

'Buying locally grown food'

There are many social benefits to locally sustaining food. Farmers markets allow you to see a person who has grown your food face to face; this allows you to ask them questions about what chemicals they have used on their fruit and vegetables etc. By doing this you are able to find out useful information about what you are putting into your body and what effects it has on you – 'the food is clean, cheaper, better for you, has more flavour and you are giving back to the community'. Gathering in season food to preserve can be done with family and friends, members of the community or a new group of people. Gathering allows you to make conversation and get to know people better; it is a social benefit and brings the community closer together. Swapping the fruit and vegetables you have gathered or swapping things you have preserved is also a great social benefit for the same reasons as gathering, it brings friends and family together and you can meet new people.

1

You can also gather some fruit like apples from the road side and it is free. This means your bottled or frozen apples are less expensive like when you swap produce. When buying fresh in season fruit and vegetables off a reliable source such as your neighbour or someone in the community you are not only benefitting yourself but also them. They are supplying you with fresh fruit and vegetables and you are keeping them in business and keeping the money in the community which benefits everyone. For example, a local organic farmer came and talked to us. He and his wife are well known around the community because of the wonderful fresh food they supply to people in the community. His wife sells cherry tomatoes and basil to the local café and various other businesses around the community and also keeps some for them. This keeps them happy and locals happy; they have a huge fan base due to the food they produce affecting their social life hugely.

2

Gardens are another great way to bring people in the community closer together. Whether they are communal gardens or home gardens, people can gather in them and swap goods, gather goods, meet new people and spend time with each other. 'Making gifts such as jam made from the fresh fruit you have gathered and preserved is a fantastic idea for Christmas and birthdays. Friends and family will really enjoy the thought and effort that has gone into every part of the jam and the tasty jam itself'. Whether you are gathering food, swapping food, preserving food, making gifts or all of the above you are benefitting yourself and your local community in a social way.

3

A limitation of sustaining food is that when preserving in season foods for when there is less or none, you are spending time preserving when you could be spending time doing other things like helping your kids with homework or reading them stories.

4

Other limitations could be you don't have the skills to preserve or you don't know anybody in the community to do it with you and help you learn the skills. For example we had the advantage in class of having our teacher show us how to make jam, show us how long to boil it for and how to test if it will set. You could waste produce through unsuccessful attempts at jam making so it is really important to know what you are doing.

5

Buying locally has a huge impact on the environment. Gathering fruit and vegetables from a local garden is fantastic. This saves you money on the food itself and also on petrol and bags at the supermarket. By gathering locally you are able to take your own bags instead of

6

buying and using plastic bags. Packaging is expensive; buying local means less packaging or recycled packaging. For example, people who have hens and sell their eggs from home, reuse egg cartons that people have given them or ones they have collected themselves over the years. Not only is packaging expensive it is bad for the environment. However when you preserve your own food at home e.g. bottling tomatoes or freezing them to use in the winter, you often use recycled materials to package them like glass preserving jars or plastic containers for freezing. Buying food locally cuts down on food miles; this means there isn't as much pollution going into the air from all the travelling your food has done to get to you.

Organic and ethical food tends to cost more. This is a huge limitation considering that it is better for you. 1kg of 'fresh produce, pure fresh organic carrots costs \$6.49' whereas '1kg of fresh produce carrots that are loose cost \$1.99.' Even 1kg of McCain's mixed vegetables with carrots, cauliflower, broccoli and peas for \$4.79 is cheaper than organic carrots from the supermarket (6).