

MVSKOKE FOOD

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative



MFSI Culinary Herb Class Huge Hit

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Communications & Marketing Coordinator

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative hosted their 2nd Herb Class, Tues., March 27, 2012. The class began at 6 p.m. and was held at MFSI Offices, located at 100 E. 7th St., Okmulgee, OK.

Those in attendance received folders which contained gardening information. Light refreshments, such as wild onion dip, were served, as guests mingled. MFSI Youth Coordinator Stephanie Berryhill introduced keynote speaker, Richard Belcher, Checotah/Eufaula Indian Community Garden Manager. He discussed growing, drying and freezing dill, cilantro, basil, sage, tarragon, thyme & chives and distributed information on herb seeds.

Some tips given were: plant herbs in direct sunlight in a well-drained soil. Container herb gardening is good and can be easier to harvest.

After the presentation, participants planted a variety of herbs which they were able to take home to plant in their home gardens. MFSI plans to have additional garden training classes, with the next topic addressing composting. For more information, please call MFSI at (918) 756-5915.



MFSI Herb Class attendees participate in planting herb seeds to take home.

Tafvmpuce 'wild onion' time in the MCN

By Stephanie Berryhill, Cultural Preservation & Policy Specialist
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Wild onions dinners have been the focus of social calendars in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) for the last few weeks and, as the long waiting lines will attest, there is no shortage of people who like to eat *tafvmpuce* 'wild onion[s]'.
Wild onion dinners, held as a part of Mvskoke church fundraising efforts, give support to the continuance of tribal foodways by making it accessible to those who may not get the opportunity to eat *tafvmpuce* otherwise. It also presents what is probably the only opportunity for many Mvskoke children to taste wild onions for the first time.

In a relatively short amount of time, it has risen to an important part of annual spring social activity in the MCN. Good food motivates us to turn up at places where we might not

regularly go, but such events are also an opportunity to catch up with friends and relatives that may not have seen each other since the last wild onion dinner.

This is a good thing in terms of how community effort and participation evolves and keeps traditional practices



Lettie Randall and her son Tim Golden, of Henryetta, provide tafvmpuce for many Mvskoke tribal churches and members throughout the MCN.

Monthly Events

www.mvskokefood.org
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

April 3

MFSI Youth Program at Park Elementary

MFSI Youth Coordinator Stephanie Berryhill will provide Mvskoke cultural education to Park Elementary after-school youth, April 3. For more information, call (918) 756-5915.

April 28

Kerr Center Resilient Farmer Training

Kerr Center, in Poteau, OK will host soil fertility training with former OSU Extension Horticulturist Steve Diver. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch. Register by April 23. To RSVP or for more information, please call (918) 647-9123.

May - October

Okmulgee Farmer's Market

The Okmulgee Farmer's Market Grand Opening will be May 4, on the square in Okmulgee. If you would like to participate as a vendor, please contact Brenda Brewer, Okmulgee Main Street, Inc. E-mail: onlyinokmulgee@yahoo.com or call (918) 758-1015.

MFSI Corner

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative invites area farmers, rancher and gardeners to visit our resource center. Visitors may use the two computers in the resource center to browse the web for beginning farmer and rancher information, gardening tips, OSU Fact sheets or any other information needed to assist in a farm, garden or ranch operation.

MFSI has material on-hand in the office for visitors to peruse, as well as free material to take home. Please feel free to stop by and enjoy a cup of coffee or water. Our staff will be more than happy to visit with you.

For more information on the MFSI Resource Center, please contact MFSI Office Manager H. June Marshall at (918) 756-5915 or jmarshall@mvsokkefood.org. Mvto!

Tips for Keeping Cabbage Worms Away

By H. June Marshall,
Community Coordinator
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Growing cabbages is a work of art especially if the cabbages do not have the uninvited guest, the cabbageworm! I was given some beautiful cabbages that came directly from the Wilson Indian Community Food Project greenhouse. My husband and I planted the cabbages in our backyard, and they did fine for a while until the worms began nibbling them. One of MFSI's beginning farmers recently shared the following tip from an article written by Mindy Moore, Glade Spring, VA that may save your cabbages. Save used coffee grounds and mix with crumbled eggshells. Place mixture around the cabbage. According to Moore, "worms will not crawl over the sharp eggshell fragments, and the smell of the coffee grounds kept the deer and rabbits away." It is worth a try! Let us know if it works for you.

