



Alfalfa House

SEPTEMBER 2010

# NEWS



PETER FLINTER AND HIS FLOWERING MACADAMIAS  
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## RICE IS BACK

AND IT'S BETTER THAN EVER

plus what's new, what's out of stock and why and what's back in

**groceries**  
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## Five-star MACADAMIA NUT BUTTER



PRODUCE OF THE MOMENT

## specialty potatoes



CHARLOTTE  
POTATOES

plus what's new, what's good now and what's on the way out in fruit+veg

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## *all about* GARLIC

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**FUN**

## FILM NIGHT BENEFIT FOR ALFALFA HOUSE

7pm Thursday September 30 • Red Rattler Marrickville

FEATURE LENGTH MOVIE: FOOD INC. MORE INFO PAGE 4

## WHAT'S new

- ▶ Biodynamic rain-fed **MEDIUM GRAIN BROWN RICE** from northern NSW. Check out the story on page 5.
- ▶ Organic **PIZZA AND PASTA SAUCE** from Spiral Foods, ideal for those late-winter dishes
- ▶ Organic **BLACK SESAME SEEDS** from Mexico. Limited time only.
- ▶ **BUSH TOMATO SEASONING** – hand-harvested by Aboriginal tribes in Australia's central deserts, has a strong Cajun-style aroma. A very versatile seasoning, perfect with avocado, cheese or tomato, on scrambled eggs, with steamed veggies, potato wedges and even popcorn.
- ▶ Organic, raw, farmer-direct **MACADAMIA BUTTER**. Thanks to our friends at the Flame Tree Co-op for the contact. More details below.
- ▶ Organic **NIGELLA SEEDS** (black cummin seeds)

## WHAT'S back

- ▶ **WAKAME** (Australian)
- ▶ **ALMOND BUTTER**. After a backlog at the roaster, this popular spread is back. The almonds are grown and roasted in Australia before being freshly ground into butter as needed in our machine.



**NEW SPIRAL FOODS PIZZA + PASTA SAUCE**  
375g, organic

- ▶ Organic **SHOYU**
- ▶ The range of **KURRAJONG NATIVE FOODS JAMS** is back in stock, including Native Fingerlime Marmalade, Macadamia Butter with Rainforest Plum Swirl, Lilli Pilli Bush Conserve, Desert Quandong Jam, Davidson Rainforest Plum. The new labels feature some background on these treats.
- ▶ Organic **MESQUITE MEAL** new batch
- ▶ **OAT KERNELS/GROATS**
- ▶ Organic **COCONUT OIL** finally back
- ▶ Organic **GRANO TOMATO PUREE**
- ▶ Organic **SENNA PODS** – new batch
- ▶ Organic **STAR ANISE**
- ▶ Organic Pureharvest **CORN THINS** and **CORN WITH SESAME AND LINSEED THINS**
- ▶ Organic hulled **MILLET**
- ▶ Organic **UNHULLED TAHINI**
- ▶ **RED STRINGBARK HONEY**

## WHAT'S out

- ▶ **SAGO** – currently unavailable at supplier; unsure when it will be back
- ▶ **COCONUT FLAKES** – hopefully back sometime this month
- ▶ **RAPUNZEL VEGETABLE STOCK BOULLION** – unavailable at supplier
- ▶ **CHIA SEEDS** – there's currently a worldwide shortage and we're stocking black sesame seeds instead. It's unclear when chia seeds will be available again.
- ▶ **AZUKI BEANS** – supplier awaiting new stock; hopefully this or next month
- ▶ **SOY LECITHIN** – discontinued by supplier but awaiting an organic lecithin shipment expected in a few months
- ▶ **BIBBA BIKKIES, MUFFINS AND CAKES** should be back by mid-month.

## Organic Expo 2010 MEDAL WINNERS

Among the winners at this year's organic industry trade show were a number of co-op standards.

- ▶ *Gold Medal for Best Pantry Staple Food* **ANDEAN GRAIN MIX**
- ▶ *Silver medal for best Pantry Staple Food* **QUINOA AND RICE PASTA**
- ▶ *Bronze Medal for Best Pantry Staple Food* Rain-fed biodynamic **RAINFED RICE**

■ FOR REGULAR UPDATES CLICK [HERE](#).

# Five-star macadamia nut butter

RAW, CERTIFIED ORGANIC, FARMER-DIRECT, HAND-HARVESTED, LOW FOOD MILES

Our new macadamia nut butter gets a lot of ticks. It's organic, raw, hand-harvested, and comes direct from a small family-owned business, Hand 'N' Hoe, which is nestled in the pristine rainforest off the Comboyne plateau, on the NSW mid-north coast.



