

May 2023

# heart beet

A Pulse on What's Happening at the **Viroqua Food Co+op**



# Events are back, baby!

Jen McCoy, Marketing Manager



## Owner participation is the key to cooperation.

We welcome the return of events at the Viroqua Food Co+op! When people come together in camaraderie to share ideas and to learn about our cooperative it strengthens our whole community. Events are our favorite way to share information about the cooperative principles, the producers we love and the products we sell.

In March, we celebrated Wisconsin cheese with Cheese Madness! Throughout this competition nearly 100 people filled out a bracket and 400+ tasters had a chance to sample delicious Wisconsin cheeses and to cast their vote to determine the 2023 Cheese Champion! In March, we also welcomed 55 new owners with a very successful Spring Owner Drive. And in April, we opened the big garage door to the Community Room to celebrate Earth Day with CSA farmers, a gardening demonstration, a BINGO game, solar panels, electric cars and more! And we are planning more exciting events throughout the

year. Stay tuned to the events page on our website, sign up for our email or follow us on social media so you don't miss a thing!

Cooperatives like ours thrive when owners take part in the business. In fact, owner participation is the key to cooperation and there are so many important ways to participate at VFC. Thank you to all who made an equity investment to become an owner of VFC and to those who run for and serve on the Board of Directors. Thank you to the owners who cast their vote and round up for their favorite non-profits and to those who vote for our Board of Directors. Thank you to all who provide feedback about service and respond to our surveys. And thank you to every single person that shops at the Co-op. Your participation in all of these things and more makes our Co-op a vibrant and thriving center of our community and that is something to celebrate!



Rebekah, Staff Bracket Winner

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Bergquist, *President*  
Elizabeth Tigan, *Vice President*  
Lizzy Haucke, *Treasurer*  
Olive Reynolds, *Secretary*  
Andrew Anderson  
Julie Tomaro  
Bjorn Bergman

## GENERAL MANAGER

Jan Rasikas

The Board meets at 6:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Meetings are currently hosted in person and online. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at a meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: [www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors](http://www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors)

The Heart Beet is intended as a vehicle for communication among VFC Owners and shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice.

The Heart Beet is printed and available in-store monthly. A digital copy is available online at:

[viroquafood.coop/newsletters](http://viroquafood.coop/newsletters)

## Good to Grow

Meet Katie-Mae, our Plants and Seeds buyer. She's got the dirt on all things Garden Center this year!

### **The VFC has a new greenhouse! What makes you the most excited about it?**

It's new and shiny! Our plants inside the greenhouse will be much happier. This new build has sophisticated temperature-controlled vents and windows, which are ideal for keeping humidity and heat levels at the perfect balance.

### **Can we expect local producers to be featured in the greenhouse?**

Absolutely! Check out our Local Plant Start lists for our producers, and be sure to double check plant labels. The only non-local varieties are prairie plants, but they are regional. We only supply plants that thrive in our climate, so you will purchase with confidence that they will thrive in your gardens.

### **What's inside the greenhouse?**

Mostly veggies plant starts are inside the greenhouse. Some flowers, hanging baskets (just in time for Mother's Day!), and prairie plants are outside the greenhouse on the patio.

### **If someone is just getting into gardening, what would you suggest to them?**

Before you break ground, call the Diggers Hotline ((800) 242-8511) to make sure it is safe to dig in your area. Plant your gardens away from black walnut and pine trees, as they make the soil acidic. For beginners, it is

best to keep flowers and veggies separate in the first year or two so you can figure out how you like to tend to each garden based on their specific needs.

### **When should customers expect to put plant starts in the ground?**

I always suggest that middle to end of May is the safest. May 16th-20th is a great time to start breaking ground. That's when to plant long growers in the ground (like brassicas) but plants like delicate herbs should go in the following week.

### **What is your favorite thing to grow in your garden at home?**

Thunbergia (or Black-Eyed Susan Vine) vines really well and flowers beautifully every few weeks throughout the summer! They are great for baskets and climbing on trellises and are rated one of the best climbers that attract pollinating bees. These sun loving plants, are easy to grow, and will let you know if they need extra care.

### **Is there anything else you'd like customers to know about our Garden Center?**

We carry a lot of oddities here! Heirloom varieties that you can't find at your traditional garden center are found at the VFC. We love weird and are your one stop shop for unusual plants. And, if you can't find a specific item here, I can tell you where you can find it locally.



Pictured: Black-Eyed Susan Vine (*thunbergia*)

A background image of several pink daisy flowers with bright yellow centers, partially obscured by a green graphic overlay.

# Annual Garden

## PLANT SALE

Shop our garden center for local, organic vegetable starts, herbs, native plants, flowering baskets and more. From gardens to containers – we'll get you started!

### Who's in Your Garden? Meet Your Pollinators



Butterflies & Moths



Native Bees & Honey Bees, Flies,  
Beetles, and Wasps



Hummingbirds

# Create a Pollinator Friendly Landscape

About 75% of the world's flowering plants rely on insects and animals for pollination, including plants that supply us with healthy and nutritious food. With pollinator populations on the decline, providing habitat and food for pollinators is more important than ever. Here's how:

## Choose Native Plants

Native plants attract native pollinators – when you have a choice, choose native varieties. The food and habitat they provide is better suited to the native pollinators' needs.

