

published quarterly by
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programs and services	Connections Childhood Immunization Outreach Family Dental Clinic Health Promotion Prescription Assistance Community Impact Team Integrated Primary Care/ Mental Health Program

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Food Fable for Modern Times

Old tale yields valuable nutrition tip

by nancy nichols

Many tales from the past hold nuggets of wisdom to guide us toward healthier living.

Aesop's "The Ant and the Grasshopper" provides excellent advice for anyone desiring to eat healthy, locally grown produce throughout the year. As the story goes,

The Ant prepared for winter by gathering and storing food whilst the impetuous grasshopper frittered away the carefree summer months, without a thought for what he may need when the seasons changed. When winter came, the Ant lived comfortably, enjoying the wonderful foods he'd stored, while the Grasshopper struggled to survive.

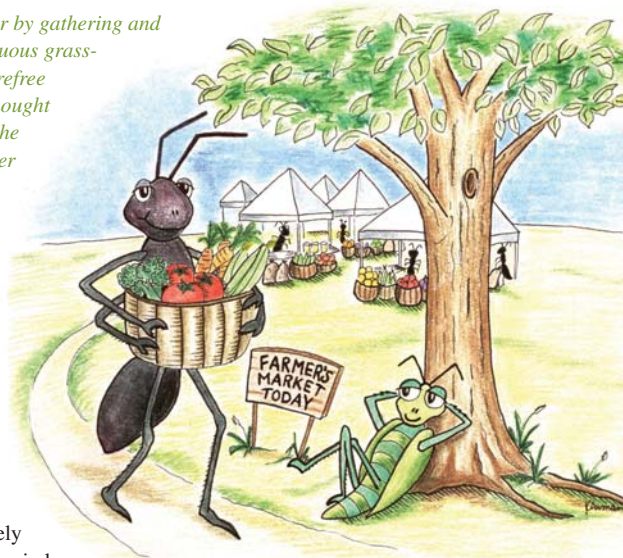
Obviously no one's going to suffer nowadays by failing to put away provisions for the winter. Ample supplies of food are available in grocery stores year-round. Nevertheless, your health will most definitely benefit by keeping the Ant in mind this summer.

Over the coming weeks, a great abundance of nutritious, locally grown fruits and vegetables will be available at excellent prices. If your freezer and pantry allow, now's the time to snap up some extra produce to use later in the year.

"Preserving foods, particularly by freezing, is a quick and easy way to retain nutritional quality and also have wonderful, tasty foods available whenever your heart desires," says Dianne Moeller, registered dietitian at the Health District of Northern Larimer County.

Preserving high-quality produce when it's seasonably available can also save you money by limiting your purchases of high-priced produce shipped from faraway places like South America during the winter.

So, prepare now for healthy eating year-round. Instead of fruitlessly searching the produce aisle in winter for items you enjoyed earlier in the year, simply go to your pantry or freezer and pull out your favorite nutrition-packed, preserved foods.



Farmers' markets in Fort Collins

Farmers' markets are great places to buy fresh, high-quality produce. You can also find locally grown foods in most grocery stores.

Downtown Farmers' Market
 Larimer County Courthouse parking lot
 8 a.m.–noon Saturdays (June 26–Oct. 16)
www.larimercountyfarmersmarket.org

Drake Road Farmers' Market
 Corner of Drake and Worthington
 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Saturdays (through Sept. 25)
www.drakeroadfarmersmarket.com

Fort Collins Farmers' Market
 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Wednesdays and Sundays (through October)
 Corner of Harmony and Lemay
www.fortnet.org/market



How to preserve fresh foods

An excellent source of information on food preservation is the Cooperative Extension Service at Colorado State University. CES publishes a series of fact sheets on freezing, drying and old-fashioned canning of foods. To download these free fact sheets, go online to www.ext.colostate.edu, or visit the Larimer County CES Office at 1525 Blue Spruce Drive in Fort Collins. CES also offers food-preservation workshops; call 498-6000 for information.

Get your questions about food safety and preservation answered by local Master Food Safety Advisors anytime 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Monday–Friday by calling 498-6000. Or get your questions answered online through the "Ask an Expert" program of the national CES system: www.extension.org/ask.