◀ Hand 'n' Hoe country, nestled amongst the folds of the magnificent mid-north coast hinterland



Alfalfa House has set up a container exchange system so the plastic bucket the nut butter comes in is returned, refilled and returned to us and doesn't end up in the waste stream. As Kerrie

and David Flint process and vacuum-seal the macadamias on their farm, and make their own macadamia nut butter. This insures the highest possible quality, and keeps the food miles to a minimum by avoiding transport to and from processors. The farm, which also backs

onto a national park, is solar-powered and the Flinters are firmly committed to sustainable organic farming; they've lived on their certified organic farm since 1979. Their nearest neighbour is five kilometres downstream, which minimises any chemical drift or run-off.

and David come to Sydney once a fortnight for a couple of farmers' markets, getting the nut butter to Alfalfa also results in hardly any extra food miles as it's on the way.

And we're hoping to soon be stocking shelled raw macadamias from them. Watch this space.

– Monika

## PRODUCE OF THE MOMENT Specialty potatoes via Food Connect

We've all grown up with the humble spud: we've happily baked, mashed, fried, steamed and stirfried the main meal staple. And while we probably thought they were all much the same, we now know they have different attributes and hence different uses. We're even a little familiar with some of them; we know, for instance, which ones are good for mash and which ones for chips! (If you're not sure, check out our [GUIDE](#).) However, Alfalfa House is always keen to foster the non-hybrids, the heirlooms, the ones in danger of ending up in the dustbin of history due to neglect, or the deliberate efforts of the likes of Monsanto to limit or control our choices. And we're also keen to buy locally as much as we can.

Which brings us to Swallow Rock farm in Ebenezer in Sydney's west, run by Matthew and Sue Simmons, who specialise in organic potatoes. (Gone are the days of us only buying potatoes from Victoria or even Tasmania.) For the Simmons it's important to work "in

harmony with the environment by making the most of natural processes to enrich the soil and create an ecosystem where weeds and bugs work for the benefit of what we grow." Alfalfa currently stocks their Ruby Lou, Charlotte and Kennebec potatoes. **CHARLOTTE**s have a pale yellow skin and flesh, a firm texture and oval shape, ideal for boiling and for a potato salad. The **KENNEBEC** has a golden skin, white fleshy insides, and a uniform appearance. The skin is thin so it peels quickly. A multi-purpose tater, try it baked, boiled, steamed, mashed or fried. The **RUBY LOU** has a creamy texture, white flesh and a rosy skin; perfect for boiling or baking, not so good for mash or frying, though.

We probably wouldn't know about Swallow Rock, though, if it weren't for Food Connect, a new group linking local farmers within 200km of Sydney to city folk through organic fruit and veg. Food Connect Sydney began in February and delivers to more than twenty locations

across the city. Coordinator Julian Lee says, "The vision is to make locally produced organic and chemical-free food accessible to anybody in Sydney." They've modelled themselves on Food Connect Brisbane, which has been trading for more than five years and now delivers to 800 plus households a week.

Food Connect mainly offers a box scheme, buying produce directly from local organic and chemical-free farmers and packing it into boxes, which are then delivered to a local host or 'City Cousin', from which subscribers collect their pre-paid weekly boxes. The closest city cousin to Alfalfa House is the Angel Street Community Garden in Newtown.

As of last month Food Connect began delivering wholesale to Alfalfa each Wednesday. (Look out for produce marked *Farmer Direct* and *Sydney*.) Not only is locally-grown produce fresher and the carbon footprint smaller, farmers get more of the profit.

[MORE ON FOOD CONNECT](#)

## GREENS GALORE FROM FARMER-DIRECT GROWERS. EATING LOCAL HAS NEVER BEEN SO EASY!

### NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ **CORIANDER** Constant supply at the moment. Good for stirfrys.
- ▶ **PASSIONFRUIT** Delicious and tangy
- ▶ **LOCAL POTATOES** Specialty varieties include pink eyes, kennebec and ruby lou. A little pricier as they're not mass-produced.
- ▶ **CUCUMBERS** FD locally-grown
- ▶ **SALAD MIX** FD from western Sydney
- ▶ **SNOW PEAS** Young and tender, FD from south-west Sydney
- ▶ **WATERCRESS** Raw or lightly steamed
- ▶ **YOUNG COCONUTS** Family-owned business in Thailand. Available by bulk order only: 9 for \$28. (e:produce@alfalfahouse.org)

### IN + OUT

- ▶ **BABACO**: A mix between papaya + lemon.
- ▶ **BANANAS** NSW stock is hard to get in winter, so appreciate them when you can!
- ▶ **LEMONADES** The season's almost over. Much sweeter than a lemon, though they look the same. Try one while you can!

