

# Benefits of Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables

Over the past several years, there has been an increase of interest for locally grown produce. Many residents are familiar with the local food movement, yet many are not. BBC in working with partners such as Rid-All Green Partnership, Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga County, and Green City Growers has made Kinsman the neighborhood of choice for urban agriculture. Below are five benefits to locally grown food.

- 1. Local food travels fewer miles to land on your plate:** "Local food" is usually grown within a 100-mile radius. The farther food travels, the more energy and gasoline must be used to get the food to your plate. Buying local will save energy costs.
- 2. Local food tastes better:** The crops are picked at their peak freshness, and farm-made products, such as cheeses and jams, are hand-crafted for the best flavor. Local food tastes better because it is fresher and has been grown or created with the consumer in mind. The less time that passes between farm and table, the fewer nutrients fresh produce will lose.
- 3. Local produce stays fresh longer:** Food that was picked the day before will last longer in your refrigerator. Food from

far away is older, has traveled long distances in trucks or planes, is shoved around in the shipping process, and has sat in warehouses and supermarket shelves before it finally gets to your table.

- 4. Local produce is safe:** Local farmers are not anonymous and they take their responsibility to the consumer seriously. The risk for major E. coli outbreaks will be slim to none with locally-grown produce.
- 5. Local produce benefits the environment and wildlife:** Well-managed farms conserve fertile soil and clean water in our communities. The farm provides a habitat for wildlife.

When possible, buy local! Your local farmers' market is an excellent place to start! To learn more about urban agriculture, contact BBC's office at 216.341.1455, or visit BBC's website at [www.bbcdevelopment.org](http://www.bbcdevelopment.org).

-Sherita Mullins



## ATTENTION CYCLISTS IN WARD 5

Bike Cleveland, Northeast Ohio's cycling advocacy organization, is seeking input from citizen cyclists. Please take a moment to fill out its cycling survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BikeClevelandSurvey>. BBC will also have paper copies of the survey available at its office by request.

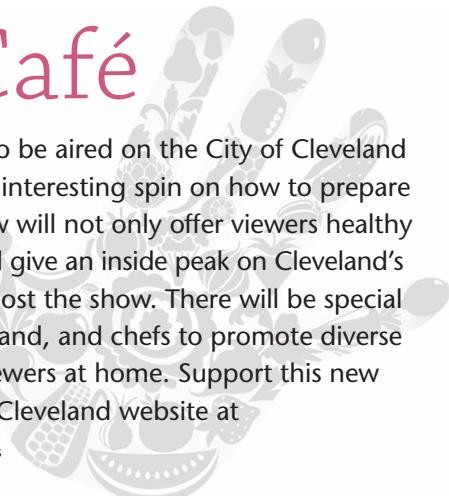
Share your input about where you ride, what streets make you feel safest and what streets cause you the most concern. The results will be used to help form the basis of the organization's advocacy efforts to make greater Cleveland a safe and friendly community for cycling. The survey will close March 11. For more information, contact Bike Cleveland at 216.245.3101 or visit the website at [bikecleveland.org](http://bikecleveland.org).

-Angie Schmitt, Bike Cleveland

## Bites by Bridgeport Café

BBC is excited to present "Bites by Bridgeport Café" healthy cooking show. To be aired on the City of Cleveland TV 20 public access channel in April, Bites by Bridgeport Café will provide an interesting spin on how to prepare healthy, yet great tasting food for residents of the city of Cleveland. This show will not only offer viewers healthy cooking tips, but also shine light on the Kinsman and Central communities and give an inside peak on Cleveland's up and coming industry; Urban Farming. Local celebrity Chef Eric Wells will host the show. There will be special guests such as Mayor Frank Jackson and Ward 5 Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland, and chefs to promote diverse cuisines. Each month, the hosts will display new dishes and recipes for the viewers at home. Support this new show by tuning in to TV 20 in April! For the airing schedule, visit the City of Cleveland website at [www.city.cleveland.oh.us](http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us), or call BBC at 216.341.1455.

-Sherita Mullins



# Important Tips for Energy Choice Shoppers

Mailings, door-to-door solicitors, phone calls and ads! Independent energy suppliers are out in force, looking to sign up new customers for their services.

In recent years, the way we purchase electricity and natural gas has changed. Not long ago, Ohioans did not have many choices regarding their utility services. Today, consumers have choices. We still have the option to purchase our electric and natural gas supply from the local utility, but we also have a number of retail energy suppliers from which to choose.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) offers fact sheets giving customers information about current retail offers and a chart to compare the price of these offers to what the utilities are charging. Each chart includes a list of offers from independent electric and natural gas suppliers as well as contact and contract information. These materials can be easily downloaded from OCC's website, [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org).