www.MotherEarthNews.com

Tafvmpuce from page 1

and foodways alive. We can also look at the use of such seasonal foods in the context of regular community activity: how many churches, tribal towns, ceremonial grounds, or MCN tribally chartered communities serve such foods following regular Fourth Sundays, monthly meetings, or squirrel soup dinners? Looking closer, we can also consider foodways of the smaller groups that make up community -- are families eating wild onions at family birthday parties or the family dinner table? Concharty United Methodist Church member Rachel Barnett puts wild onions back (freezing) so that she can serve them during her Christmas Eve family gathering. Kvsehtv Tribal Town member Michael Berryhill, gathers winter onions as early as December.

How many Mvskokvlke have the knowledge to identify the different varieties of wild onions and how many young people are learning the historic and sustainable Mvskoke practices by going out to dig onions? Such foodways are at risk of loss when elder tribal members are the only individuals that possess such knowledge and are foraging for edible foods without participation from young people. MFSI has been making opportunities for youth to learn about food gathering traditions on outings to MCN lands and family allotments. If such foodways are to continue we must feed these foods to our babies, show our children how to identify or grow it, and, finally then teach them how to prepare and cook it.

MFSI Today



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Pink Slime

By Rita Williams, Education & Policy Manager, rwilliams@mvsokokefood.org

We have been hearing a lot about Pink Slime Hamburger Meat. Sounds like a name for a rock group or has some band already captured that name? From what we have been hearing and reading through social media, everyone needs to do their own research and be a little concerned about the foods we are eating.

The so-called pink slime is a beef-like product created by grinding together connective tissue and beef scraps normally used in dog food, and treated with ammonia hydroxide to kill salmonella and E. coli. It is "not meat" according to a 35 year veteran USDA microbiologist, and was recently rejected by the likes of McDonald's, Taco Bell and Burger King. According to reports, the USDA plans to buy 7 million pounds of it for school lunches.

McDonald's said this week, that it was no longer using the controversial ground beef additive known as "pink slime" in its hamburger recipe. Taco Bell and Burger

King have also reportedly repudiated the "slime."

The move came after "Food Revolution" and "Naked Chef" Jamie Oliver made public calls for chains to abandon the "slime," which has been manufactured by Beef Products Inc., since 2001. Some are pointing to his advocacy as a central factor behind McDonald's decision.

The *New York Times* raised serious doubts about "pink slime" in a 2009 investigation of the product. It was also criticized in the 2010 documentary "Food Inc."

The USDA, for its part, approved of the ammoniated beef trimmings. In 2007, when it mandated increased testing for most ground beef, it specifically exempted "pink slime," even though the ammoniated beef comes from the parts of the cow most likely to harbor pathogens. The USDA argued that the beef's ammonia treatment would kill any bacteria lingering in the beef.

Do you know where your food comes from?

Corn & Bean Seeds Available

MFSI has 15 varieties of corn and eight varieties of bean that are available. Come in and see Sue White if you are interested in growing corn and/or beans. Sue may be reached at 918.756.5915.

A Taste of Home: Applesauce for Oil



Kitchen Time: 5 minutes
Ingredients: Applesauce 1/2 cup, Oil 1/2 cup

Directions: To make baking healthier, substitute oil with applesauce. For example, if the recipe calls for 1 cup of oil, use 1/2 c. oil and 1/2 c. applesauce.

Beginning Farmer Spotlight: Lawrence Wayne West

H. June Marshall, jmarshall@mvsokokefood.org
Community Coordinator

MFSI would like to introduce you to Larry West from Dewar. West is working with MFSI in the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program with the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau, Okla. There are eight farmers representing MFSI in the program. Besides MFSI, other organizations participating in the program include: Oklahoma Farmers and Ranchers Association, Rural Smallholders Association, and Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. These organizations will form a team to train, mentor and develop resources for beginning farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma. The major goal of this program is to develop sustainable and successful agricultural enterprises. These organizations are made up of real farmers, from different economic backgrounds and cultural heritages. They are working with other farmers who want to make a difference in their lives and their communities by growing and providing local food and food products. Hands-on, as well as classroom training, will take place at the Kerr Ranch.