- ▶ **MUSHROOMS** Availability varies due to temperature fluctuations.
- ▶ **PUMPKIN** The stores of this summer-grown vegetable are running out.
- ▶ **SPANISH ONIONS** Out of season, should be back in six weeks
- ▶ **GARLIC** Stores running low (harvested in November). No Italian garlic available. Expect some fluctuations in supply of elephant garlic.

### WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ **APPLES** Galas, Granny Smiths, Fujis and Pink Ladys as well as Juicing Apples.
- ▶ **BROCCOLINI** FD, Broccoli is going to flower as the season is ending. Use all parts in stirfrys etc.
- ▶ **BRUSSEL SPROUTS** Just a light steam
- ▶ **CABBAGE** Green, red and savoy
- ▶ **CAULIFLOWER**
- ▶ **CUMQUATS** Tiny citrus, eat whole – sour fresh taste sensation
- ▶ **FENNEL** Crunchy, use in stirfrys and chopped in salads; use foliage too.
- ▶ **JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE**s Nutty flavour, use

- as a potato – baked, raw and in soups!
- ▶ **KALE** Tuscan + Curly (green and purple)
- ▶ **BABY LEEKS** FD, softer and less stringy than full grown leeks!
- ▶ **LEMONS** Bush, Eureka and Meyer
- ▶ **MANDARINS** Hicks, Imperial, Emperor, FD from Port Macquarie area
- ▶ **MIZUNA** Salad green with a bit of a bite
- ▶ **ORANGES** Heritage navels from Anthony Wallis on the Colo River
- ▶ **PARSNIP** Baked, steamed, in mashes or curries.
- ▶ **RADISH** Fresh and crisp with a bite; perfect for a salad
- ▶ **SILVERBEET**: Many varieties, lightly steamed or raw.
- ▶ **SWEDE** An old fashioned winter staple, used to fill out stews and soups.
- ▶ **TANGELLO** Juicy and colourful, grown by Colin Amos near Port Macquarie.
- ▶ **TOMATOES** small quantities of local glasshouse produce
- ▶ **WASABI LETTUCE** Tastes just like wasabi!
- ▶ **YAKON** Fresh and crunchy "earth" apple – ideal for juicing and raw in salads.

# FILM NIGHT FUNRAISER

## THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30

7PM (food+music) for 8PM (film)

# THE RED RATTLER

6 FAVERSHAM STREET MARRICKVILLE

\$20 full/\$10 concession

includes homemade hearty organic soup with sourdough bread

DRINKS+SWEET TREATS ON SALE

FEATURE FILM: **FOOD, INC.**

PLUS A SURPRISE SHORT FILM BEFORE THE FEATURE  
MUSIC: The Thingos, featuring Lisa McIntosh  
on piano and Paul Hayward on guitar

RAFFLE: Organic olive oil and wine hamper  
donated by member Rhys Goodey of Ark  
Wine Agencies plus a Lucky Door Prize



All funds raised will go towards improving the co-op. This year it's  
to buy new nut butter machines or to repair our two existing  
machines, which are getting close to their use-by dates.

“Bigger-breasted chickens, the perfect pork chop, herbicide-resistant soybean seeds, even tomatoes that won't go bad — filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the veil on the food industry, exposing the underbelly of big corporation food production and the dangers it presents. Food Inc touches on issues of consumer health, the livelihood of farmers, worker safety and what is happening to our environment, often with the consent of regulatory agencies.”

[www.foodincmovie.com/about-the-film.php](http://www.foodincmovie.com/about-the-film.php)



# Rice is back and it's better than ever

**A**fter a long wait amid the lingering rice crisis of the last few years, organic Australian-grown medium-grain rice is back. And it's better than ever. We finally have an ethical, sustainable local biodynamic rice suitable for Australian conditions grown in an area that gets enough rain to support it.

Growing a water-intensive crop such as rice in drought-prone regions doesn't make sense to Casino farmers Brett and Karen Slater, which is why they're growing and milling their own, a first for northern NSW. Not only is it biodynamic but it's grown entirely on rainwater, unlike rice grown in an irrigated paddy field; previously all Australian-grown rice relied on flood irrigation.

