

Column #4-2005:  
Dear IOWA:

***The "Early-Early" Garden...IS UP!!!***

Those early spinach and lettuce seeds that I planted while the ground was still frozen have germinated nicely and it is really a treat so early in April to see green rows in the garden.

The rest of the garden is tilled with lots of greens planted (more spinach, chard, parsley, and other mixed greens) and the onions are in as well as some potatoes. Still need to plant the peas. Soon the dill and the cilantro will be up. Don't forget to harvest early lamb's quarter for spring salads. It is extremely nutritious.

***Early Spring on the Farm...My Chickens....***

The pullets are laying up a storm and hiding eggs. One hen is in hiding and the hunt is on to find her before the raccoons do. I saw her one morning while doing chores, but she disappeared before I could follow her.

The broiler chicks are still living in my husband's shop but hopefully will be moved to the brooder house in a few days as they are really growing fast now. The first 3 weeks are critical for temperature, so I have been not pushing moving them to the bigger brooder that will be cooler. There is such a difference in raising these chicks compared to the ones hatched out by my hens!

***Life on the Farm...the Cows...***

Calving time is here in full force. No twins yet. One bottle baby, Honey, is being adopted by a little girl, Elizabeth, for her 4-H bottle project. Elizabeth will give Honey her bottle 3x a day for probably 5 months and wash her off afterward, just like a real cow mama would do. Honey will follow Elizabeth around and will eventually be lead with a halter. Raising a calf baby like this will add many blessings to Elizabeth, including helping her develop into a responsible adult. She will also understand very well the needs of our four-legged friends!

***Chicken Salad with Rosemary***

3 cups chopped roasted, skinless, boneless chicken breasts (about 3/4-1 lb.)  
1/3 cup chopped green onions  
1/4 cup chopped smoked almonds  
1/4 cup plain fat-free yogurt  
1/4 cup light mayonnaise  
1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary (I used a bit more)  
1 tsp. Dijon mustard

1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
10 slices whole-grain bread  
Red or green leaf lettuce

Combine first 9 ingredients, stirring well. Spread about 2/3 cup of chicken mixture over each of 5 bread slices and top with a lettuce piece.

*Cooking Light*, April 2005, p. 170.

### ***Chocolate Tofu Pudding***

6 oz. semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped  
1 tbs. Vegetable oil  
12 oz. soft tofu, well drained  
1/4 cup pure maple syrup  
1/4 cup vanilla or plain soymilk  
1 tsp. lemon juice  
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 tbs. Tahini  
1/2 pint fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced.

Heat chocolate and oil in top of double boiler set over barely simmering water. Whisk until smooth. Remove pan from water, let cool 20-30 minutes. Cut tofu into thick slabs and place on a thick layer of paper towels. Press firmly to squeeze out as much water as possible, changing paper towels as needed. Next, put maple syrup, soymilk, lemon juice, vanilla extract and Tahini into food processor. Crumble tofu into mixture and purée until smooth, scraping down sides from time to time. Add melted chocolate and process until well blended. Place pudding into custard cups or small bowls and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate 2-3 hours until softly set. Top with berries. *Vegetarian Times*, May 2005, p. 39.

### ***From the Daily Om March 21, 2005...Life Begins Anew...***

First Days Of Spring: Tender, green shoots break through the earth and tiny buds suddenly appear on naked branches. Mountain snows melt to feed streams and creeks with their life force. Lambs, piglets, calves, bunnies, chicks, ducklings and so many more babes are born at this time of year. And for one day there is a perfect balance of daylight and darkness. It is during the Vernal Equinox, the first day of Spring when life begins anew.

The air itself seems new this time of year. Washed by spring rains, the palate is cleaned to be filled with the fragrance of new blossoms, fresh water, and pungent soil. Even the sun leaves its scent on clothes hung outside, dried by warm, brisk winds. Like ponies that shed their winter coats, we too begin to peel off the layers that kept us insulated through the winter months. It is now time to bring dreams out of hibernation. We have winter to thank for the insights gained during long, dark nights of introspection. Seeds planted then, give life to thoughts, ideas, wishes, desires, and new goals.

