



MARIPOSA NEWS

FALL 2012



Notes from Mary Anne

Autumn Is Here!

October is the time of harvest, a golden season, the days still holding onto the warmth of summer while the cooling nights signal the coming of winter's chill. We tend to get that delicious "autumn feeling" as we stroll on leaf-strewn paths, smell wood-smoke in the air once again, or observe the color changes in our beautiful vineyards.

At Mariposa Market, we are busy with the influx of seasonal "visitors" while preparing our shelves for the upcoming holidays. Mike Gauder's famous apples are arriving from Covelo, Irene Engber is bringing fresh-dug heirloom potatoes and sweet onions, and Jim Leonardis is harvesting luscious winter squash and pumpkins. Pears, grapes, pomegranates and persimmons are all part of the fall produce scene. By November, the first of the Mandarins should be starting to come in. We're hoping for some local organic walnuts as well. Such a colorful array of goodness—we love this time of year.

October is GMO-Free month. This year it's particularly important because the GMO Labeling proposition is on the November ballot in California. Proposition 37 will require that foods sold in California that contain genetically modified organisms will have to be labeled as such. Of course, the big food producers are freaked out by the probability that this law may pass. They are launching a huge campaign filled with scare tactics and mistruths. All the law asks for is labeling. If GMO's are safe, why should they worry? Please get out and vote for this very important and empowering proposition. During October, we will celebrate non-GMO foods in our store with 25-30% off sales on many selected products.

Continued on Page 2

It's Almost Turkey Time

This year, for our Thanksgiving season, we are offering a nice selection of turkeys. Both free-range and organic turkeys will be available from Willie Bird, with weights ranging from 12-26 lbs. There will also be organic heirloom turkeys with weights up to 18 lbs. (only a few of these as they are more expensive) Diestal is offering some smaller turkeys this year for smaller families or individuals. They will be in the 6-10 lb. range. Sign up sheets will be out on Oct. 22. As yet, we do not have a current price. Turkeys will be available for pickup on November 19th. Please order early to insure the size you want.

Did You Remember To Bring Your Bags?



Mariposa gives You a 5¢ Credit for Each Bag Re-Used.

Hours

Mon-Fri 9-7 Sat 9-6 Sun 11-5:30

Mariposa Market - 500 S. Main St., Willits, CA 95490 - Ph (707) 459-9630

Mary Anne - Continued from Page 1

We are now accepting coupons from magazines as well as those from in-store pads. They are only useful, of course, for products that we carry.

A reminder to our customers: Please drive slowly through our parking lot. It is often congested and care needs to be taken. Observe the signs that indicate the flow of traffic. Whatever you do, avoid going into the exit side of the parking lot in order to enter. Watch for people walking and children who may wander in front of your car. And please, do not park in the back of the lot. Those spaces are reserved for our employees. An open space in the back only means that the employee is temporarily gone on a break. We are really short on parking spaces. Please be respectful.

For the fall holidays we will have all the usual traditional and not so traditional foods, treats, decorations and gifts. Remember how lucky we are and how blessed it is to live in this wonderful community in beautiful Northern California. Thank you to every one of our shoppers who have helped support our local business. We love you.

Some Employee Thoughts

By Angelia

As a Mariposa employee I like to “beef up” for the coming cold weather season with Jarro-Dophilus EPS Probiotics to help boost my immune system so I can ward off illness and ease indigestion after I’ve over-indulged. Another wonderful way to protect yourself and your family during this very social time is to wash your hands frequently. We carry a variety of lovely smelling soaps and lotions that are natural and safe. My favorite is Griffin Remedy Foaming Orange Blossom Hand Soap. And, it sells for only \$5.99! It smells divine. Thank you very much from the employees at Mariposa Market. We hope you have a fantastic fall.



Businesses Bringing A Positive Change

By Alecia

In spite of the fact that many large companies use questionable practices, there are a few who are setting a good example for the rest, in their own small but powerful way. This movement is labeled Corporate Social Responsibility, and its goal is to not only embrace responsibility for their own actions, but also to encourage positive activities which affect the environment, the community, and their employees.

