LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter

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Learn the symptoms!

Raising the Bar

A spotlight on Grab & Go Salads

Going Green

Take a natural approach to spring cleaning



SPRING 2021



LIVING NATURALLY SPRING 2021

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Store Hours 8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

Drive-Thru Window Hours 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. Daily

> Garden Center May I - June 6 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Get the latest deals and news from the co-op by signing up for our e-newsletter at: valleynaturalfoods.com









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Valley Natural Foods Co-op works in partnership with the South Metro community to support health and well-being through education and expertise in local, sustainable food and wellness services.

- Valley Natural Foods Mission Statement

CEO UPDATE

Nick Seeberger

Happy Spring, everyone! The weather is warm and we are making progress in the pandemic. Thank you to all our customers for wearing face coverings and honoring the social distance guideline during this last year. As a co-op committed to the health and well-being of all in our community, these simple steps have had a tremendous impact on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our corner of MN. I am excited and grateful that each member of our staff is now eligible to receive vaccines. I want to recognize and honor these hard workers for showing up day in and day out throughout the pandemic to see that the co-op continues to safely provide healthy, nourishing food. But the nourishment goes well beyond food...

One of my favorite co-op moments each year is the assembly of our hoop house to host our annual garden center. From May I through June 6, we will sell neonicotinoid-free bedding plants, hanging floral baskets, heirlooms and so much more! The garden center will be open daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

In truth, the essence of Earth Day (April 22) is celebrated every day here at our co-op. We are committed to decreasing the environmental impact of our operations. We've been at this for years, from being early champions of organic farming practices, to low-packaging bulk products, to innovations, such as our partnership with GOATOTE, an app-based kiosk system that provides sanitized, reusable bags at no charge to our customers. Check out other green initiatives in this edition of Living Naturally.

I am very excited to share that Valley's Own Bakehouse, the gluten-free bakery owned and operated by Valley Natural Foods, is relocating to a larger facility in Rosemount. Our bakehouse products are certified by the Gluten Free Certified Organization (GFCO) program. We produce a wide range of tasty items under our two brands,



Valley's Own Bakehouse and Brody's 579. Our products are available at other co-ops, grocery stores, summer camps and schools across the upper Midwest. Our expansion allows us to boost efficiency, grow our product lines and increase production for other local companies looking for a gluten-free supplier. Congratulations to the entire bakehouse team on growing our business and preparing for expansion!

As our country inches toward the end of this pandemic, the co-op is enthused about safely rolling out more of the popular, time-tested events you are familiar with each season. As allowed by the state regulations, we look forward to reintroducing on-site dining, in-person classes, Community Dinner gatherings, and summertime events on our patio. Continued wishes for health and vitality to you and yours from all your friends here at the co-op.

Sincerely

Neihol Salaro

Nick Seeberger

LETTER from the board



Spring, a season of renewal and growth, is a time of reflection for many individuals. Looking back on the previous year about brings emotions for me. I know I am not alone when I say it was a year of fear, uncertainty, outrage and exhaustion.

But I also witnessed a year of courage, selflessness, innovation and a nation demanding social justice. Practicing gratitude helps me persevere through challenging times and I am thankful to have the opportunity to share my reflections of gratitude with the Valley Natural Foods community.

Like many, I have been working from home for the past year. My place of employment transitioned more than 20,000 employees to a remote work environment. It is now second-nature, but the beginning months were extremely challenging. As I reflect back, not a day went by this past year that I didn't express gratitude for having a house with electricity and clean water, as well as access to the outside world via reliable internet. I am also grateful I had the means to purchase multiple weeks of groceries during a time of uncertainty in the beginning stages of the pandemic. This isn't possible for many families and I am proud to be a member of a co-op that gives back.

In 2020, our Register Round-Up proceeds went to several local organizations who addressed urgent

community needs due to the pandemic. Rounding up your purchases at the register is a simple yet meaningful way to continue making donations that help our local community organizations.

It is difficult to articulate the amount of gratitude I have for VNF employees. To show up to the front line each day during a pandemic is a level of bravery I deeply respect. As a director on the board, I witnessed firsthand how decisions by leadership were made with extreme care and consideration to assure the safety of all customers and employees. There are nearly 100 employees at VNF and I personally thank each of you. What would we do without the continued courage of our VNF team!

As we enter, hopefully, the final phase of this pandemic I am grateful for science and the innovations of the past year. I was skeptical that a vaccine could be developed in under a year but in doing so it proves worldwide crises can be addressed when we come together.

