

Purple Asparagus Newsletter

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April 2009 Newsletter

Greetings!

Mea culpa, we say. It's been a long time, a really long time, since our last newsletter. For this we apologize and admit that we've been preoccupied with other matters. So before we jump into a run down of the green goings-on during Earth Month, we want to share what we've been up to and what we're planning for the next few months.

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We've continued our education program at McAuliffe School in Logan Square and at a handful of other City schools in partnership with Seven Generations Ahead. In these workshops, we been showing parents and kids how to make seasonal and nutritious and sustainable snacks. On this subject, we've prepared a hand-out for parents, caregivers and school officials on [Sustainable Snacking](#), which includes nutritional information, recipes and snack ideas. For those schools and centers interested in having Purple Asparagus offer our programs and workshops to their parents and students, we have an educational package with sample curriculums. For more information, please email us at info@purpleasparagus.com.

Outside of the school realm, we have the following great upcoming educational and social activities available to parents and children.

Cook Green at Smarty Party

On April 23 at 3:30pm, Melissa Graham, Head Spear of Purple Asparagus, will show kids how to cook green with fresh herbs. They'll taste, touch and smell a variety of fresh herbs. Learn about their meanings and uses. And then they'll make three simple, delicious snacks: herbed yogurt dip, tomato salad on a stick and rosemary-grilled cheese! \$25.00 a child. Space is extremely limited. Please RSVP to Smarty Party at 773-687-0521.

For more green cooking and eating tips, check out Conscious Choice's article "[Green Your Diet Now: 24 Fresh Ways to Reduce Your Foodprint.](#)" Our friends at the Chicago Conscious Choice are launching a new magazine called Mindful Metropolis. Look for it in May.

Garbage to Garden

[Urban Worm Girl](#), Stephanie Davies, will show parents and kids how to transform their garbage into nutrient-rich compost for a garden or houseplants. Reading Tim Magner's [Earl the Earthworm Digs for His Life](#), parents and kids will learn about the important

role that worms perform for the soil. Finally, with Purple Asparagus' head spear, Melissa Graham, some of this black gold will be used to grow an herb seedling. \$10.00 for a parent-child team. Space is extremely limited. Please RSVP to [A Cooler Planet](#) at 773-248-1110. April 25, 10-11am.

To learn more about composting and kids, check out the New York Times article, [Urban Composting: A New Can of Worms](#). Also, look for a run down on urban composting from our own Melissa Graham next week on [The Local Beet](#), a website dedicated to a practical approach to eating locally.

Cheese, Please!

Purple Asparagus will be at [Provenance Food & Wine](#) (2312 West Leland) during Lincoln Square's "Kids in the Square Event" to make some cheesy goodness: delicious cheese snacks good for adults and kids! Saturday, April 25 from 10am - 4pm.

Kids' Cooking Class at The Kids' Table

Board member, Elena Marre of [The Kids' Table](#) is giving a kids cooking class to support Purple Asparagus. The Kids' Table offers hands-on cooking classes for parents and kids (starting as young as 2), all with a single goal in mind - to get kids eating healthy. On Sunday, May 3 from 1-2pm, come see how easy and fun it can be to get kids involved in the kitchen and to love good food.

The class is open to 2-6 year olds. Space is limited, so sign up now! The ticket price is \$25.00 per child for members and \$27.00 per child for non-members. To purchase tickets, call or stop by The Kids' Table at 2337 W. North Ave. Chicago, IL 60622, 773-235-2665.

For those concerned about our children's eating habits, there are some great new food resources. Check out the [new food pyramid](#) designed for preschoolers. There's also a new book co-authored by Epicurious editor, Tanya Wenman Steele, "Real Food for Healthy Kids," ["Real Food for Healthy Kids,"](#) and a great New York Times' article on the ["6 Food Mistakes Parents Make."](#)

We Told You So!