Nature adorns herself in unabashed glory at this time of year. She pulls out every color in her wardrobe from the brightest yellow to the softest pink, throwing in orange, blue, lavender and every shade of green she owns. Spring offers us the opportunity to shed our inhibitions, to be more bold and open to what life has to offer. Put on a bright, colorful smile

and charm the world like the newborns, we are young again, no matter our age. Our heart wants to sing, our soul to dance, and our mind to run wild.

The world awakens in Spring and awakens our spirit of renewal, because Spring is the promise that life not only goes on, but that it begins over and over. Seeds become plants and flowers, animals give birth to their young, even the barren desert blossoms with wild flowers. Spring is a time to reinvent ourselves. We can give birth to a new life for ourselves and start fresh. All a tiny seed needs to sprout is soil, sun, and rain. All we need is a willing heart. During these first days of Spring, know that you are in perfect balance and give yourself the nutrients to not only grow, but to blossom in all your glory.

### ***Health News...***

From *Vegetarian Times*, May 2005, p. 13, a report that if we will simply get up off the couch for 2 hours more a day, we will use up 350 calories, which is the equivalent of 40 pounds per year! Imagine the power of that information...don't need money for gym memberships as an excuse for not shedding pounds...simply need to get up and move around!

Let's compare enriched white pasta and whole wheat pasta: You will save on calories with whole wheat, get another gram of protein, way more magnesium and fiber. Only folate is not increased as it is actually added to the "enriched white" pasta. Because the whole wheat is more absorbent, you may need to prepare some additional sauce. *Cooking Light*, April 2005, p. 24.

Are you a late night snacker? If so, stress may be partially contributing to this problem. How to deal with this problem? Try limiting TV viewing after dinner if you find yourself influenced by food commercials. When the craving arises, talk to someone right away to distract the craving. You may wish to establish a "food free" room in your house. Go there when the craving hits. *Cooking Light*, April 2005, p. 39.

### ***Creatives....***

I have now really learned how to make Mitties for the grandkids and my 2 year old granddaughter loves her hot pink ones! Knitting, as with other hand crafts, is about more than "just knitting." It is about mindfulness and mindfulness is what provides us with those healing moments when our bodies become centered and still inside. This is so helpful for stress reduction. If you haven't considered a hand skill because you think you can't possibly do this, maybe taking some classes in various crafts will convince you that you can. I finally took a weaving class this winter that I have wanted to do for years and years now. I loved weaving! I still would like to find someone to show me how to tat before that fine old hand art is lost.

### ***Principles of Mind-Body Integration: Therapeutic Techniques for Wholeness***

This is my standard statement about Qi Gong. As I have written about before, Qi Gong is considered to be about 3000 years old and originated in China. Qi Gong is beneficial for relaxation, flexibility and actually to promote strength without stress. Researchers find that we can help lower blood pressure, help with asthma attacks, promote healing and enhance our immunity through regular practice of Qi Gong. I am intrigued and enthused about the use of Qi Gong for persons with cancer.

My very favorite Qi Gong movement consists of folding in like a plant closing up and opening up like a plant blooming, going all the way up on the tip toes with the fingers outstretched. Do this with the breath and it becomes a harmonizing movement, both oxygenating the blood stream while detoxifying our bodies. Try this in the morning. It will really help move lymph in your system, getting you off to a really good start for your day.

***The Vistas of our Lives...& Earth Day in Newton, Iowa...Local Food...***

My Social Issues students are organizing an Earth Day celebration in Newton, Iowa, for April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We are encouraging families to come and bring their bikes and trikes to be decorated for a little parade. We will have music, craft demonstrations, and films on the prairie, about Pale Male-the Red Tail Hawk in NYC, about fueling a car on veggie oil, and the like. I am going to demonstrate tea making from locally grown products, including alfalfa, clover, mints and rosehips. I will also be knitting some Mitties. If you are in the area, please do come...bring your own handwork!

"Local Food" is becoming the "new organic" according to many foodies and green activists. The problem with sustainably grown food that has to be transported for hundreds or a thousand miles away is that by the time it reaches the grocery store, it has lost many of its nutrients, and is not sustainable. Locally grown food may be fresher and taste better. For sure, eating as locally as possible gives you a chance to actually meet the farmer producers and understand better the connection between our food, its production, and our Mother Earth.

'Til next time when we'll explore more on body-mind-spirit issues affecting our health in "The WellFem-in-Law™" column. ***Namasté***

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