But COVID isn't our only crisis and we still have work to do. I personally commit to improving the health of our planet through my daily actions. I also personally commit to practicing anti-racist behaviors and advocating for racial equity and social justice. I see others around me making these same commitments. And for that, I am grateful.

Sincerely,

Amy Simpson

CALL FOR CANDIDATES!



RUN FOR YOUR CO-OP **BOARD**

Share your talents and serve our cooperative community as a member of the Valley Natural Foods' Board of Directors.

Applications open early summer for VNF member-owners. Stay tuned!

For the most up to date information on happenings at the co-op, subscribe to our newsletter at valleynaturalfoods.com

COMMUNITY IMPACT

FOOD DONATION BIN

Throughout the months of January, February and March, volunteers from Eagan's Open Door Food Pantry faithfully stopped by weekly to pick up food donations. Due to the generosity of shoppers and staff, the bins consistently overflowed with food and personal care items.

2,050 lbs. of donations were collected this past quarter!

360 Communities is collecting all bin donations in April, May and June to serve their network of five food shelves in our surrounding communities. We've set a goal of 2,250 lbs. - help us reach this goal!

REGISTER ROUND-UP PROGRAM

Interested in donating? Just say "yes" when your cashier asks if you'd like to round-up your total purchase during your next VNF visit!

April Round-Up Recipient: Midwest Food Connection

Round-ups in April will benefit Midwest Food Connection's online education program to support K-8 teachers with classroom and distant learning.

PREVIOUS 2021 RECIPIENTS

360 Communities

Your round-up contributions benefited 360 Communities' network of five local food shelves, and provided immediate food and resources to individuals and families to bridge them through difficult times.

\$3.502 in contributions were raised in March.

EdAllies

This Minneapolis-based education advocacy nonprofit helps students, families, educators, and community members share their stories and advocate for the education issues that matter to them, with a focus on those who have been historically under-served.

\$2,999 in contributions were raised in February.

Eastview Community Foundation

Funds raised through Register Round-Up were directed to EVCF's Random Acts of Kindness Grants. These grants help to pay off negative lunch balances for students, purchasing school supplies and winter clothing for students in need and providing opportunities for students to participate in school activities.

\$3,099 in contributions were raised in January.

Thank Your for your continued support and generosity



FOOD ALLERGEN AWARENESS

The Gist Behind This Serious Life Science

In the US, 90% of all food allergies are caused by only eight foods. Even if you or your kids aren't impacted by the "Big 8 Allergens," you likely have a friend or are not the same thing. Food intolerances often lead family member that does! May is Food Allergen Awareness Month and it's important to know the prevalence of these allergies and be aware of the reactions. common symptoms each allergen displays.

While it's easy to misinterpret the differences between the two, food allergies and food intolerances to discomfort but do not involve the same measurable immune system response or potential life-threatening



About 80% of children will outgrow it before they start elementary school, but 2-3% of children are allergic to cow's milk - making it the most common food allergy among children.

Common Symptoms of a Milk Allergy:

- Hives
- Wheezing and/or coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Vomiting
- Swelling of lips, tongue and/or throat



What constitutes a wheat allergy is vague, but an estimated 0.5% of the population may be affected. It's common for individuals who are allergic to wheat to also be allergic to barley, oats, and rye.

Common Symptoms of a Wheat Allergy:

- Throat & mouth swelling
- Nasal congestion and/or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Head pain
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Anaphylaxis



CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH

An estimated 1.2% of the general population is affected by a shellfish allergy. Shellfish fall into two categories: Crustaceans and Mollusks. It's possible to be allergic to both groups or just one.

Common Symptoms of a Shellfish Allergy:

- Hives and/or itchy skin
- Dizziness
- Nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting
- Wheezing and/or difficulty breathing
- Swollen lips and/or throat



Children are more likely to be allergic to peanuts than adults. Depending on the severity of the allergy, it may be necessary to avoid consuming products produced in a facility where peanuts are used.

Common Symptoms of a Peanut Allergy:

- Hives
- Tingly mouth and/or throat
- Tightening of the throat
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose
- Wheezing and/or difficulty breathing





Allergic reactions to fish typically become known in

adulthood, with 0.2% of children and 0.5% of adults

being allergic to fish. It's estimated that 0.4% of the

general population live with a fish allergy. Fish and

shellfish allergies are not the same. A fish allergy refers

to a finned fish, commonly from anchovies, halibut,

Individuals living with a tree nut allergy make up 0.4-0.5% of the U.S. population. As many as 40% of individuals with peanut allergies are also allergic to tree nuts. Common tree nut allergens include almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts.

