

MFSI's **Return to Your Roots** Newsletter

January 2009
Volume 4 Issue 1

January—Rufo Cuse (*Winter's Little Brother*)

www.mvskokefood.org

MFSI Upcoming Events and Announcements

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative is currently planning to host "Return to Your Roots Food Sovereignty Symposium" on March 20 & 21, 2009, which will be held at the Mound Auditorium, Muscogee (Creek) Nation. This will be a very educational event to improve the local food system and to motivate the Mvskoke people. The panel consists of expert pre-

senters from different tribes and the most beneficial aspect is that it will be held locally. Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Movie Night with healthy snacks, is beginning February 4th at 6 PM. The movie is "The Future of Food" by Deborah Koons Garcia. "There is a revolution happening in the farm fields and on the dinner tables of

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Community Outreach for Producer's Empowerment Project



MFSI has received a grant award from USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service Agency to carry out a program entitled Community Outreach for Producer's Empowerment Project.

Our 37-foot mobile unit will be driven into communities within Okmulgee County to assist farmers, ranchers, and those interested in pursuing loans, grants, cost shares and incentive programs available through federal, state and regional sources.

The information on the unit will also include contact information for an advisory team designed to answer questions and assist in any area needed in expanding or beginning farming and ranching operations.

Two new staff members of MFSI will be working on this project. Dena Lindley, from Okmulgee, is our Education & Research Coordinator. She is developing a Farmers & Ranchers Resource Manual that will be distributed free of charge. Elizabeth Gore from Glenpool will be visiting and working with the communities as the Community Coordinator.

"We will taking our mobile resource unit, which is a 37 foot RV into the selective communities with a staff person available to answer questions and inform people of the services available and direct them to the right office they need," says Vicky Karhu, MFSI Director.

To come to your area, please call us at: (918) 756-5915.

Composting is a Year-Round Project

By Dena Lindley

Winter is a wonderful time to reflect about the previous year's garden successes and failures. With a little extra "down-time" we can begin to plan and prepare for next year's gardening projects. Yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, twigs, excess vegetation, non-fat containing foods scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves



and livestock manures can be used to start an active, healthy compost pile any time of the year.

There are many benefits to composting. Recycling natural materials reduces the need for chemical

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MFSI Upcoming Events and Announcements

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America, a revolution that is transforming the very nature of the food we eat. The film offers an in-depth investigation into the disturbing truth behind the unlabeled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly filled grocery store shelves for the past decade. It examines the complex web of market and political forces that are changing what we eat as huge multinational corporations seek to control the world's food system. The film also explores alternatives to large-scale industrial agriculture, placing organic and sustainable agriculture as real solutions to the farm crisis today."

This is a 2.5 hour film, so we will show 30 to 45 minutes followed by short round table discussion. Schedule for viewing & discussion of entire film will be agreed on by participants. All shows will be at 208 W. 6th Street, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Call 918-756-5915 for more information.

* Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative has two new employees, Liz Gore from Glenpool, who will be working with the communities as the Community Coordinator. Dena Lindley, from Okmulgee, will be working with the communities as the Education & Research Coordinator.

* MFSI has new office hours: Monday – Friday, 9 AM-5 PM, except on Thursdays, 9 am-7 p m

* MFSI will be hosting a Seed Saving class Feb. 21st at 10:30 a.m. Speaker is Sue Gray.

* MFSI will be hosting a workshop on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 6 PM, to be held at the MFSI office at 208 W. 6th St., Okmulgee. Topics will be garden planning and soil science-sampling and analysis. Speakers include Dena Lindley, MFSI Education Coordinator, and Doug Maxey from the Okmulgee Ag. Extension Service.

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative Mission Statement

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative works 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, cultural and educational programs

MFSI Board of Directors

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Staff

Executive Director - Vicky Karhu
Co-Director-Ben Yahola
Office Manager-Dacey Barnett
Chumona Deere-Projects Manager
Dena Lindley, Education & Research
Elizabeth Gore, Community Coordinator

A majority of the Board, Advisory Committee and staff are Muscogee (Creek) citizens.

MVTO to Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation, USDA/CRESS, Seventh Generation Fund and our friends who have donated time and money to MFSI.

If you have any questions about our upcoming events or programs that we have to offer, please call our offices and we would be glad to talk with you or set up an appointment to visit with you. Office hours 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday except Thursday we are open until 7:00.

Phone: (918) 756-5915 Fax: (918) 756-5918 Email: mvskekefood@gmail.com

A Comment from the Co-Director of MFSI

The Muscogees have survived many crises utilizing their available resources: the land, water, air and faith in the cultural spirituality. With courage and the will to survive, the Muscogee people developed a sophisticated intelligence in a relationship with the Earth. This has become our foundation for our knowledge in planting and growing our foods for survival

This development of our agricultural knowledge and political social structures has, like many tribes, contributed to America's knowledge of the subject and our lives today. Historically, we have not been credited for our part, but recently that recognition is growing in the food security movement. About sixty percent of all food grown in the world today was devel-

oped by us and other North and South American indigenous nations.