Mariposa is proud to support some of these companies by featuring their products in our store. Here are a few of the ones we admire the most.

Rainbow Light, a food-based supplement company, has committed to saving endangered sea turtles. After a small population of the world’s most endangered sea turtles was discovered in the mangroves of El Salvador, Rainbow Light teamed up with Fabien Costeau, grandson of the famous Jacques Costeau. Costeau’s initiative called “Plant a Fish” engages communities in the restoration of their marine environment. It teaches people about nature and sustainable living, including the importance of mangroves and coral reefs.

Rainbow Light’s policy of “taking from the ocean, then giving back to the ocean” goes into full effect as they donate proceeds from their Omega 3 Fish Oil supplements directly to this foundation. In addition, their “eco-guard” bottles reduce their carbon footprint by 92%. They are the first company to use 100% post-consumer recycled products in the production of their containers.

Another “eco-conscious” company is Mychelle Dermaceuticals, which is focused not only on 100% non-toxic skin care, but also on projects that “give back to the world that inspires us every day”, as they put it. The scope of organizations which Mychelle supports is pretty astonishing and range from community enhancement to the empowerment of women. One is called Ogichi Daa Kwe Camp, which is on a mission to strengthen young women and their families through wilderness exploration, camping, and cultivating teamwork, confidence, integrity,

Continued on Page 3

Positive Change - Continued from Page 2

leadership, and respect. Mychelle and another company called Natural Health International (we carry their Maca products) support the Medicine Horse Program and HopeFoals. The horses that they work with are the foals of mares used in the production of PREMARIN, a hormone replacement drug for women. Foals from these mares are typically slaughtered, but thanks to this program, they are now teamed up with “at risk” girls who work with these young horses. Encouraging love and kindness, this project is designed to address issues of low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal tendencies in these young women. In the process, both foals and girls are helped to heal. Mariposa Market is featuring Mychelle Skin Care in a line-drive sale at 20% off until the end of October.

Nordic Naturals is another philanthropic company who” gives back” as part of their mission. Through the end of October they are sponsoring a “back to school” promo to support the organization called Healthy Child Healthy World. For every bottle sold from their children’s line, one dollar will go to this worthy organization. Healthy Child Healthy World is an advocate for corporate policies and government legislation to protect children from environmental health risks. It translates the science of these environmental hazards in order to inspire parents and caregivers to create healthy environments where families can flourish. This organization was started because of the growing evidence linking everyday environmental contaminants to asthma, obesity, cancer and more. Mariposa Market will help support Nordic Naturals with a sale of all children’s products through the month of October at 20% off.



I subscribe to the “ripple effect”, and believe in backing companies whose mission it is to improve the quality of life and preservation of the health of our environment and our communities.

**Genetically Modified Food
An Epidemic Worldwide**

In honor of Non-GMO Month, we are hosting an information table on October 10 2012. On this day we will have selected Non-GMO products on sale throughout the store. Since you, as our customers, are very important to us, we would like to take this time to inform you, educate you, and empower you in changing the future of our food system. In the U.S. GMOs are in as much as 80% of conventional processed foods. Over 80% of all GMOs grown worldwide are engineered for herbicide tolerance. GMOs are a direct extension of chemical agriculture, and are developed and sold by the world’s largest chemical companies.

How Can You Avoid GMOs?

By choosing foods and products that are Non-GMO Project Verified! We will be here on the 10th of October to introduce you to these foods, as well as educate you as best we can about the project, and you may begin here at our market to make a change. IF YOU stop buying GMOs, companies will stop using them and farmers will quit growing them! The powerful biotech lobby has succeeded in keeping information from the public. In the absence of mandatory labeling, The NON-GMO Project was created to give you the informed choice you deserve.

The NON-GMO Project is a non-profit organization with a mission of protecting the Non-GMO food supply and giving consumers an informed CHOICE. Please join us at our Non-GMO awareness table here at Mariposa all day and get the facts!

