



April 2024

heart beet

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

Greetings of Spring, and Peas to You All!

Elizabeth Tigan, Board President

I can't imagine being in Viroqua without the co-op, and co-op ownership is more than great deals and delicious food.



I just love spring. It embodies so much of our hopes and excitement for the future, don't you think? Together, we look forward to the joy and anticipation of new life and all the opportunities that spring brings.

You can feel the renewed excitement at the Viroqua Food Co+op, too! If you ask me, there is never a bad time to become a member of a co-op, but right now is a great time to be an owner of the VFC! Our new owner benefit, Owner Extras, adds value we can see at the checkout. Plus, the folks in the deli are rocking out new foods to enjoy. I bought a whole entire quiche and thought I won the lottery! I can't imagine being in Viroqua without the co-op, and co-op ownership is more than great deals and delicious food.

As a board member, I see firsthand how the cooperative model maintains local control through the owner member-elected board and recirculates your food dollars in our local economy.

The co-op commits to working with organic farms that bring us a variety

of bountiful springtime products, such as plant starts to help fill our gardens, vegetables, grains, and flours (also flowers). Plus, many organic farmers are members of local farmer co-ops like Organic Valley, Maple Valley Cooperative, and Westby Co-op Creamery. When we put food dollars toward local and organic food, we pledge support for hardworking farmers who go the extra mile to meet the requirements for organic certification, which include enhancing biodiversity and managing and improving soil fertility for the betterment of our community and our planet.

Earth Day is the perfect time to shine a little light on our area's network of organic farms that work in harmony with the co-op to bring fresh, delicious food and products to our store daily. Pretty soon, there will be peas! And around here, those peas are organic.

We have a Spring Into Ownership drive this month. If you are already an owner, thank you! If you aren't, consider the investment and join us in supporting the Viroqua Food Co+op. Your ownership dollars support the co-op financially and help nurture and grow the business we all share. Plus, owner participation in the co-op enhances our community and ensures year-round access to fresh, delicious food for all.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elizabeth Tigan, *President*
Andrew Anderson, *Vice President*
Olive Reynolds, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Peter Bergquist
Bjorn Bergman
Dustin Skelley
Shana Meshbesh

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:

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

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Join the co-op today!

- All new owners get **\$10 off** their next shopping trip.
- The first 36 new owners in April receive a canvas tote bag filled with groceries.

Sign up in store or online at:
viroquafood.coop/become-an-owner

owners save an **extra 10%** on **coop deals**.

Co-op owners enjoy the following benefits:

- 10% off Co+op Deals
- \$10 off select Driftless Folk School classes
- Eligible for a patronage refund*
- Vote in co-op elections (co-op board and GWYL)
- Run for the Board of Directors
- Offer feedback in-store or online through our website
- Invitation to our Annual Owners Meeting

* Refunds may be declared by the board in profitable years and are proportional to the amount you spend.

Your owner equity payment helps to:



Support Local Producers

We prioritize local farmers and producers and are often the first retail business to take a chance on folks just entering the market. We are proud to work with **200 local farmers** and producers. Local products make up over 30% of our annual sales.



Build Community

From donating to local nonprofits to creating an inviting space where everyone is welcome, our co-op is so much more than a grocery store.



Protect the Environment

From our commitment to organically produced products to the array of solar panels on our roof, we seek to operate in ways that positively affect the environment. At the co-op, over 42% of our annual sales are comprised of certified organic products.



Grow Our Local Economy

As a co-op our profits stay local which means more of your food dollars benefit our community and local economy.

Yes, peas!

Mint Pesto Pea Soup

Serves 6. Total time: 30 minutes

Soup

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup yellow onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
4 cups vegetable broth
6 cups fresh or frozen peas
2 green onions, diced
2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced
¼ cup sour cream

Pesto

½ cup fresh parsley leaves
¼ cup fresh mint leaves
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ cup pine nuts
1 lemon, zest and juice
2 ounces Parmesan cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and black pepper to taste

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil with the butter in a large stock pot over medium-high heat. Add the onions and saute 5 to 10 minutes until onions are soft and translucent. Add half the minced garlic, and cook another minute, then add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Add the peas, return to a boil, and simmer for 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat, then stir in the green onions, mint, sour cream, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Be careful — vent the blender to allow steam to escape or use an immersion blender. Taste for salt and pepper.
2. To make the pesto, put the parsley, mint, garlic, pine nuts and lemon zest and juice in a food processor and blend until smooth. Add the Parmesan cheese and blend. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil until blended well. Top each bowl of soup with a large spoonful of pesto, and serve warm or chilled.





Snow Peas

Snow peas are perhaps most popular as an ingredient in stir-fried dishes. The tender, flat pods are harvested while still young, before the peas inside fully develop. Snow peas may be eaten raw or cooked — slice them into salads or try a quick saute in olive oil with minced garlic, salt, pepper and a squeeze of fresh lemon.