Agriculture is a primary factor in the culture and religion of the Muscogee people. Ancient and contemporary traditional cultures have left a body of knowledge that is broad and deep and now there is an increasing awareness of the endangered knowledge of traditional peoples.

Today, we are preparing to meet new challenges of diet related illnesses, rising food cost and the loss of traditional seeds by reinvigorating our Muscogee cultural history in agri-



Ben Yahola, Co-Director of MFSI

culture.

Therefore, I would like to ask that you support and encourage everyone to participate in the upcoming "Return to Your Roots Food Sovereignty Symposium".
MVTO

Winter Squash Recipes

Winter squash is a perfect vegetable to have during the winter months. It is easy to prepare and makes hearty meals for the whole family. They store easily in a cool spot such as a cool pantry or cellar for up to one month. Nutritionally, most squash varieties are bursting with fiber and antioxidants. They have all three types of carotene-family phytochemicals: alpha, beta, and gamma; which studies suggest helps reduce the risk of many types of cancer. Although low in calories, squash is high in both vitamin A (214 % of the recommended daily allowance) and vitamin C (33%) and also vitamins B6 and K, potassium and folate. Most types also have folic acid, as well as, several minerals many of us need more of -- calcium, magnesium, and potassium.

So cook and enjoy while knowing you are providing valuable nutrients to yourself and those you care about.

Winter Squash and Pumpkin Cooking Tips

If you can't cut into the squash, place in a preheated 400°F oven for 12 minutes or microwave on High for 3 minutes.



The heat will loosen the skin enough to let a knife inside—but be careful of steam escaping from the inner core.

Winter squash can be peeled with a vegetable

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Composting is a Year-Round Project

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fertilizers, reduces the amount of material going into landfills, and reduces expenses of hauling and disposing of materials.

Compost is a natural dark brown humus-rich material formed from the decomposition or breakdown of organic materials that, when incorporated into the soil, establishes beneficial bacteria and organisms that assist plants in absorbing nutrients. This excellent soil amendment can help loosen clay soils, help sandy soil retain moisture and nutrients, improve soil

fertility, structure and texture, and aid in erosion control.

Making a healthy compost pile or two is quite simple, placing



The most common method of composting is produced in a composting bin. The bin can be any large container which allows drainage and aeration of the components. It can be made of wood, plastic or metal wire.

alternating organic "green" and "brown" layers (wet & dry) in a container, bin or pile. Alternating green and brown layers of material helps assure the correct carbon and nitrogen amounts. With water and air, bacteria and insects use

the materials as a food and energy source. The bacteria need water to live and grow and this process generates heat from 140* to 160* F. Aeration is needed to evenly distribute nutrients to organisms throughout the material and is achieved by turning the material over periodically. The more turning the more air, and the faster the process works.

Compost should be ready in about 4-6 months. When the temperature decreases, the process is complete and "voila" your compost is ready to be incorporated into your garden soil to feed your plants again this coming growing season. Your

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Cancer and Chemoprevention with Nutrition

By Dr. Michelle McClellan

Today's diet, particularly among the American Indian Community is one of processed food absent of nutritional value. The consumption of processed food occurs because of a lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables and organic anti-biotic free meats and milk. It occurs because keeping up with day to day life makes processed foods more convenient. It also happens because the cost of fresh and organic food is prohibitive to most families.

Research is showing that poor nutrition plays a large part in a number of life threatening illnesses. It is also showing that nutrition can be a strong preventative component in such diseases as diabetes and cancer, two of the

main illnesses effecting the American Indian Community. The term chemotherapy is known to many as the application of drugs to treat cancer. However, a doctor named Michael Sporn has used the term "chemoprevention" to teach the world how to use nutrition and natural occurring entities in the environment to prevent, slow down or reverse the development of cancer.

Foods that are high in components known as polyphenols are being recommended to add to ones diet to prevent and slow down or reverse the growth of cancer. The foods that are currently suggested as chemopreventative agents are: tomatoes, ginger, soy, dark chocolate, calcium, citrus fruits, garlic and onions, and most highly recommended are berries. Because of the high concentrates of vitamins

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Winter Squash Recipes

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peeler or paring knife. There's no need to remove the skin if you're planning to bake it and scoop out the flesh when it's done.

Squash Casserole Side Dish

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup biscuit mix (dry)
- 1 (4 ounce) can chopped green chiles, with juice
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 cups grated Cheddar cheese, divided
- 4 cups coarsely chopped summer squash or zucchini or yellow summer squash

DIRECTIONS

Combine eggs, oil and biscuit mix. Stir in chili peppers, onion, garlic and half the cheese. Stir in squash. Pour into a greased 13-in. x 9-in. x 2-in. baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees F for 40 minutes; sprinkle with reserved cheese and bake 5 minutes more.