**Did you remember
to bring
your bags?**



See Suggestion Box—Page 8

Sugar - How Sweet It Is

Let's talk about sugar. At Mariposa we sell many forms of sugar for many different uses. We have powdered, dark, light, sucanat, demerara, turbinado, raw and whole cane. I would like to shed some light on these sweeteners so you can pick the right sugar for your needs.

First, a little science. Sugar is the generalized name for a class of sweet-flavored substances used as food. They are **carbohydrates** and as this name implies, are composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. There are various types of sugar derived from different sources. Simple sugars are called monosaccharides and include glucose, fructose and galactose. The table or granulated sugar most customarily used as food is sucrose, a disaccharide. Other disaccharides include maltose and lactose.

Sugars are found in the tissues of most plants but are only present in sufficient concentrations for efficient extraction in sugarcane and sugar beet. Sugarcane is a giant grass and has been cultivated in tropical climates in the Far East since ancient times. A great expansion in its production took place in the 18th century with the setting up of sugar plantations in the West Indies and Americas. This was the first time that sugar became available to the common people who had previously had to rely on honey to sweeten foods. Sugar beet is a root crop and is cultivated in cooler climates and became a major source of sugar in the 19th century when methods for extracting the sugar became available.

In our baking aisle you will find powdered sugar, a familiar friend. This is simply very fine granulated sugar. Also in the baking aisle, as well as in our bulk section, you may find some not so familiar forms such as **turbinado**, **demerara**, **sucanat** and **rapadura**.

Turbinado sugar is also known as raw or cane sugar. One might mistake it for brown sugar at first glance. However, turbinado sugar is lighter in color and its crystals are larger than those of traditional brown sugar. Most of the turbinado sugar found in the United States is produced in Hawaii, and was given the name due to the fact that turbines are used in its spinning process. It is created by extracting juice from sugar cane, then heating it layer by layer slowly, to cause the water within it to evaporate and form crystals of the organic sugar. Afterward it is further dried in centrifuges, or turbines, in which the impurities are removed from the product.

Turbinado is a result of the first pressing of sugar cane, so it still contains quite a bit of sugar cane's natural byproduct, which is molasses. This sugar can also be used in lieu of brown sugar or white sugar in various baking recipes, as it gives the finished product more moisture and lowers its caloric value. Given that many are now turning to healthier and more natural ingredients for their food, turbinado is the obvious choice for substitution when it comes to these other,

more refined sugars. Due to its high molasses content and the fact that it contains absolutely no chemicals, it is now widely used in kitchens across the globe.

Demerara sugar, popular in Britain, and turbinado sugar—both of which are often referred to as “raw sugar” in the United States—are very similar to one another in color and texture. To make them, the molasses-rich crystals are spun in a centrifuge to dry them, as well as to remove excess plant material, leaving a coarse granule that's lighter brown or tan in color. Edouard Rollet, cofounder of Alter Eco, a fair-trade food imports company that sells sugars, describes Demerara as having a mild molasses flavor. Turbinado, he says, contains hints of honey. Both Demerara and turbinado are good for sweetening coffee and tea.

Demerara sugar is so named because originally it came from sugar cane fields in the colony of Demerara, a former British colony in South America, now known as Guyana.

SucanatTM is a minimally refined form of cane sugar. The process for making SucanatTM starts out like that used for other forms of cane sugar, with the harvesting of the sugar canes. The canes are cut, leaving the roots behind so that they will sprout new canes in the coming year, and then they are crushed in a mangle, which extracts their naturally sweet juice. If the sugar was going to be refined, the juice would be run through an evaporation process which included measures for purification, and in this process, much of the natural molasses would be extracted.

In the case of SucanatTM, however, the sugar cane juice is simply heated and then allowed to cool down, forming granular crystals of what is basically dried sugar cane juice. The SucanatTM retains the molasses, creating a very distinctive and quite strong flavor, along with other impurities which may be present in the cane. Unlike more refined sugar, SucanatTM is grainy, rather than blocky and crystalline. It also contains less sucrose, because it is has not been purified; white sugar contains the most sucrose, and is in fact almost entirely sucrose.