West is full-blood Muscogee Creek citizen who is fluent in his native tongue. He gives honor to his grandparents, Robert and Melissa Fields, for teaching him the language, and for rearing him. His grandmother,



Melissa, is a full blood Euchee. His parents are Lucas and Leona West (now deceased). West stated he lived and went to school in Weleetka until the eighth grade when he went to Phoenix to live with an aunt and helped care for her property. He remained with her for two years, and came back to Oklahoma where he joined the Navy. He stated he wanted to see the world, but he remained on shore duty in San Diego. When he was discharged from the Navy, he returned to Oklahoma and tried to find work and could not. The Bureau of Indian Affairs sent him to welding training in San Jose where he completed the training and began working.

While living in San Jose, he met his beautiful wife Marilyn (Gilbert). He said he was love struck when he first saw her. Her beautiful smile and long black hair stole his heart. Three weeks later they were married in Watsonville by Rev. Mooney. That was forty-four years ago, April 18, 1968! When asked what

makes her special, he stated she has a beautiful heart and is a beautiful person, easy to get along with, easy to talk to, yet she can be stern.

West returned to Oklahoma when his grandparents Fields got sick. He worked in Catoosa, until 2000 and retired. He wanted a quieter lifestyle so the family moved to Dewar. He has lived in Dewar for a year. They have two children, Cherlyn and Jennifer, and three grandchildren, Jeff, Mitchell, and Lauran.

Now that he is retired, West wants to remain busy, raising fruits and vegetables to sell. He will probably begin container gardening growing tomatoes and pepper. He stated he wants to learn as much as he can from the Kerr program.

Besides his dream of becoming a farmer, he loves to beadwork, paint old classic cars, and carpentry work. His favorite foods are beef tips and hominy, red beans seasoned with (lots of) bacon, and wild onions.

I visited with Larry at the Dewar Indian Community Center where he you can find him most of the time eating lunch and visiting with his community friends/neighbors. He is the person with the friendly and nice smile who loves his community, his family, and MFSI. Blessings to Larry.



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MCN FFPC Update

The MCN Food & Fitness Policy Council
By Rita Williams, MCN FFPC Chairperson

MCN FFPC members are excited to be a part of healthy food changes for our tribal nation.

Lou Fixico, Manager of the Tribal Elderly Nutrition Program and Policy Council member states, " our mission is to our elderly and to assist them by eating healthy foods". "Through tribal food policy change we can improve our menus toward eating fresh healthy vegetables and fruits. Once we see the tribe helping the nation to become food sustainable and the fields and gardens full of fresh foods then we are going back to our old ways."

Connie Fox, MCN WIC Nutrition Coordinator and Policy Council member believes that food policy is a positive step for several reasons. It creates an avenue for Creek Citizens to sell their homegrown fruits and vegetables to the public and tribal departments. Allows for community gardens to be put next to walking tracks and gardens in the back yard of all Creek citizens that desire one. Strong policies can be implemented from tribal stakeholders that address childhood obesity by allowing access to affordable fresh vegetables that families can afford and enjoy. A food policy can guide Creek Nation as a whole to embrace the idea that all citizens deserve good health and it begins with one of the most fundamental things that human beings need every day -FOOD

Johnnie Brasuell, Manager of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Diabetes Programs, states, " as manager of the diabetes program for thirteen years, I recognize that even if we have the most successful diabetes treatment possible in our health system, it will affect the health of the total Muscogee population only a little. What we are eating is affecting our health and contributing to early disease. The Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative is a small group of warriors who have the vision and a path toward getting healthier food available for the Muscogee individuals and families to choose and grow. All of our efforts are important but their success matters more in determining the health of the Muscogee Nation.

Two members of the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative serve as Policy Council members to assist the MCN FFPC in reaching its goals.

For more information or to participate in the MCN FFPC, please contact MCN FFPC Chairperson Rita Williams at rwilliams@mvskokefood.org or (918) 759-1891.

MFSI Office

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Tuesday - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

MFSI Staff are here to help you. Please feel free to stop in and visit.

mvskokefood@gmail.com



Check us out on Facebook!

Our Mission.....

MFSI is dedicated to enable the Mvskoke People and their neighbors to provide for their food and health needs now and in the future through sustainable agriculture, economic development, community involvement and cultural and educational programs.