Snap Peas

Gardeners know it's hard to resist eating freshly picked snap peas! Crisp and sweet, snap peas (or sugar snap peas) are a cross between snow peas and shell peas. Their edible, rounded pods are crunchy and the peas are larger than those found inside snow peas. Enjoy them dipped in hummus or tzatziki, a yogurt sauce flavored with cucumbers and mint.



Shell Peas

The frozen and canned peas found in grocery stores are shell peas, also known as garden peas, English peas or sweet peas. Whereas snow peas and snap peas can be eaten pods and all, this variety has a tougher outer shell — open it to reveal and remove the sweet peas inside, then discard the pod.





Chicken and Pea Salad

Serves 4. Total time: 40 minutes; 15 minutes active

- ½ pound snap peas
- 3 cups cooked chicken, roughly chopped
- ½ cup frozen peas, thawed
- 2 scallions, chopped
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- ½ cup Greek yogurt, nonfat
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- Salt to taste

1. Trim the snap peas, chop into ½-inch pieces and place in a bowl with the chicken. Add the thawed peas, scallions and parsley.
2. In a cup, stir the yogurt, olive oil, lemon zest and tarragon. Pour over the chicken mixture and stir to mix.



Honey Teriyaki Chicken Stir-Fry

Serves 2. Total time: 20 minutes

- 1 large boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 large carrots, halved and sliced on a diagonal
- 2 cups snow peas, fresh or frozen, stems removed
- ⅓ cup teriyaki sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- Red pepper flakes, optional

1. Slice the chicken breast across the grain in thin slices, then cut them into ¾ inch strips. Set aside.
2. Prep the vegetables and reserve. In a cup, mix the teriyaki sauce and honey.
3. Place a large wok or skillet over high heat for a minute, until the pan is very hot. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan, then add the chicken. If using red pepper flakes, add a generous pinch now. Stir frequently for about 3 minutes, until the chicken is no longer pink and has some browned spots.
4. Add the carrots and snow peas and keep stirring for about 1 minute. When the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are crisp-tender, stir the teriyaki sauce mixture again and pour it over the chicken and vegetables. Stir to coat and thicken the sauce for 1-2 minutes, and serve hot.

Snow peas and carrots add color and crunch to this simple stir-fry. Serve over rice or stir in cooked udon noodles, coating them with the teriyaki sauce.



Carrot-Pea Fritters

Serves 3. Total time: 30 minutes

Raita

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey or agave
- ¼ cup fresh mint, chopped
- 2 large scallions, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Fritters

- 3 cups finely shredded carrots
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 cup chickpea flour
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1. For the raita, place the yogurt in a medium bowl and stir in the honey or agave, mint, scallions, salt and pepper. Refrigerate.
2. Heat the oven to 200°F and line a large, heat-safe plate with a double layer of paper towels. In a large bowl, combine the carrots, peas, onion

and ginger and toss to mix. In a small bowl, combine the chickpea flour, turmeric, cumin, cayenne and salt. Stir to mix, then stir into the carrot mixture, mixing until a thick dough forms. Use a quarter-cup measuring cup to scoop the carrot mixture and flatten each portion to a half-inch thick patty.

3. Place a large skillet over medium-high heat for about a minute, then drizzle in the oil, tilting the pan to cover the bottom. Place several portions of the carrot-pea mixture in the pan, leaving an inch of space between them. As they start to sizzle, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook for about 2 minutes, and use a thin metal spatula to carefully turn the fritters. Cook for 2 minutes on the second side, then turn and cook on the first side again for 2 minutes more, until the fritters are quite brown and crisp on the outside. Place on the prepared plate in the oven to keep them warm as you finish the remaining fritters. Serve warm with raita.

Called pakora in India, these fritters are dotted with peas and seasoned with warm spices. Pair them with dal (a traditional lentil soup or stew) and naan.

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



Round up this month for Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Sleep in Heavenly Peace WI-Vernon County, a non-profit organization, provides free beds to kids ages 3 to 17 who do not have a bed of their own, many who are sleeping on the floor. Each bed includes the frame, mattress, mattress cover, sheets, pillow, pillow case, a blanket and a quilt.

Apply at the link below:

shpbeds.org



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 2nd Wednesday of the month make up our monthly Give Where You Live total donation. Learn more about GWYL on our website.

celebrate earth day

Saturday, April 20th • 9am - Noon

Vernon County Energy District Electric Car Show & Presentation

Viroqua Food Co+op Parking Lot - 9am to 11am
Explore electric vehicles, learn about electric car technology, charging stations and more.

Ethos Green Power Cooperative

Learn how solar power works and explore options for your home or business.

Wonderstate Coffee

Sample coffee and learn how Wonderstate prioritizes sustainability.

Earth Day Scavenger Hunt

The co-op is earth-friendly every day- participate in our scavenger hunt to learn how! Fill up your card for a chance to win a prize!

Earth Day BINGO

We had so much fun last year, we're doing it again! Pick up a BINGO card at the co-op to play! Turn it in at the customer service desk by April 1st for a chance to win a prize!