OCC urges you to be informed not only about available offers but about the terms and conditions of any contract you may sign. Before agreeing to a contract with any supplier, make sure you have answers to the following questions:

1. What is my current rate with my local utility?
2. Is the energy offer higher or lower than my current rate?  
Is the offer a fixed or variable rate?

3. How long will the contract last?
4. Is there a fee to cancel my contract?
5. Will the contract automatically renew at the end of the contract period? If yes, will it renew at the same rate?



If a salesperson comes to your home, ask to see a valid photo identification badge issued by the supplier. Solicitors must explain that they are not employees of the utility and clearly explain the details of any document they ask you to sign. Make sure you read everything in fine print and **ALWAYS** keep a copy of your signed contract. Whether you are contacted by phone or in person, never release your billing or account information to a salesperson unless you have decided to enter into a contract.

Alternative energy suppliers offer choices to consumers regarding their electricity and natural gas services. But some choices, especially if not based on price comparisons, can be costly for consumers.

—Marty Berkowitz, writer for Consumers' Corner, Office of the Ohio Consumer's Counsel

## FREE Backyard Garden Kits Available to Families to Grow Vegetables

Would you like to start a small vegetable garden this spring?

BBC is giving 50 families in Central and Kinsman all of the materials they need to grow fresh produce in their own backyards, ALL FOR FREE!

Refer to the article "Benefits of Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables" on page one that talks about the benefits of eating local foods. Gardening is also a fun activity family members can do together to enjoy time together and become more active outdoors.

BBC will be providing a raised bed gardening system called GardenSoxx. GardenSoxx can be placed anywhere that receives ample sunlight and water is accessible. They can be put on top of grass, concrete, or soil. They are also resistant to weeds, which can crowd out vegetable plants, compete for water and sunlight, and create a lot of extra work for gardeners. They are not messy like typical gardens.

Each participant will be given enough GardenSoxx to establish a four foot by four foot garden, as well as seedlings that can be planted

within GardenSoxx. Vegetable seedlings to be provided to participants tentatively include varieties of tomatoes and peppers, beans, lettuce, spinach, collard greens, zucchini, and basil.

BBC will also provide rain barrels to many participants. The benefits of rain barrels are mentioned in the article "Limited Number of Rain Barrels Available this Spring" in the article below.

Special programming, such as cooking classes at CornUcopia Place for gardeners to learn creative ways in which they can use the produce they grow, may also be available exclusively to participants.

Garden kits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis and will be provided to participants in May. They will go quickly, so act today! The deadline to apply is Tuesday, April 30th at 5pm. For more information or to participate, please contact Jeffrey Sugalski or Sherita Mullins at 216.341.1455.

—Jeffrey Sugalski

## Save Money and the Environment with a FREE Rain Barrel!

BBC is giving away a limited number of rain barrels to Central and Kinsman residents this spring.

Rain barrels are great for the environment for a number of reasons. The water they collect from gutters is nutrient-rich and is much better for watering gardens and landscaping than tap water. By using rain water to water plants, rain barrels help you save on your water bill. They also help prevent flooding by diverting stormwater from the sewer system.

Installing a rain barrel is a simple process. A small plastic diverter is attached to a downspout on the back or side of the house or garage. That diverter channels water into a rain barrel for use when it is needed. A spigot is located at the bottom of the barrel, and a hose can be connected to it for easy watering.

An additional benefit to using a rain barrel is that you can receive a 25% stormwater credit from the NEO Regional Sewer District. Request your rain barrel now! For more information or to participate in the program, please call Jeffrey Sugalski at 216.341.1455.

—Jeffrey Sugalski



# Food Assistance for Seniors

Many seniors struggle to pay bills while on a fixed income. They might have to choose between buying food or medication. Under the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], seniors may qualify for food stamps [now called "food assistance"] to help buy food.

In Ohio, a person can apply for food assistance at the local County Department of Job and Family Services. They can apply in-person, by phone, or online. If you apply by phone, you will be mailed an application that same day. Later, you will need to have a face-to-face interview with your caseworker. You will also have to give proof of your income and bills [e.g. rent and utilities receipts, bank statements]. It is important that you mail, fax, or deliver these papers as soon as possible.

Whether you can receive food assistance depends upon:

- The number of people in your household,
- Your income, and
- Your resources [such as cash, savings and checking accounts].

Your income must be below a certain limit. A special income rule applies to elderly or disabled persons. The county will not look at your "gross" income, but will subtract certain expenses [such as heating and cooling expenses, mortgage or rent, and medical expenses], and use this "net" income to decide if you qualify.

A household with an elderly member [over 60 years old] can have up to \$3,000 in resources. Household goods, most retirement plans, and the home you live in are not counted as a resource.

If you are approved, you will receive an "electronic benefits transfer" [EBT] card. Shopping with the card is like shopping with a bank debit or ATM card. You can buy food or food-related products, including seeds and plants to grow food. You cannot buy alcohol, tobacco, or vitamins. In 2012, a single senior can receive as much as \$200 per month for food assistance. A household of two can receive up to \$367 every month.

