

Growing Food to Eat All Year Subject of First “Local Eating” Talk

DAMARISCOTTA - Samuel Kaymen had a clear objective when he started gardening over 40 years ago.

“The purpose was to have organic food for a growing family,” said Kaymen, founder of organic yogurt producer Stonyfield Farms Inc., and creator of the



Samuel Kaymen, founder of organic yogurt producer Stonyfield Farms Inc., shows grandchildren (from left to right) Aliston, Alysa and Ian the garlic in his garden

Stonyfield product.

In the late 1960’s, there were few resources for people interested in learning about chemical-free growing, so Kaymen’s first forays were a matter of learning by doing. In a few years, however, he was growing not only the summer favorites – peas, cucumbers and tomatoes, for example – but many foods that could be stored for the winter months.

Winter Sustainability Gardening – growing food to eat long after you have put your garden to bed – is the subject of the first of three talks on Eating Locally sponsored by Lincoln County Healthcare. Kaymen’s talk is scheduled for May 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the LCH Education Center on Chapman Street in Damariscotta.

Because of limited space, people interested in attending are asked to RSVP by calling Elizabeth McIlwain at 563-4833.

Other speakers include conventional farmer and former Maine Commissioner of Agriculture Robert Spear and organic farmer Brendan McQuillen, of Morning Dew Farms in Newcastle.

Lincoln Medical Partners Physician Tim Goltz, MD, said Lincoln County Healthcare is sponsoring the talks to highlight the importance of healthy eating habits.

Most Americans eat far too many highly processed and fatty foods – think hamburgers and french fries or potato chips and hot dogs – a diet closely linked to chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Buying more locally grown food, or growing your own is a great way to improve eating habits, said Goltz.

Locally grown foods tend to be much fresher with a higher content of vitamins and minerals, and they also taste better, said Goltz.

“When you either grow it yourself or you have a relationship with the farmer who grew it, there is going to be more interest in trying other foods, the taste is going to be better and you are

going to eat more of the healthier foods,” said Goltz.

People can minimize the expense by buying in bulk when fruits and vegetables are in season, by joining a community supported agriculture program, or by growing it themselves.

And while buying healthier, fresher foods may cost more, Goltz said the investment pays off by lessening the risk of debilitating diseases like heart disease and diabetes.

Kaymen believes best reasons to grow your vegetables are not financial.

In a fenced-in area of roughly 1,000 square feet, Kaymen can grow enough food for himself and his wife, not to mention friends and neighbors. All of it is grown organically on well-nurtured soil.

The strawberries, he knows, will be not just delicious but chemical-free and full of important minerals drawn from the rich soil.

“It feels good to take care of yourself and be self-sustaining, to know where the food is coming from and how it is grown,” said Kaymen.