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# Farm to Table

By Kelsi Franzen  
Marketing, Education, & Outreach Coordinator  
Whidbey Island Conservation District



### ON WHIDBEY ISLAND, WINTER FARE IS THERE FOR THE TAKING

For the lovers of Whidbey fare, the cool weather season provides an opportunity for consumers to deepen relationships with local farmers. As main season growing subsides to more challenging conditions, a quick chat with your farmer provides both the knowledge of what is available and a glimpse into what it means to grow locally year-round.

In the Pacific Northwest, as each season changes, so do the variables that influence our food. Winter is often laden with frost, heavy rains, and lack of light – major contributors to dormancy in plants, both wild and domestic. As petals curl and leaves shed, a plant's energy becomes centered in its roots below, preparing for the rough months ahead.

Admire all the change, one can still find delicious food nestled in the landscape on Whidbey this winter. Root vegetables, for example, which include a wide variety of carrots and beets, radishes and turnips, rutabagas, Jerusalem artichokes, and leeks, store well in the ground, an earthen refrigerator until the hard frost arrives. Overwintering Brassicas – brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale, cabbage, collards, cauliflower, and event giant kohlrabi – are picked well into mid-winter. Storage crops like potatoes, dry beans, onions, garlic, and winter squash lay in waiting for your purchase in barns and farm stands. A quick phone call or email, a visit to a farmer's website or Facebook page, can connect you directly with local food right now in our cool weather season.

There are many resources available to connect you with local food. A few tips – keep your eyes open for road side and farm stands, look for "local" on grocery store labels, visit a winter farmers market, join a cool season CSA, or sign-up through a variety of farm mailing lists to stay "in-the-know" about what produce is available and where to find it.

How should you start? A variety of organizations that support local producers have developed informational brochures and websites to help you in your search for local fare. Below is a list of several tools available to you – but even more exists out there! A bit of research and creativity can point you in the right direction and connect you with the farms and food that you love on Whidbey.

**Helpful Resources to Get You Started**  
Goosefoot's 2016 Farm Stands brochure  
www.goosefoot.org/pdf/farmstands.pdf  
A great directory for locating a farm stand near you. Contact Marian at marian@goosefoot.org if you wish to be added to this brochure. Farm stands open this season, but not featured on the brochure include Bell's Farm and Foxtail Farm.

**Slow Food – Whidbey Island's Directory of Farm Stands, Farmers Markets, and CSA Programs**  
www.slowfoodwhidbeyisland.org/csa/  
A great compliment to Goosefoot's directory, and includes farmers market and CSA information, as well.

**Whidbey and Camano Island Tourism's Farmers Market Map**  
http://whidbeycamanoislands.com/things-to-do/food-wine/farmers-markets/  
A map featuring the hours of Whidbey and Camano Island's farmers markets.

**Whidbey Island Conservation District's Local Agriculture Resource Page**  
www.whidbeycd.org/local-agriculture.html  
Features a variety of resources for local food, for both the consumer and producer.

**Opportunities in October, November, and Beyond**  
With fall still underway and winter arriving

soon, farms and other vendors come together in unique ways to connect with consumers. Below are examples of places where you can purchase local food on Whidbey this winter. Check it out!

**Farm Stands** – Some of Whidbey's farm stands remain open all year long. In the cool season, hours can change due to weather or crop availability, so it's best to call ahead or visit each farm's website or Facebook page to ensure you are up-to-date on your favorite farm stand.

**Cool Season CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Programs** – Several farms on Whidbey Island offer cool-season extensions to their main season CSA. Sign-ups for these CSAs often go fast, so a call in to the farmers directly is encouraged. Deep Harvest Farm in Freeland, for example, has a cool season CSA that runs through December.

**Farm Mailing Lists** – Sign-up for regular updates from your farmers on their mailing list. Several farms use mailing lists to market their products in the off-season. For example, four farms in central Whidbey come together for *Endless Summer*, a weekly mailing list that allows consumers to order and pick-up on Saturdays from Rosehip Farm in Coupeville starting October 22. Contact Linda Barlett at rosehip@whidbey.net for more information.

**Markets** – Markets are great social events, and a way to meet your farmers all at one place and time. The Bayview Farmers Market remains open Saturdays through the end of October 2016, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Clinton, Coupeville, Langley, Oak Harbor, and South Whidbey Tilt Markets have closed for the season and will reopen in spring. The Oak Harbor Holiday Market, held at Hummingbird Farm Nursery and Gardens features local products each Saturday, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., from October 15 to December 24. The Bayview Holiday Market will open its doors Saturdays at Bayview Community Hall, starting November 26 through December 17, 10 a.m – 2 p.m.

**Grocery Stores, Restaurants, & Caterers** – Grocery stores throughout Whidbey Island continue to feature local products in winter. The Star Store in Langley, Goose Community Grocer in Bayview, Prairie Center Red Apple Market in Coupeville, and Three Sisters Market in San de Fuca, are several stores you can visit. Strike up a conversation with the produce manager to find out what's seasonally available the next time you stop to shop. Restaurants also sport local fare on their menus. Ask about what's fresh from the farm next time you go to your favorite eatery or special order from a caterer.

**Community & On-Farm Events** – Many farms host celebrations on-site. With fall, comes the harvest. Call up the farms nearest you to see what's on their calendar and if you can attend. Community groups also hold events that feature local farms and their produce, or celebrate slow food. October's *The Haunting of Coupeville* (http://minref.wixsite.com/coupeville-halloween) features several farms that provide produce and entertainment for the entire family.

As the season of rest approaches, when it comes to finding local food this winter, there is no need to feel restless. Nestled among the contours of the landscape, for sale in farm stands and on store shelves, winter fare is there for the taking and with your next meal you'll be making a feast with what Whidbey's winter has to offer this year.

*Kelsi Franzen is the Marketing, Education, and Outreach Coordinator for the Whidbey Island Conservation District. WICD offers many programs and free services to help residents conserve natural resources on private property, whether the property is a working agricultural operation, a small farm, or a home in town. Contact WICD at (360) 678-4708 or wicd@whidbeycd.org. Visit their website at www.whidbeycd.org.*

PHONE: (360)682-2341 FAX: (360)682-2344

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390 NE MIDWAY BLVD | PO BOX 1098 | OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON 98277

Publisher & Editor ..... **Eric Marshall**      Contributing Writers  
Marketing Representatives ..... **Penny Hill, Roosevelt Rumble**      **Jim Freeman**  
Graphic Design ..... **Teresa Besaw**      **Wesley Hallock**  
Production Manager ..... **TJ Pierzchala**      **Kae Harris**  
Office Administrator ..... **Marchelle Bright**      **Carey Ross**  
Circulation Manager ..... **Jon Wynn**      **Ed Oldham**  
      **Kathy Reed**

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# Barbara Bailey

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- No to a state income tax - protect consumers
- Spearheaded the CARE Act which supports family caregivers and their loved ones - SB 6327
- Supported other policies protecting seniors such as the Silver Alert program for memory patients - SB 5264
- Supported laws that limit dramatic increases in prescription drug prices - SB 5441
- Supported new education opportunities for Veterans - SB 5620

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*"The AARP thanks Senator Barbara Bailey for sponsoring the CARE Act, the Washington Legislature for passing, and Governor Jay Inslee for signing the bill into law." -AARP, April 27th, 2016*

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