Common Symptoms of a Tree Nut Allergy:

- Hives
- Swollen throat
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Wheezing and/or difficulty breathing
- Swelling of the lips



As many as 0.7% of the population is affected by a soy allergy, which often shows up in infancy and is typically outgrown by age ten. Many types of soy protein are contained in a variety of products and aren't always clearly labeled on a product's ingredient list, such as tofu, tempeh, edamame, and miso.

Common Symptoms of a Soy Allergy:

- Hives and/or itching
- Swelling of lips, tongue and/or throat
- Wheezing and/or difficulty breathing
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and/or vomiting

mahi-mahi, salmon, and tuna. Individuals who suffer from a fish allergy can take supplements for omega-3 (with direction from their doctor).

Common Symptoms of a Fish Allergy:

- Hives
- Itchy and/or closing throat
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Runny nose
- Swollen lips



FGGS

Allergic reactions to eggs can be mild or lifethreatening. About 2% of children are allergic to eggs and most outgrow the allergy in or before adolescence. The egg white is typically the portion that contains the allergenic proteins, though most doctors recommend total avoidance.

Common Symptoms of an Egg Allergy:

- Hives
- Nasal congestion and/or sneezing
- Coughing and/or wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and/or vomiting

How many live with food allergies in the USA?

Shellfish Allergy:

Egg Allergy:

• ~ 1.2% of population

• ~ 2 - 6% of children

under 6 year

• More common for adults

Milk Allergy:

- 2 6% of children under
 - 6 years

Fish Allergy:

- ~ 0.4% of population
- More common for adults

Peanut Allergy:

• ~ 0.6 - 1.3% of population

under 6 years

population

Tree Nut Allergy:

• ~ 0.4 - 0.6% of

- Wheat Allergy: Soy Allergy: • ~ 0.4 - 1% of children • ~ 1 - 2% of children
 - under 10 years
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Raising the BAR for SALAD

TRY OUR GRAB & GO

Signature Salads





Our salad bar is always freshly-stocked with our beautiful signature salads, thanks to long-time deli team member Sandy and other deli staff, who assemble, package and stock the freshest grab & go salads for VNF shoppers to enjoy.

Each salad is large enough to split into two side salads or you can eat a whole one for a big meal! On any given day, you are sure to find at least six of our eight salad varieties to choose from!

This salad is sure to remind you summer is on its way! Strawberries, sliced red onion, and walnuts top a bed of fresh spinach. Cap off this

crowd-favorite with poppy seed dressing!

Packed to the brim with spring mix lettuce, romaine lettuce, cherry tomatoes, chickpeas, feta, Kalamata olives and topped with organic balsamic vinaigrette, prepare to have your taste buds transported to the Greek coastline!



For a salad that packs a serious punch, look no further! Boasting sliced turkey and ham on a bed of Romain lettuce and topped with cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese, a sliced hard boiled egg and creamy ranch dressing, VNF's Chef Salad will knock out hunger in no time!

"It's the perfect salad to give you fuel! With 3 types of protein, I always finish the Chef Salad feeling full and satisfied!" 'er Salad

- Steve S Valley Natural Foods, Store Manager



Organic balsamic vinaigrette dressing is the perfect topping for a salad filled with mixed and romaine lettuce, dried cranberries, feta cheese, and walnuts!



NOT PICTURED BUT JUST AS DELICIOUS:

BLT Salad

Built with mixed lettuce, bacon, tomato, and blue cheese dressing, this salad is sure to hit the spot!

Caesar Salad

This classic salad boasts house-made croutons, mixed lettuce, creamy Caesar dressing, and Parmesan cheese!

Oriental Chicken Salad

Tangy ginger-miso dressing brings a tasty balance to this blend of mixed lettuce, Mandarin oranges, roasted chicken, green onion, and toasted almonds.

Raw Veggie Salad

This vegan option boasts rainbow chard, baby spinach, cucumber, carrots, red onions, raw pumpkin seeds and walnuts, topped with a lemon & grape seed oil dressing!



WE CELEBRATE EARTH DAY **EVERY DAY**

Valley Natural Foods continually works towards lessening our carbon footprint and committing to new green initiatives!

- 100% of VNF energy usage is offset by alternate
- Zero single-serve plastic bottles on our shelves
- Two electric-vehicle charging stations are installed in our parking lot
- VNF and Valley's Own Bakehouse adhere to recycling and composting alternatives to trash
- Donation bins available in-store for cellphone recycling and eye glasses
- Strong focus on local vendor relationships to support local producers, plus locally-made products have shorter distances to travel to VNF, reducing carbon footprint.
- Reusable bag system at the in-store GOATOTE kiosk, gives shoppers access to clean reusable bags, reducing paper bag use.