SucanatTM is a contraction of “Sugar Cane Natural.” It can be difficult to bake with, because it behaves very differently from more processed forms of sugar. The lower sucrose content makes SucanatTM less sweet, which can be confusing for bakers who want to replace regular sugar with SucanatTM on a cup for cup basis. The granular texture can also manifest in finished baked goods, causing a disappointing texture, and the strong

Continued on Page 5

Sugar - Continued from Page 4

flavor can be unpleasant, especially when mixed with other intense flavors like citrus or chocolate.

Sucanat™ is a trademark held by Ragus Holdings, Inc. Other companies certainly manufacture similar products, but they generally do not label them as “Sucanat™” to avoid a copyright infringement lawsuit. The fact that Sucanat™ is trademarked can make it easier for consumers to identify the real thing; **Rapadura™** is another product made using the same process.

Lastly, we have our old favorite, **brown sugar**. Brown sugar is a sucrose sugar product with a distinctive brown color due to the presence of molasses. It is either an unrefined or partially refined soft sugar consisting of sugar crystals with some residual molasses content, or it is produced by the addition of molasses to refined white sugar (so-called Molasses Sugar).

Brown sugar contains from 3.5% molasses (**light brown sugar**) to 6.5% molasses (**dark brown sugar**) based on total volume. Based on total weight, **regular brown sugar** contains up to 10% molasses.

A Few Words About Compost By Debbie Flowers

Compost is a very important issue for Mariposa. We really try to recycle everything, and that includes the trimmings from the kitchen and the produce department. We love to take care of our animal friends. All of the compost has a specific destination.

Mary Anne takes all the lettuce and soft greens for her chickens. And the “goat people” have a separate box for their goats. Please be considerate. These people have permission from us and their compost is kept just inside the back door. The goat food is clearly marked “GOATS”.

For several weeks now someone has just helped themselves to the compost without asking. Please, don't ever take any compost or greens from inside the store without asking. We sometimes have extra compost that we are willing to share. If you make arrangements with us, we will try to accommodate you.

Thank you for helping us to keep this recycling effort going.

What Does BPA-Free Really Mean?

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a synthetic estrogen used in polycarbonate plastic products. You hear about it most when it comes to water bottles, canned goods, and receipts. We know it can cause hormonal changes and otherwise negatively affect our health. So, we try to buy products that are BPA-free. But somewhere along the way, BPA-free seems to have become synonymous with “safe”. What does BPA-Free really mean? It means there shouldn't be any BPA in it. Great. What it doesn't mean is that the product doesn't contain any other toxic chemicals, synthetics, additives, etc. Only recently did the FDA recognize BPA as toxic. How do we know the BPA replacements are safe? Or other plastics in general? Or, for that matter, that BPA-free products are actually free of BPA?

According to Health Canada, “Bottles made from non-polycarbonate plastic may contain very low level, trace amounts of BPA resulting from cross-contamination caused by the ubiquitous nature of BPA.”

People seek out “safe” plastics. But is there such a thing? Have all the other plastics really been tested for their effects on human health? Is BPA-containing polycarbonate plastic the only dangerous one, or just the one that's been singled out?

Luckily, we don't have to ponder this question for long. A study by the University of Texas already did the work for us, by thoroughly testing 455 everyday products, most of which were labeled as PBA-free, to see if they still release chemicals that have estrogenic activity. Their conclusion:

“Almost all commercially available plastic products we sampled—independent of the type of resin, product, or retail source—leached chemicals having reliably detectable EA, including those advertised as BPA free. In some cases, BPA-free products released chemicals having more EA than did BPA-containing products.”

When they then stress-tested the products (microwave, sunlight, dishwasher, etc.), they leached even more.

So really, BPA-free doesn't mean much. In fact, some BPA replacements tested worse!

What can we do? Try not to use plastic – use glass instead. I'm hesitant to recommend stainless steel due to nickel and other impurities, but I'd still choose stainless steel over plastic. Also, if you do use plastic, try to “stress” it as little as possible – i.e. keep it out of the microwave, dishwasher, and direct sunlight.

Have you reduced your use of plastic?