## Spring Cleaning

Fallen leaves and plant stalks provide nesting material and winter shelter for pollinators. Wait until spring and until your soil temp reaches 50°F to clean up your garden. This allows time for pollinators to come out of hibernation.

## Plant in Clusters

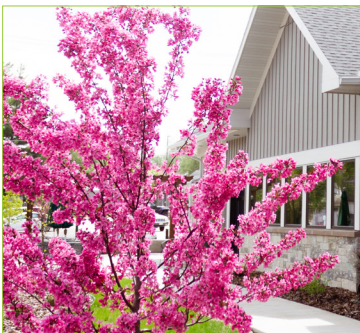
Pollinators typically visit the same species on a single trip. Consolidated plant groupings provide a large area to attract pollinators and make each trip more efficient.

## Show Your Colors

Choose a mix of shrubs and flowers with a variety of colors. And find plants that provide consecutive blooms throughout the growing season to maintain a stable food supply.

## Provide a Host

Flowers provide food but providing plants that also host the life cycle of pollinators is also important. Milkweed for example provides food for the caterpillar and nectar for the butterfly.



*The VFC has over 80 feet of pollinator gardens and other green spaces throughout our walking paths and parking lot. This month, be sure to enjoy the blossoms on the flowering crab apple trees before they are gone!*

## Plants From Producers We Love



local

### Deep Rooted Organics

*Annuals, perennials, native plants, vegetables and herb seedlings.*



### Agrecol Native Nursery

*Native seed and plants grown from collections gathered primarily in South Eastern Wisconsin.*

local

### Bluffview Greenhouse

*Flowers, herbs, perennials, planters and baskets.*

local

### The Flower Barn

*Annuals, perennials, hanging baskets, and planters.*

local

### Thoreau Greenhouse

*Annuals, perennials, native plants, edibles, and medicinals.*



local

### River Root

*Vegetable and herb seedlings.*



local

### Levi Miller

*Sweet potato slips.*



# How Sweet it is!

Fruit inspired desserts that are perfect for Mother's Day or coffee with a friend.

## Strawberry Walnut Scones

Total Time: 45 minutes; 20 minutes active, Servings: 8

- 3 cups whole-wheat pastry flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup butter, chilled
- 1 large egg
- ¾ cup low-fat plain yogurt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 1 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 ¾-inch thick. Sprinkle with sugar and pat to adhere.

2. Use a knife to slice like a pie into 8 wedges. Place each wedge onto the sheet pan with at least 1 inch between them. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until golden. Transfer scones to a wire rack to cool.
3. Serve warm, or cool completely and store, tightly covered, for up to 4 days at room temperature.



## Easy Flourless Chocolate Cake with Ganache

Total Time: 1 hour total; 25 minutes active, Servings: 12

- 10 oz. dark chocolate, divided
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup cocoa
- ½ cup heavy cream

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Cut a 9-inch circle of parchment paper to fit the bottom of a 9-inch cake pan. Press the paper in the bottom of the pan and lightly oil the parchment. Reserve.
2. In a 2-quart pan, place 6 ounces of the chocolate and the butter. Over medium-low heat, melt the two, stirring occasionally until smooth. Remove from heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in the sugar, salt and vanilla, then stir in the eggs, just until mixed. Stir in the cocoa until well-mixed, then transfer the batter to the prepared pan.
3. Smooth the top and bake for 25–30 minutes. The cake will be puffed and a toothpick inserted into the center will come out clean.
4. Cool the cake on a rack for 10 minutes, then run a knife around the cake edges to loosen it. Place the rack on top of the cake pan, and hold it tightly to the pan as you flip the cake onto the rack. Peel off the parchment paper and let cool completely.
5. While the cake cools, place the cream in a small pot and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat and add the remaining chocolate and let stand for a minute to melt the chocolate before stirring with a heat-safe spatula. When smooth, let cool slightly.

6. Transfer the cake to a serving plate. Pour about half of the ganache on the center of the cake and use your spatula to spread it out to the edges and over the sides. Pour the remaining ganache over any uncovered spots and spread it evenly. Let cool at room temperature or in the refrigerator.
7. Cut into 8–12 slices, and serve at room temperature.



## Mixed Berry Crumble

Total Time: 40 minutes; 15 minutes active, Servings: 8

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ¾ cup light brown sugar
- ¾ cup whole wheat pastry flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 4 cups fresh strawberries, stems removed
- 2 cups fresh raspberries
- 1 cup fresh blueberries
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon arrowroot or cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.



# give where you live

**Nominate in October. Vote in November. Donate all year round.**

## Round up in April for Driftless Humane Society

The DHS aims to engage the hearts, hands, and minds of our community by bringing positive change to the lives of people and animals. They are an animal shelter funded mainly through private donations for the purpose of finding quality forever homes for stray, surrendered, and neglected animals.



Recipients based on VFC Owner votes each November. Register round-ups plus the donations in the collection boxes at each register, combined with 1% of VFC's total sales on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month make up our monthly Give Where You Live total donation. Learn more about GWYL on our website: [viroquafood.coop/gwyl](http://viroquafood.coop/gwyl)

## Looking for more ways to save?



**WEEKLY SALES**  
Wednesday - Tuesday



**BI-WEEKLY SALES**  
Wednesday - Tuesday



**EVERYDAY BASICS**  
Look for the purple tags!

At the co-op, fresh, delicious food is just the beginning. Nourish your family. Discover local food. Connect with others and help build a strong community. It all comes together at the co-op.