With winter behind us and summer on the horizon, many of us are reaching for storebought cleaning solutions as we dive into spring cleaning mode. And after the extra time spent at home in 2020, many of our homes are well past due for a good deep cleaning.

There's no better time than spring to clean up from the winter, open the windows and breathe in the fresh air. Though store-bought cleaners may offer quicker cleaning, they aren't always eco-friendly or safe to be inhaling while using them.

Here are a few easy substitutes to try:

3-INGREDIENT **ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER**

Why continue to spend money on cleaners that cost so little to make and are toxic to people and pets? You'll find this recipe is inexpensive, nontoxic, nearly odorless and safe for children and fur babies alike. Mix 2 cups water, I cup hydrogen peroxide, and 1/4 cup lemon juice into a spray bottle and you're armed with some serious cleaning power.

Hydrogen peroxide is the key to this recipe. Stronger than vinegar, peroxide works like bleach, but without the health and environmental effects.



STAINLESS STEEL SPARKLER

Though it sounds counterintuitive, olive oil can get your appliances extra sparkly clean. Pour some of that EVOO onto a clean, soft cloth and buff for your shiniest appliances ever!

ZERO-RINSE FLOOR **SANITIZER**

Mix 1/2 cup borax with 2 gallons of hot water in bucket. Apply to floors with a mop or sponge. Extra bonus: No need to rinse after!

DIY WOOD POLISH

If you aren't one to polish your furniture regularly, try making your own wood polish and save on the storage of a bottle of store-bought polish you'll never finish. Juice a medium-to-large lemon and pour the juice (should be about 1/2



DIY DRAIN CIFANER

Avoid harmful chemical drain cleaners by pouring 1/2 cup baking soda into a drain, followed by I cup of vinegar. Let it fizz for about 15 minutes, then rinse thoroughly with boiling water. You can repeat as needed or leave to fizz overnight and rinse in the morning.

DAILY YOGA MAT SPRAY:

While it's not necessary to deep clean your mat with warm water and mild soap after each practice (because who has time for that?), a daily spray to wipe down after each use is far more realistic and beneficial for the life of your mat. For an antibacterial, antifungal spray, mix I part warm water with 3 parts white vinegar. Add 8-12 drops of essential oils (we like eucalyptus, lemongrass, lavender, mint, and tea tree).

Mix thoroughly and place in a spray bottle. Spray liberally over the surface of the mat and if it's looking especially dirty, let the cleanser sit and soak in a bit before wiping with a wet cloth or sponge.

Then dry it with a soft dry towel or washcloth. Repeat on the other side and allow your mat to fully air dry for 5-10 minutes before rolling it up to store.



Ripe for Picking

Scoop up fresh, local strawberries while they're in season — these desserts are sure to delight.

hey are among the most anticipated fruits of the summer — sweet, juicy strawberries are so enticing! It's hard to resist those plump, glossy red berries with their fresh green caps. But let's face it: They're also quite perishable. When you go overboard with your berry buying and are left wondering what to do with all those beauties before they go bad, turn to these dessert recipes.

Strawberry Cake

Serves 8. Prep time: 1 hour, 15 minutes; 20 minutes active.

1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup sugar

I large egg

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1/2 cup fat-free plain yogurt

³/₄ pound strawberries, hulled and halved vertically

2 tablespoons turbinado sugar

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Use a ½ teaspoon butter or vegetable oil to grease a pie pan.
- In a medium bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, pastry flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Whisk to mix.
- In a stand mixer with the batter paddle, or a large bowl with an electric mixer, beat the butter until creamy, and then beat in sugar. Beat for about 2 minutes, until fluffy and light. Beat

- in the egg and vanilla, scraping down and mixing again to make a creamy mixture.
- Alternate beating in half the yogurt, half the flour mixture, then half the yogurt and half the flour mixture, just until mixed.
- Spread the batter in the prepared pie pan.
 Arrange the strawberry halves on top, placing them lightly, starting along the rim, then filling in concentric circles to cover the batter completely. Sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
- Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until the top is golden and crackly, and a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out with no wet batter.
- Cool on a rack for 5 minutes before slicing.
 Keeps, tightly wrapped, for up to 4 days in the refrigerator.

A touch of butter gives this meltingly tender cake rich flavor. It's light enough for a weeknight dessert and equally delicious for breakfast with a dollop of yogurt.

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Strawberry Walnut Scones

Servings: 8. Prep time: 45 minutes; 20 minutes active.