So it's finally dawning on the restaurant industry that kids aren't genetically hard-wired to like chicken nuggets and hot dogs. A marketing and menu report published in Restaurant News concluded that children have a growing preference for bolder, spicier flavors and are broadening their accepted flavors beyond those found in traditional American fare.

Green Fest!

Purple Asparagus will be at this year's Green Festival, May 16 and 17 at Navy Pier. We'll be in the Organic Valley Kids Zone making "salad in a jar." Volunteer with Purple Asparagus and get your admission to this great Festival free! For a full line-up of exhibitors and activities, visit the Green Festival [website](#).

Sustainable Sushi-Making at the Shedd

In partnership with the Shedd Aquarium and Plitt Seafood, Purple Asparagus presents a sustainable sushi making class for parents and children in the Shedd's Lobster Lab. On Sunday May 31, 2009, from 4-6pm, join us at the Shedd to roll our own sushi using sustainably caught and raised seafood. Seafood that is as good for the earth as it tastes. On hand will be a Shedd employee who will talk about the importance of sustainability in the aquatic world.

\$20.00 per adult, \$5.00 per child. Adult and child beverages are included in the price. Families who arrive an hour early will receive free admission to the Aquarium. For more information about tickets, visit our [website](#).

On the subject of sustainability and fish, in "[A Seafood Snob Ponders the Future of Fish](#)," Mark Bittman exposes many of the problems associated with industrial fish farming, including destroying a key defense against typhoons, mangroves, in shrimp farming, the pollution of local waters by fecal matter from the farms, and the threat to wild fish when it comes into contact with farmed salmon upon its escape. In their January 2009 issue, the Ecologist reports similar risks in the very directly titled, [Should I Buy Farmed or Wild Fish?](#) Finally, [in the same issue](#), the Ecologist also exposes the environmental pollution resulting from the manufacture of fish feed for farmed salmon.

To support the [Shedd's Right Bite program](#) promoting sustainable seafood, check out the Right Bite Aquarium Dinner Series. The next dinner on will be on May 4 at Parker's Ocean Grill. Call the Shedd for more information.

Save the Date!

Purple Asparagus' annual benefit will be August 30! Location to be revealed shortly.

Sustain This!

It's Earth Month and there's a ton going on in Chicago to promote sustainability. On Wednesday April 22, 2009, 10:30am-12:00pm Manda Aufochs Gillespie a.k.a. the Green Mama will be green tips to parents in Green Parenting 101. Green Parenting 101 is part of the Northside Parents Network's Parent University. The session will be at Flourish Studios at 3020 North Lincoln and includes a brown bag lunch from Gourmet Gorilla.

Enjoy an Earth Day dinner at [Sola](#), a member of Chef's

Collaborative, a non-profit organization that works with chefs and the greater food community to celebrate local foods and foster a more sustainable food supply.

Finally, on April 25, there will be lots of great activities for parents and kids at [Loyola University's North Lake Shore Community Earth Day](#) from 9:30am-4:00pm.

For more earth-friendly advice, check out Mother Jones' answers to [Burning Questions, 20 Econundrums Solved](#) in its December 2008 issue.

What a Bunch of Cornballs or Would You Like Fries With Your Hg 80?

Around the middle of last year, the Corn Refiners Association embarked on a multi-million dollar campaign to rehabilitate the reputation of the recently maligned high-fructose corn syrup. In full page ads in major newspapers and television commercials, the industry tried to convince us that, gee wilikers, corn syrup is just the same as refined sugar and even honey. Setting aside the ubiquity of the sweetener and the subsidization of the industry that creates it making it unnaturally cheap, [Grist](#) has reported that two separate studies, including one published in the peer-reviewed Environmental Health Journal has found mercury in nearly half of high-fructose corn syrup samples collected in 2005. Oh, well.

Purple Asparagus

A non-profit organization dedicated to bringing families back to the table by promoting and enjoying all the things associated with good eating.