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<http://www.theprimalist.com/what-does-bpa-free-really-mean/>

Prop 37: The David versus Goliath Fight Over Our Right to Know

By: Zack Kaldveer, Assistant Media Director, Yes on Proposition 37 Campaign

On November 6th, California voters will have an historic opportunity to reclaim our right to know what's in the food we eat from powerful special interests known for endangering our health, our environment and deceiving the public.

Proposition 37 - The California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act - would simply require clear labeling of genetically modified foods (GMOs). These are foods that have been artificially altered by genes from other plants, animals, viruses, or bacteria - and are not found anywhere in nature.

Fifty countries around the world - representing more than 40% of the planet's population - already require GMO labeling, including all of Europe, Japan, India and China.

Yet in the United States, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires no safety testing of GMO's, no long-term health studies have been conducted (UPDATE: First Ever Long Term, Peer Reviewed Study Finds Massive Tumors in Rats Fed Monsanto's Genetically Engineered Corn), and no labeling is required to alert unsuspecting consumers to the presence of these ingredients.

The GMO Threat to Our Health and Environment

A growing body of peer-reviewed studies has linked GMO's to allergies, organ toxicity, and other health problems. These studies must be followed up. The United Nations/World Health Organization food standards group and the American Medical Association have each called for mandatory safety testing of genetically engineered foods--foods many of us are eating, even though we don't know it, every day.

Most recently, we've learned that Wal-Mart will be selling a new sweet corn from Monsanto Company that has been genetically engineered with a Bt toxin INSIDE it. This toxin is known for disintegrating the stomach walls of insects, and causing kidney and liver damage in rats. What's it going to do to our bodies? We don't know. And because GMO foods aren't labeled, Wal-Mart's customers don't get to choose whether they want to be a part of the experiment.

Various environmental problems have also been linked to genetic engineering--including biodiversity loss, an overall increase in pesticide use, the emergence of super weeds that are threatening millions of acres of farmland, and the unintentional contamination of non-GMO and organic crops. And contrary to industry claims, GMO's don't increase farmer's yields.

Ultimately, the free market is supposed to provide consumers with accurate information about products so we can make informed choices. Yet in the case of genetically altered food, and the risks it may pose to our health and environment, we are all being left in the dark.

Proposition 37 and Our Right to Know

Americans have made it abundantly clear that we support the fundamental, democratic right to know what's in the food we eat and feed our children - particularly when it's been genetically engineered in a laboratory, and especially given the growing health and environmental concerns linked to these products.

That's why in just 10 weeks, nearly a million signatures were gathered by a volunteer army of concerned California citizens this spring, easily qualifying Prop 37 for the November ballot. Also this spring, the FDA received more than a million comments demanding that genetically engineered foods be labeled (more than any petition in the agency's history) and polling showed that approximately 90% of Americans (and Californians) agreed.

GMO labeling is not a new issue. To date, 19 US states have attempted to enact mandatory labeling laws through legislation---only to be blocked by the same entrenched special interests currently fighting Prop 37. That's why we're taking the question directly to consumers in the largest state in the union--and doing so knowing that victory here will be a victory for common sense food transparency everywhere.

For decades, we didn't label foods with calorie or nutritional value information, but we do now, and many consumers use this information every day. Did prices go up when calories were added to a label? Of course they didn't - and independent research shows they won't if one more line of ink is added now either. Research also shows that Prop 37 has been carefully crafted in a way that provides far greater legal certainty for businesses than other consumer disclosure laws.

The No on 37 Campaign's Growing Credibility Problem

There is no clearer David versus Goliath fight anywhere in America--on this year's ballot. On one side, is a truly grassroots people's movement with overwhelming bipartisan support for the right to know what's in the food we eat. On the other side, stands a who's who of the world's largest pesticide, agribusiness and junk food companies - a \$32 million war chest (almost all of which has come from special interests outside California) and a well-documented history of false product safety claims, discredited arguments, and outright doublespeak.

