

# NATURAL BRIDGES FARM NEWS

A weekly, seasonal publication of life at the Homeless Garden Project's Farm

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## FARM MUSINGS

The Farm Bill is making its way through Congress. This bill, passed every five years, expires in 2012.

The Farm Bill stands a chance to **promote many of the principles that HGP works to promote everyday**—healthy food, locally available to all; sustainable farming methods that protect our soil, water and air and conserve energy; education to encourage healthy eating habits that promote health and well-being. Sometimes called the “Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012”, I am looking forward to hearing about how jobs figure in.

It's easy to get swallowed up in the details and facts about this legislation, so starting with a little background is helpful. This past June, at the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the US Conference of Mayors, a resolution was adopted to urge the passage of a farm bill that supports healthy local and regional food systems.

Here are a few excerpts from that resolution:

- There are major concerns about food and farming issues that affect the health of residents in urban America because of hunger and food insecurity in low income populations, lack of access to healthy food in low income areas, **chronic diseases related to poor diet** such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases;
- Current farm bill proposes significant cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)(formerly called Food Stamps) over the next 10 years – cuts which would eliminate or reduce benefits to every SNAP household and jeopardize the national economic recovery by removing billions of dollars from the economy;
- The areas of our cities which have the highest rates of enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs also have the least access to healthy food and the highest rates of obesity and diet-related diseases, which ultimately lead to significant health related costs at the federal and local levels;
- Approximately 90% of our nation's farms are owned by smaller scale farmers, and support of smaller scale farmers in a **local food system provides economic benefits** to each region.

This resolution contains many positive suggestions for change, from strengthening incentives and infrastructure to encourage more local vegetable production and distribution (now called “Specialty Crops” in the Farm Bill), to investment in new programs such as farm-to-cafeteria programs that bring the freshest, locally grown food into school lunch programs and other institutions. To see the complete resolution, go here:

[http://usmayors.org/resolutions/80th\\_Conference/chhs03.asp](http://usmayors.org/resolutions/80th_Conference/chhs03.asp)

Additional resources on the Farm Bill:

<http://hfhpcalition.org/> (Healthy Farms Healthy People Coalition)

<http://grist.org/article/three-ways-to-protect-food-stamps-from-a-cruel-congress/>

<http://californiawatch.org/dailyreport/study-nearly-4-million-californians-cannot-afford-enough-food-17028>

--Darrie Ganzhorn, Executive Director \* I'd love to hear your thoughts.\*

## IN YOUR SHARE THIS WEEK:



- Strawberry Jam
- Onion
- Kale
- Radish
- Summer Squash
- Arugula
- Carrot
- Chard
- Organic flower bouquet

SUSTAIN Farm Dinner, Saturday July 28, 4-7 at Natural Bridges Farm.

More info and tickets:

<http://shop.homelessgardenproject.org/tickets.html>

## Arugula!

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eruca\\_sativa#Cultivation\\_and\\_uses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eruca_sativa#Cultivation_and_uses)

Arugula, also known as rocket, roquette, rucola, or rugula, is a leafy vegetable which may be eaten fresh or cooked.

Before the 1990's arugula was usually collected in the wild and was not cultivated on a large scale yet.

Arugula can be used as salad green, pizza topping, or lightly grill arugula with olive oil and salt to use as a topping for poached eggs on a cheese toast.



### HOMELESS GARDEN PROJECT

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## FROM OUR FARM TO YOUR KITCHEN

### Roasted Tomato, Arugula, and Mozzarella Salad

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/patrick-and-gina-neely/roasted-tomato-arugula-and-mozzarella-salad-recipe/index.html>

#### Ingredients:

- 4 medium sized tomatoes, cut in 1/2 and seeded
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 5 oz arugula
- 1 8 oz package baby mozzarella balls, drained
- ¼ cup basil leaves
- Balsamic vinegar

#### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Add the tomatoes to a shallow casserole dish in a single layer.
3. Toss the tomatoes with the oil, and salt and pepper, to taste. Make sure the tomatoes are cut side up after tossing.
4. Roast until the tomatoes are extremely tender, about 35 to 40 minutes. Remove them from the oven and keep warm.
5. In a large salad bowl, toss the arugula, mozzarella balls, basil and the warm tomatoes along with any juices from the dish. Drizzle with some good balsamic and season with salt and pepper, to taste.

### Spaghetti with Arugula and Garlic Bread Crumbs

#### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 clove garlic, split in half lengthwise
- Olive oil
- Salt
- 1 pound spaghetti
- 1/2 cup finely chopped arugula
- Grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

#### Directions:

1. Combine the bread crumbs in a small saucepan with the garlic and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Stir to coat well; there should be only a light trace of oil in the bottom of the pan. Season with a pinch of salt and place over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the crumbs have darkened and toasted, about 5 minutes. Transfer them to a small bowl and set them aside to cool slightly. When cool, discard garlic.
2. Cook the spaghetti in a large pot of liberally salted, rapidly boiling water. When it is tender but still slightly chewy, drain it and combine it in a mixing bowl with 2 tablespoons olive oil and the chopped arugula. Add toasted bread crumbs and toss to coat well.
3. Divide among 4 to 6 shallow pasta bowls. Sprinkle with the Parmigiano-Reggiano to taste. Serve immediately.