3 cups whole wheat pastry flour

1/2 cup sugar

I teaspoon baking powder

I teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup butter, chilled

I large egg

3/4 cup low-fat plain yogurt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

I cup fresh strawberries, halved

2 tablespoons sugar

- 1. Heat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment or coat with vegetable oil spray. In a large bowl whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Cut chilled butter into cubes and work the butter into the flour mixture quickly with your fingers or a pastry blender until the mixture is crumbly but small chunks of butter remain. In a small bowl, whisk the egg, yogurt and vanilla; mix well. Make a well in the dry mixture and pour in the wet, stir just until mixed, then stir in walnuts. Place half the dough on a floured counter or breadboard and shape into a circle 8 inches across, then cover with halved strawberries. Crumble the remaining dough over the strawberries and pat to cover, and form a disk about 3/4-inch thick. Sprinkle with sugar and pat to adhere.
- Use a knife to slice like a pie into 8 wedges. Place each wedge onto the sheet pan with at least I inch between them. Bake for I5 to 20 minutes, until golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.
- 3. Serve warm, or cool completely and store, tightly covered, for up to 4 days at room temperature.



Mixed Berry Crumble

Serves 8. Preptime: 40 minutes; 15 minutes active.

I cup rolled oats

3/4 cup light brown sugar

3/4 cup whole wheat pastry flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted

4 cups fresh strawberries, stems removed

2 cups fresh raspberries

I cup fresh blueberries

2 tablespoons sugar

I tablespoon arrowroot or cornstarch

I teaspoon vanilla

- Heat the oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, combine the oats, brown sugar, flour, salt and zest. Add the melted butter and stir to mix. Reserve.
- Place the berries in a 2-quart baking dish, and sprinkle with sugar, arrowroot or cornstarch, and vanilla. Toss gently to coat, until well combined. Crumble the oat mixture over the berries in the dish.
- Bake for 25 minutes, or until the topping is golden and the juices are thick and bubbly all the way around the dish. Let cool on a rack for 5 minutes before serving.

Juneteenth celebrations often feature red foods to symbolize the perseverance, strength and resilience of enslaved ancestors. Carry on this culinary tradition with a festive Strawberry Slab Pie (pictured on the facing page), which brings familiar pie ingredients together in a baking pan instead of a pie plate.



Strawberry Slab Pie

Serves 12. Prep time: 2 hours, 30 minutes; 1 hour active.

31/2 cups all-purpose flour

11/2 cups sugar, plus 2 tablespoons

11/2 teaspoons salt, plus 1/4 teaspoon

21/2 sticks unsalted butter (10 ounces)

3/4 cup ice water

3 pounds fresh strawberries, hulled and halved

1/4 cup cornstarch

I tablespoon fresh lemon zest

I teaspoon vanilla

2 tablespoons half and half

3 tablespoons turbinado sugar

I. In a large bowl, mix the flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt. Cut in the butter, then drizzle in ice water as you toss with a fork. If needed, drizzle in an additional tablespoon or so of ice water to make a dough. Form into a rectangle, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Note that the crust will have a biscuit-like texture when baked.

- Place the hulled, halved strawberries in a large bowl. Add the remaining sugar, cornstarch, lemon zest, vanilla and remaining salt. Mix.
- 3. Heat the oven to 425°F. Get out a 10 x 15-inch baking pan that is 1 inch deep.
- 4. On a floured counter, cut off one third of the dough. Roll the larger piece to 12 by 16 inches. Transfer the dough to the pan, pat lightly to fit into the pan, leaving the edges hanging over.
- 5. Roll out the remaining piece of dough into a piece 11 by 16 inches. Distribute the berries over the dough in the pan. Place the second sheet of dough over the pie. Fold the edges of the lower crust over the upper crust, crimp the crust and slash the top.
- 6. Brush the top of the pie with half and half and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
- Bake for 15 minutes at 425°F. Reduce temperature to 400°F. Place a sheet of foil over the pie, then bake 25 to 30 minutes, until bubbling.

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ON ONE \$50+ PURCHASE IN THE GARDEN CENTER



Exclusions Apply. Cannot be combined with any other offer. One coupon per person.
Redeemable in the VNF Garden Center Only.
Valid through May 15, 2021.



Walley MATURAL FOODS.

Garden Center

Opening May 1 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily

Our 8th annual garden center will feature a wide selection of old favorites and exciting new plant options from local suppliers: Rush Creek Growers, Twin Organics, and Green Earth Growers.

Delight yourself with our healthy selection of veggie and floral bedding plants, floral hanging baskets, herb baskets, native perennials and more!