Continued on Page 7

Prop 37 - Continued from Page 6

Consider the "No" campaign's two largest donors - Monsanto (\$7.1 million) and DuPont (\$4.9 million) - the same companies that told us Agent Orange and DDT were safe. And while spending wildly to fight our right to know what's in our food in America, Monsanto also produced a series of ads supporting labeling of GMOs in Europe. In other words, Monsanto thinks Europeans have the right to know, but Americans don't.

Who Do You Trust: Big Pesticide or a Broad Based Public Interest Coalition?

The question before voters could not be starker: Whose side are you on? -- the discredited special interests like Monsanto and DuPont, or everyday California families; the more than a million individuals who stood up to get Prop 37 on the ballot; the tens of thousands more who have joined us on Face book; and the more than 2,000 consumer, environmental, farming, faith-based, political and labor organizations that have endorsed Yes on 37.

Opponents of Prop 37 have built a business model that relies on secrecy, inhibits consumer choice, and prevents small farmers, the organics industry, and truly natural food producers from competing on an equal playing field.

The time is now for all of us to reclaim our basic democratic right to know what's really for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Prop 37 does one and only one thing-it gives California consumers the power to decide for ourselves what is best for our families.

Learn more or join us at www.carighttoknow.org.

Serendipitous Experiments

Fall is in full swing and before we know it the holidays will be here as well. It is my favorite time of year; with all the changing colors outside, as well as inside in the produce. I get excited thinking about all the different playful ideas that can be created with the abundance fall offers us. Keeping in with the tone of generosity I will be offering you one of my favorite experiments. It is one of my favorites because it is simple, seasonal, delicious, and perfect for entertaining.

Ingredients:

Framani Uncured Pancetta
4 Red Pears
Wild Flower Honey
Sierra Nevada Pale Ale Honey and Spice Mustard
Redwood Hill Traditional Chevre

Recipe:

Combine ½ cup honey to 4 tbsp. mustard. Slice ½ block of pancetta to approx. ¼ inch thick by 1 ½ inch long slices. Add ¾ of honey mustard mixture to raw sliced pancetta and let sit over night in refrigeration. Refrigerate remaining honey mustard.

Next day preheat oven to 450 degrees and line cookie sheet with aluminum foil. When preheated lay pancetta on sheet and bake until golden and deep brown. Slice pears and place on serving tray.

Place cooled pancetta onto pears, add a dollop of chevre, and drizzle remaining honey mustard on top. Enjoy.

Beer and Wine

Now that fall is beginning and the harvest and crush season is in full gear, the fact that we live in wine country is very evident. As the season changes, so typically, does our choice of wine. The wines that compliment fall foods will be heavier and more intense. Chardonnay and reds take the place of lighter whites. Foods, such as, mushrooms, roast chicken, pot roast, and Thanksgiving dinner all pair nicely with these wines.

Pinot noir is a natural match with food during September and October. The colors of the changing leaves, the heartier food that starts to hit our tables and the joy of the holidays all perfectly compliment the burgundy-colored fresh fruit and spice characteristics of this grape. We are blessed to live in an area that is well known for producing superb Pinot noirs; Anderson Valley. The combination of warm sunny days and cool foggy nights and mornings allow the grapes of this region to mature slowly and to develop to the height of their varietal character.

Chardonnay is another nice fall wine. The grape itself is a relatively low maintenance vine that adapts well to a variety of climates. Our microclimates in California create perfect conditions for world class Chardonnay. Chardonnay is very versatile, from rich and buttery to fruity flavors; it can accommodate most palates and just as many food pairing combinations.

Also consider Sangiovese, a light red known for aromas of cherry and blackberry and fruit flavors; Gewurztraminer, which can be sweet or dry, or a rose or a syrah. We carry all of these wines at Mariposa, with a good selection from our local wineries.

The beers are changing also. Many of the light summer ales are being replaced with darker, richer tastes of autumn. Check out the cooler as they continue to change. Also remember we still carry Ace ciders in pear and apple in the 22 oz. bottle and Crispin apple cider which continues to be a favorite.

From Our Suggestion Box

I AM LOOKING FOR AN ESSENTIAL PERFUME CALLED "WHITE OPIUM". I HOPE YOU STILL CARRY IT—IT COMES IN TINY BOTTLES.