Butternut Squash Supreme

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds butternut squash, peeled and cubed
 - 2 eggs, beaten
 - 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
 - 1 medium onion, chopped
 - 3/4 cup milk
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/2 cup crushed butter-flavored crackers
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine

DIRECTIONS

1. Place squash in a saucepan and cover with water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until very tender. Drain well and place in a large bowl; mash. In another bowl, combine the eggs, cheese, onion, milk, salt and pepper; add to the mashed squash and mix well. Transfer to a greased 2-qt. baking dish. Sprinkle with cracker crumbs. Dot with butter. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees F for 40-45 minutes or until a knife comes out clean.

Composting

compost should be dark, crumble easily into small pieces and have no foul odor.

Large branches, fatty foods, grease, meat, dairy products, fish, bones, synthetic products, diseased plant material, seedy weeds and pet or human waste should never be used in your compost mix.

Here are a few examples of easy to make and use compost units:

Garbage Can or Barrel, Commercial Drum, Concrete Block Wall, Wood w/ Wire Sides, Wood Pallets, Posts and Wire, All Wood Slats/Boards, Posts and Snow Fence or Silt Fence.

Creating your own compost is an inexpensive, easy and environmentally responsible way to improve your soil and increase the volume and quality of future harvests. Dena Lindley is the Research & Education Coordinator for MFSI]

Cancer and Chemoprevention

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and minerals, fiber, calcium and selenium and how these concentrates work to clean the human system of the toxins creating cancer (carcinogens), simply by adding berries to one's diet the risk of cancer decreases. Black raspberries are the highest in these concentrates, but blackberries, blueberries, elderberries, concord grapes, raisins, eggplant, plums and prunes are also very good sources. The key to remember is the darker the berry the more preventative it is. The second thing to remember regarding prevention is that the riper the berry, the more nutritional value and the better at chemoprevention the berry is.

Change can be a very difficult thing, because often times people believe that everything has to shift all at once. This type of change is too stressful for most people and turns out to be ineffective. Shifting one's habits especially around food works better one step at a time. Consider adding berries to your diet on a daily basis. It will add not only color to your life, but could possibly add more years to your life!

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative

208 West 6th Street
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Community Calendar of Events

Jan. 20th - Beginning Meat Goat Production. By the OSU Cooperative Extension. Time: 6:30. Located: Okmulgee (Fairgrounds). Free and open to the public. For more info: Doug Maxey at 918-756-1958.

January 29th thru March 19—Oklahoma Market Gardening School. Located at the OSU Extension Center. Speakers include: Mrs. Susan Gray, Dr. Merritt Taylor, Dr. Warren Roberts, Dr. Lynn Brandenberger, Dr. Michael Kizer, Dr. Eric Stafne, and others.

January 29th - “Made in Oklahoma” networking event. By the Oklahoma Dept. of Agritourism. Location: Canebrake Restaurant and Resort in Wagoner, Oklahoma. To confirm your attendance please send an e-mail to abby.cash@oda.state.ok.us.

Feb. 4th – MFSI Movie Night

Feb. 7th—Planting & Growing Traditional Corn. At the MFSI offices. Time: 2:00. Speakers are Kent Sanmann (Chickasaw) and Steven Bonds, Chickasaw Nation’s Ethnobotanist, a Southeastern foods history expert. Info: 918-756-5915.

Feb. 7th - Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is offering a day-long conference about Successful Growing with Plastics to Sell at Farmers’ Markets and Schools. For more info: www.okfarmtoschool.com. There will be a \$15.00 charge per person or \$25.00 per couple. Late registration after Jan. 25 and at the door will be \$25.00 per person or \$45.00 per couple.

Feb. 10th - “Made in Oklahoma” networking event. By the Oklahoma Dept. of Agritourism. Location: Woods & Waters Winery, Anadarko, Ok. Please contact abby.cash@oda.state.ok.us.

Feb. 21st— “Seed Saving”. Speaker: Sue Gray, OSU Ag. Extension Service. Time: 10:30 a.m. Location: MFSI offices 208 W. 6th St., Okmulgee, OK. Info: 918-756-5915.

March 4th – MFSI “Movie Night”

March 5 thru Sept. 24 - Grape Management Course by OSU. Location: At the Cimarron Valley Research Station in Perkins, OK. For Info: Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or e-mail stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.

March 20 & 21st—“Return to Your Roots Food Sovereignty Symposium”. Hosted by MFSI. To be held at the Mound Auditorium, Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Movie Night... and you're invited!

Mark your calendar for our Movie Night and Reading Circle every first Wednesday of the month. The next one is February 4th at 6:00 p.m. at our office located at 208 W. 6th St., Okmulgee, OK. Make new friends and stay informed to what is going on in the food sovereignty world. Please call if you are interested - 918-756-5915.