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edible SAN DIEGO

Celebrating San Diego's local foods, season by season • No. 16 • Spring 2012



The garden issue

The Chef as Farmer

Therapy garden

City Farmers Nursery

Aji Amarillo peppers

Get dirty.

My peach tree is blossoming so rambunctiously and the bees are so happily buzzing about that I can barely stand to tend to the business at hand. I'm eager to rip out my tired winter garden and plant for summer. And now I could easily expand my ambitions and add in a hive for those bees, some chickens (they would help keep the bugs in check after all) and a goat or two, thanks to the valiant efforts of a few tireless individuals, some dedicated organizations and a lot of concerned citizens.



Riley Davenport & John Weaver

As has been widely reported by now, the City of San Diego has joined other forward-thinking cities (San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle and Chicago amongst others) in creating more progressive urban agriculture ordinances. It is so heartening to see these changes happening across the country and while San Diego may not lead the pack, at least we are close to the forefront of this positive, common sense movement. Growing food to feed ourselves is a good thing—a healthy, delicious pastime for some but a necessary part of a healthy diet for others.

Now community gardens will be allowed on private property without deal-breaker permits and small growers on community farms can sell their produce, opening up small business opportunities and making fresh produce more widely available.

The new rules allow residents living in single-family homes to keep up to five chickens. They can keep up to 15 birds if the coop is at least 15 feet from the property line and up to 50 birds if the coop is a minimum of 50 feet from residential structures. Coops must provide at least six square feet of space per bird, be sturdy enough to keep out predators, be well ventilated and kept clean. Sorry, roosters may not apply.

Two miniature goats are now welcome in the yards of single-family homes and their proud owners may legally consume their milk and make goat milk products like cheese and yogurt for their own use. You need to give them a nice shed that is predator-proof, thoroughly ventilated, watertight, easily accessed and cleaned. There are several other requirements you need to conform to if you're serious about this.

And finally, those happy bees. You can keep up to two hives in single-family areas as long as they are at least 15 feet from neighbors' homes and 20 feet from a street, alley or sidewalk.

We've come a long way towards making our yards and gardens more productive and in reclaiming rights that our forefathers took for granted. Now all we have to do is get out there and get our hands dirty.

For more information, check out the 1 in 10 Coalition's summary of the new rules: foodpolicy.org/downloads/UA_Summary_Table_Council_versions_2012Jan31.pdf

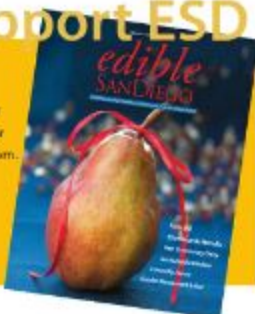
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Brooklyn Girl Eatery—Sustainable Eats in Mission Hills

This February, Brooklyn Girl Eatery became the newest addition to the corner of Goldfinch and Ft. Stockton in Mission Hills. Michael and Victoria McGeath, former owners of Trattoria Acqua in La Jolla, opened this neighborhood-centric eatery built around an ideology of sustainability and accessible, high-quality food.

Brooklyn is where Victoria hails from but there's more to the name than that, says her husband, Michael: "Brooklyn is also an epicenter for cuisine right now. Though we're fond of organic and sustainable [in San Diego], Brooklyn is probably one of the places best doing that right now."

Michael, who has been involved in eco-friendly, sustainable practices for 40 years, has enlisted chef Tyler Thrasher, formerly of *Jsix* and *Oceanaire*, to continue this tradition at Brooklyn Girl. Specifically, the pair intend to obtain 90% of their product from San Diego County, (including beer, wine and free-range chicken), make use of an in-house herb garden and recycle green waste. They also plan on becoming LEED certified.



Chef Tyler Thrasher

Open from 7:30am to midnight seven days a week, there is no doubt Brooklyn Girl will become the new place for local foodies.

—Kristen Fogle



Market manager Brian Beavers

Farmers' Markets Strive to Make Food Accessible to All

Not many farmers' markets are accessible to low-income families. "Farmers' Markets sometimes have a false stereotype that they're more expensive," said Brian Beavers, manager of the Point Loma, Mission Hills, University Towne Center (UTC), Imperial Beach and Golden Hill farmers' markets. Because of this perception, he believes it is tough to attract low-income families to local markets.

Yet Beavers has managed to overcome this barrier by arranging for the markets to accept government-subsidized Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards—or food stamps.

"The EBT system is empowering people to eat better," said Beavers, who previously served as the manager of the City Heights farmers' market when it implemented the first farmers' market EBT program in San Diego.

Beavers supports EBT for one main reason: he believes that fresh and healthy food should be accessible to everyone, no matter where they fall in the income bracket. After implementing the system in City Heights, he put the program into place in all of his markets.

"Once I realized the value and importance [of EBT] and what it did for the community, my markets were the next to implement the system," he said.

He also sees the EBT program as a business booster for markets and farm vendors. Beavers sees every EBT transaction as a sale he and the local farms would not have otherwise made. "These low-income families are not coming with cash. They're coming because they know we have EBT. They want fresh and local produce."

Beavers hopes all farmers' markets will eventually accept EBT. Currently, in addition to the markets mentioned above, the San Marcos, Santee, Linda Vista and Southeast San Diego farmers' markets and the People's Produce Project are EBT capable.

—Leah R. Singer