I believe this is an Attar Bazaar brand. We still carry these oils. They are at the end of the wellness aisle.

PLEASE CARRY COCONUT BUTTER.

We have this product; it's right next to Earth Balance in the cooler.

LOOKING FOR FOOD FOR LIFE EZEKIAL BREAD 4:9 ORIGINAL PLAIN.

We carry it in the freezer with the other specialty breads.

I WISH YOU WOULD CARRY PINTS OF GOAT MILK.

After trying this product several times, it just does not sell.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HUMBOLDT CREAMERY 1% MILK IN 1/2 GALLONS?

We are only able to get a limited selection of Humboldt Milk. We can't get it direct anymore and our distributor does not carry this one that you want.

PLEASE CARRY TOFU HOT DOGS.

We have these in the freezer next to the tempeh.

CAN YOU BRING IN STRAUSS GREEK YOGURT?

We have it in the cooler next to the other Strauss yogurts.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME ORGANIC VEGAN CHEESE.

We carry the ones we can get. However, we will look for some organic options. The vegan cheese market is pretty limited.

THE BEST TASTING TORTILLAS EVER ARE THE RUDI'S SPINACH ONES.

Sorry, we are not able to get this product at this time. We'll leap on it if it comes available.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE LESS OF THESE NEW PRODUCTS THAT ARE CLEARLY NOT ORGANIC AND DEFINITELY NOT GMO FREE. I AM SEEING MORE AND MORE OF THIS AT YOUR STORE.

We really do try to scan our new products for GMOs. Some items do escape us. Others we research to find out if the products contain GMOs. Often, smaller companies do not state non-GMO on their labels but when we research them we find that they are GMO free. Some escape our attention, especially those which contain small amounts of cornstarch or soy. We really do try, and we will try harder. I am asking that every new product be scrutinized for GMO content. Organic is another story. Sure, we would like ALL of our products to be organic. Our store would have very empty shelves. We will try harder to be more diligent.

PUT MORE SHADE TREES IN THE PARKING LOT.

Every suggestion box emptying contains this request. It's just not feasible. We have such limited parking already without adding trees, each of which would take up at least 2 spaces. Curbs and irrigation have to be put in at great expense. It's just not going to happen.

BULK BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS, PLEASE. ALSO, BETTER MAGAZINE SELECTION, LIKE WELL-BEING JOURNAL.

We have the bittersweet chocolate chips. They are bagged up in the cooler near the nuts. Magazines are tricky for our little store. But, we will look into carrying the Well-Being Journal.

TUNA SALAD IS WAY BETTER WITH REGULAR MAYO. WHY USE VEGANAISE ON A NON-VEGAN OPTION?

It's not the vegan part we are concerned about. Veganaise is non-GMO, and this is important to many of our customers. To be cost effective we have to buy mayonnaise in bulk. This is our only reliably GMO free option in bulk. A lot of people love Veganaise.

WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO GET PUMPKIN SEED NOT FROM CHINA?

We'll keep searching---it's a daunting task.

I RECOMMEND DOING SOUP AND SUSHI BOTH IN THE WINTER AND CUTTING BACK ON SALADS. SUSHI IS QUICK PROTEIN FOR US WORKING FOLKS.

Sadly, sushi is not near as good of a seller as salads. Also, it is extremely time consuming and our poor little kitchen can't take all the prep that is required of it. Sushi will be available again when we are done with soup in May.

I WAITED 24 MINUTES FOR A PANINI SANDWICH. AND, I DIDN'T GET THE PEPPERONCINIS THAT I ORDERED WITH MY SANDWICH.

We are so sorry, but sometimes those paninis just take forever to cook. Call in ahead of time and we can work on your sandwich before you get here. Or, we now make cold sandwiches to order and those don't take as long. Mea Culpa about the pepperoncinis. Sometimes we just can't get it right.

Dear Customers, We have so many suggestions, but it would take up the whole newsletter to answer them all. A lot of the things you request we already have. If you can't find something please ask the grocery or HABA manager next time you shop.