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Today's Paper

Thursday, September 16, 2010

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A bumper crop of Guelph farmers markets emerging

September 16, 2010

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GUELPH — Eating local has never been so easy — nor has shopping for such fare.

Gone are the days when the only farmers' market in town was the Guelph Farmers' Market. Several such operations now complement the downtown Saturday-morning Guelph institution.

The development is a welcome one for supporters of the shop-local movement and foodies who've fallen in love with the offerings provided in such settings. An growing number of locals seem to be shopping for foodstuffs like the Europeans — looking for the freshest foods in season then planning menus accordingly, not the other way round. Pop in to see what's on offer, as new markets have emerged in a neighbourhood near you.

● The Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming at the University of Guelph

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3-6 p.m. to first frost, located at College Avenue East, past the Cutten Club on the right-hand side, watch for signs

This is the first year for the market, coordinated by Martha Gay Scroggins, of the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming. This market sells fresh organic fruit and vegetables at cost to the child care and day centre on campus. About 120 children take part in the planting and maintenance and see the produce grow. The children then eat the fresh organic food each day. Student volunteers from several programs at the university work in exchange for food spending their volunteer hours planting, seeding, and harvesting. Any surplus goes to a local women's shelter. Produce includes leeks, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, okra, eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, watermelon, and cantaloupe. Find out more at www.organicag.uoguelph.ca

● **Backyard Bounty** holds two markets in the city during the week featuring organic vegetables and fruit. One is its Norwich Neighbourhood Market. The other is its Waterloo Avenue Neighbourhood Market.

● Norwich Neighbourhood Market

Tuesdays 4 to 8 p.m., at 126 Norwich St. E.

Brightly coloured patchwork bunting marks the entrance to this neighbourhood market. Organic vegetables and fruit are the main feature, and availability depends on what is in season. This time of year, the market may feature red and golden beets, carrots, raspberries, blueberries, ground cherries, baby bok choy, kale, burgundy beans and potatoes. Alex and Dan Catering sell frozen prepared foods such as Maple Pumpkin Soup, and Veal Stew. Another vendor from nearby Derry Street sells chutneys, jams, preserves, and home-baked breads and buns. This is a family-friendly venue on a quiet street so visit with your children and pick some fresh, healthy produce. Tips on how to cook an unfamiliar vegetable are readily available too. Find out more at norwichneighbourhoodmarket@gmail.com

● Waterloo Avenue Neighbourhood Market

Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., until the end of October, at the Wellington Chiropractic Centre parking lot, 121 Waterloo Ave., across from the Guelph Farmers' Market

Scott Williams, the farmer for Backyard Bounty, sets up rows of large tubs brimming with organic vegetables and herbs for shareholders in a related program. Check out the tailgate of the truck for surplus available for sale if you don't have a share. There is an abundance of choice: mesclun mix, arugula, cucumbers, fresh basil, tomatoes, onions, squash, turnip, burgundy beans, raspberries, and ground cherries. Find out more at www.backyardbounty.ca

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Melody Wren, For The Mercury

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