If you think you might qualify, you can do a quick check and apply at Ohio's Benefit Bank online at [www.thebenefitbank.com](http://www.thebenefitbank.com). You can also call you're the Cuyahoga County Department of Job and Family Services at 216.987.7000 or apply online at <http://odjfsbenefits.ohio.gov>.

—Deborah Dallmann, writer for "the Alert", The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

## Cooking with Chef Eric Wells

Join Chef Eric Wells for a hands-on cooking demonstration that will develop your cooking skills while creating a festive atmosphere to enjoy a great tasting meal. Our March classes are "Fresh, Healthy and Fast," "Asian Fusion," "Italian Night," and "Low Fat Solutions." Come alone or bring friends. For a complete list of classes, visit BBC's website at [bbcdevelopment.org](http://bbcdevelopment.org), or call 216.341.1455.

Who is Chef Eric Wells? He is a personal chef, caterer, and culinary instructor. He is a strong advocate for healthy eating, especially for America's youth. He has appeared on Food Request Live on Fox 8 and WEWS Newsnet 5 in Cleveland, as well as "Help I Need a Makeover" and "Another Look" on channel 21.

Classes started in February and are held every Saturday, 2pm -4pm, at the new state-of-the-art kitchen at Cornucopia Place, located at 7201 Kinsman Road. The cost per class is \$20 [A retail value of \$70!]. Registration and payment is required before each class. To register, call BBC's office at 216.341.1455, or online at [cornucopiaplacebbc.eventbrite.com](http://cornucopiaplacebbc.eventbrite.com).

—Sherita Mullins

*Sign up for the next class today!*



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## ON THE HORIZON

LOOK TO THE ON THE HORIZON SECTION FOR UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE CITY OF CLEVELAND

### AROUND THE WORLD WINE TASTING EVENT

Did you miss the Black Vines event in February? Well, you have another chance on March 22nd at the Around the World wine tasting event. Join BBC on March 22nd, from 5:30pm to 10:00pm, at Cornucopia Place, located at 7201 Kinsman Road. Participants will get free wine samples of wine from around the while enjoying live music and mingling with other community members.

This event is free and open to the public. Bridgeport Café, which is right next door to Cornucopia Place, will be offering \$7 happy hour specials. To view a complete menu, visit Bridgeport Café's website at bridgeportcafe.org. To RSVP for the wine tasting event, call BBC's office at 216.341.1455 or online at www.cornucopiaplacebbc.eventbrite.com

For information on any of our programs, call us at 216.341.1455. Follow BBC on Facebook  and Twitter 

Date	Time	Event	Location	Address
March 22	5:30 PM	Around the World Wine Tasting Event	Bridgeport Café/CornUcopia Place	7201 Kinsman Road
March 26	7:00 PM	3rd District Police Comm. Relations Mtg.	3rd District	10600 Chester Avenue
March 27	7:00 PM	4th District Police Comm. Relations Mtg.	Covenant Community Church of Cleveland	3342 East 119th Street
April 2	4:00 PM	Cooking Classes - Sharon Glaspie (ages 7+) Tuesdays, 4:00pm - 5:30pm	CornUcopia Place	7201 Kinsman Road
April 6	2:00 PM	Cooking - Chef Eric Wells (ages 16 +) Saturdays, 2pm-4pm	CornUcopia Place	7201 Kinsman Road
April 13	12:00 PM	Ward 5 Club Meeting	Vocational Guidance Services	2235 E. 55th Street
April 24	7:00 PM	4th District Police Comm. Relations Mtg.	Covenant Community Church of Cleveland	3342 East 119th Street
April 30	7:00 PM	3rd District Police Comm. Relations Mtg.	3rd District	10600 Chester Avenue
May 4	2:00 PM	Cooking - Chef Eric Wells (ages 16 +) Saturdays, 2pm-4pm	CornUcopia Place	7201 Kinsman Road
May 7	4:00 PM	Cooking Classes - Sharon Glaspie (ages 7+) Tuesdays, 4:00pm - 5:30pm	CornUcopia Place	7201 Kinsman Road
May 11	12:00 PM	Ward 5 Club Meeting	Vocational Guidance Services	2235 E. 55th Street
May 22	7:00 PM	4th District Police Comm. Relations Meeting	Covenant Community Church of Cleveland	3342 East 119th Street
May 28	7:00 PM	3rd District Police Comm. Relations Meeting	3rd District	10600 Chester Avenue

### CURRENT EVENTS

If you would like to submit an event to our Current Events calendar, please contact Joy Johnson at BBC, 216.341.1455. Please call Councilwoman Cleveland's office to confirm all community meetings 216.664.2309.

*Thank You*