended to address turbidity and sedimentation in surface water, it is important to recognize the connectedness of the watershed as a community system and address concerns that are indirectly related, and sometime seemingly unrelated. Please watch for the plan draft set to be issued in late April. Comments will be taken through May for incorporation before a final copy is accepted and placed in the community for use.

If anything can be said about the watershed group, the conversation around our table is always interesting. Sometimes humorous, many times serious, always informative and inspiring. Please join us should the desire take you. We meet on the third Monday of the month at the Community Center.