

Northern SUN

Stories of growing & gathering



Elder Franklin Carriere teaches students about the basics of trapping.



Celebrating Culture and Community in La Ronge

The school yard of Churchill Community High School in La Ronge, SK is abuzz with activity on a sunny Wednesday in early June. Around the field, prospector tents and tipis are set up in a large circle, with people flowing in and out of each one. Today is the second day of the 6th annual Jimmy Roberts Memorial Culture Camp.

The generosity of the many Elders involved is what makes this such a special event. In each tent, Elders welcome visitors, ready to pass on their knowledge to a new generation of youth in the community. The atmosphere in the tents is intimate, almost like visiting someone in their living room. Inside the tents are tools for everything from trapping to birch bark crafts. There is a chance to touch medicines and artifacts or make your own bannock or beaded bracelet. Tents are filled

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Elder Celine Pearson teaches students how to cut up caribou meat.



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with laughter and encouragement as people of all ages try their hands at new skills.

Tying the whole event together is a powerful sense of community. It's in the laughs shared between old friends reconnecting after the winter, it's in the smiles on the students faces as they run around from tent to tent, and most of all it's in the words passed from one generation to another – the gift of knowledge that keeps the community's traditions alive. ●



Northern Lifestyles teacher Christine Ravenis shows some students an unprocessed moose hide.



An elder welcomes students to his tent to learn about woodworking.



Food DOES Matter

Micro Greens for Life

Contributed by Ray Derksen

What we eat does matter. My granddaughter frequently reminds me of this as she calculates the percentage of my body weight that is composed of taco chips and salsa. In an attempt to justify my relationship with taco chips and salsa by arguing the merits of salsa as a vegetable. In the end I do have to acknowledge to her that food matters. Taco chips aside, this past winter I was able to grow a steady supply of microgreens with healthy sounding names such as broccoli, kale, radish, buckwheat, and peas. In addition to being incredibly healthy and fresh, these greens made great additions to sandwiches, wraps, and salads.

In the north fresh produce is expensive and many times not all that fresh. But nutritious and tasty microgreens can be grown at home in a small space for just pennies a serving. To get started all you need is a small table, a fluorescent light or sunny window, a bag of potting soil, and some containers for growing.

What are microgreens?

They're similar to sprouts, but they are one stage further along in their growth. They're new plants that have just developed their first true leaves. This takes one to three weeks depending on what you're growing. Then they are ready to be harvested and eaten. There are many different kinds of seeds that can be grown as microgreens. Some of the easiest



A participant harvests microgreens during a Grow North workshop.

and tastiest greens to grow are fava beans, peas, kale, sunflowers, broccoli, and radish.

How to grow them:

1. **Fill trays with soil.** Gently press down to create flat surface, but don't squish the soil.
2. **Sprinkle seeds over the entire surface.** Seeds should be spaced apart slightly to allow seeds to grow.
3. **Press the seeds into the soil** and cover with a damp unbleached paper towel or a thin layer of soil.
4. **Water with clean drinking water** until soil is evenly moist. You can use a plastic lid or cover the tray with saran wrap to prevent water loss.
5. **Store the tray in a warm location** and check it every day to make sure it is kept damp to the touch. Water as needed.
6. After 2-3 days, leaves will appear. Remove the plastic covering and put under fluorescent lights or in a sunny location.
7. After another 2-3 weeks, when their true leaves begin to form, the micro greens are ready. You can pick by gently pulling on the leaves and snipping with scissors. Use immediately or store in a sealed container with a moistened paper towel or clean cloth.

Tips

- If you can't get any seed starting trays, two litre milk cartons cut in half lengthways make economical trays in which to grow greens. Just make sure to poke holes in the bottom of the cartons so the soil can drain.
- To speed up the process, soak large seeds like peas and beans overnight in a bucket, then rinse and drain them before putting them on the soil. Smaller seeds do not need soaking.
- Buy seeds in bulk. Individual seed packages are too expensive. Instead buy from companies specializing in bulk seeds, like Mum's Sprouting seeds. A 50 pound bag of fava beans is under \$75. This is enough seed to supply a small community with greens for quite a while!

For more information, Mum's website provides detailed instructions on how to grow each kind of seed. Visit <http://sprouting.com/>.



Step 2 - Laying out seed to germinate.



Step 6 - germinated seed ready to be placed under light.



Step 7 - tray of greens that are ready to harvest.

A Snapshot of Grow North

Northern community members from Shamattawa to Black River and a number of places in between gathered in Leaf Rapids this past April to learn about growing food and share their own food knowledge and skills. Here are a few of the highlights:



A participant practices her transplanting skills.



Plants for Leaf Rapids indoor gardening project.



Carol Sanoffsky and Anthony McKay sharing seeds during the seed saving session.



Participants getting ready to eat the bison tacos they prepared.



Perfect Kale Chips

Kale chips were a big hit at the recent Grow North conference in Leaf Rapids. Kale grows well in the short northern growing season, because it can tolerate low temperatures and those first frosts. If you've been wondering what to do with the kale in your garden, give this recipe a try!



Prep: 10 minutes | Total time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 large bunch kale
- 1 to 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp salt

Other seasonings as desired, try garlic powder, chilli powder, paprika or some grated parmesan for different flavours

Directions:

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and preheat oven to 300° F.
2. Remove the stems from the kale and tear it into 2 inch pieces. Rinse and pat dry, removing all water.
3. Spread the kale over the baking sheets in a single layer. Drizzle with olive oil then rub oil in with hands to ensure the kale is coated evenly. Sprinkle with salt and any desired seasonings.
4. Bake for 10 mins. Rotate sheets and bake for an additional 10 to 12 mins or until chips are dry, crispy and evenly baked.

Recipe adapted from Chatelaine.com

Apitaye Massou! Wiisinin! Bon Appetit!

Celebrated Community Elder Annie Spence turns 100!

Contributed by Ithinto Mechisowin Committee

O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation's Ithinto Mechisowin Program advisor Elder Annie Spence celebrated a major milestone this spring - turning 100!

Her birthday was Wednesday, April 20th, and the community came together to celebrate and honour her on April 23rd. Annie Spence is the daughter of Elder Annie Moose, another centenarian from the community, who shared 113 years of wisdom. She is also related to late Elder Vivian Moose, who is known for her spirit of community



Elder Annie Spence

PHOTO CREDIT: ASFIA GULRIUKH

leadership. Annie is a wise, strong and happy spirit motivating many in the community to move forward. Elder Annie likes to knit, garden and camp. She loves eating white fish and drinking mint tea. Annie is an active member of the Ithinto Mechisowin (Food from the Land) Program. She always asks others to eat traditional food so that they can be healthy. She is usually one of the first people from the community out on the land in the spring, and one of the last to return in the fall.

These Elders remind the community of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin of how, before the Churchill River Diversion disaster, celebrating health and long life was a usual thing in the community.

Submit a story

Please send along your northern food stories and photos and share your stories with neighbours in the north.

Send your story ideas to:

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