It all began about eight years ago when Gary Woolley, a north coast sugar grower, trialled a few of the Japanese 'upland' rice varieties, which need warmth and good summer rainfall but

not irrigation. Last season, the Slaters grew a small trial crop of the Tachiminori variety, had some success and learnt a few valuable lessons. More recently, they planted a larger crop on their certified biodynamic farm and it produced a bumper harvest.

Rather than truck the unprocessed rice to Leeton in the Riverina for milling, they built a new mill on their farm at Fairy Hill, the first in the Northern Rivers. The mill whirred into action last month, producing 300 tonnes of brown rice, saving around 465,000 litres of water, which is what it would have required had it been grown in the Murray-Darling Basin. From the farm, the rice is simply trucked to us in Sydney. It doesn't get any more efficient.

"It just makes sense. Here we lose crops to flood, not drought," Brett says. And while he's not sure if it's the rain, or the biodynamic nature of the crop,

but apparently this brown rice is tastier than the mainstream version. "People are saying their kids won't eat brown rice, but they'll eat ours," he says.

The other big plus is the price has come down close to where it was pre-drought. It's almost 45% cheaper than last season's and it's no surprise this rice won the Bronze Medal for the Best Pantry Staple Food at this year's Organic Expo and Green Show Awards. And, again, no surprise it's popular.

To cook brown rice, place 1 cup of rice with 2 cups of liquid in a pot, bring to the boil, cover with lid, then simmer till fully absorbed (about 30-40 minutes).

– *Monika Baumann*

#### SOURCES

[www.goodness.com.au](http://www.goodness.com.au) • <http://santotrading.com.au> • [www.clw.csiro.au/issues/water/water\\_for\\_food.html](http://www.clw.csiro.au/issues/water/water_for_food.html) • Northern Star Aug. 19, 2010 • personal communication Honest to Goodness

# Recipe

with Renata Field & Monika Baumann

## Green Curry

VEGAN. SERVES 4

- ▶ ½ onion, finely chopped
- ▶ 2 cloves garlic
- ▶ sesame oil
- ▶ 1–2 tsp green curry paste, or more to taste (Alfalfa's Blue Kitchen curry paste is quite concentrated.)
- ▶ 1 can coconut milk
- ▶ 1 cup vegetable stock
- ▶ 500g tofu
- ▶ 1 medium head broccoli, cut into florets, stems thinly sliced
- ▶ ¼ cabbage, thinly sliced
- ▶ 2 medium-sized carrots, thinly sliced
- ▶ ½ bunch kale
- ▶ 1 bunch either bok choy, tat soi or pak choy
- ▶ 200g cashews
- ▶ small bunch coriander and a little fresh basil (opt)
- ▶ juice of 1 makrut lime
- ▶ salt and pepper to taste

### METHOD

- 1 Lightly cook onions and garlic in a little oil until translucent. Set aside.
- 2 Add curry paste to a little oil in a separate pan and lightly fry for 30 secs. Add tofu and fry 3–4 mins. Set aside.
- 3 Add coconut milk to onions and garlic, continue to cook
- 4 Add vegetable stock
- 5 Add broccoli, cabbage and carrot and cook a few mins until carrots are softened.
- 6 Add cashews, tofu, coriander, basil and lime juice
- 7 Season with salt and pepper and garnish with fresh coriander leaves.
- 8 Serve with a cup of cooked brown rice and the new Blue Kitchen lemon–lime–date chutney.

# Got a cool two million?

## The house is for sale. Well, the building is.

**Y**ou may have noticed the FOR SALE sign on the awning above the shop. Yes, after eighteen years, the building that has housed the co-op is on the market. Check out the ad by clicking [HERE](#).

The owner is asking for close to \$2 million for a title comprising two shops (Alfalfa House and the framer next door) plus the two two-bedroom flats above each shop.

The sale does create some uncertainty for Alfalfa House. For instance, the new owner may want to redevelop the site or undertake a major refurbishment of our premises. Were that to happen, we'd have to find somewhere else to trade. Even if we were able to move back in after any renovations, the likelihood would be the rent would go up, possibly significantly. This is all speculation, of course. We simply don't know.

Ideally, we'd like to be in a position to make an offer on the building, but unfortunately we don't have the necessary deposit. Which is where you, the members, could come into the picture.

Perhaps you have a cool million or two lying around or you know somebody who does and is after an investment property. Or, you might know of a group of people who do, say a foundation or the like, and you



think they might be interested.

Another alternative is for Alfalfa House to raise a deposit – which would be significant – and take out a mortgage to buy the building. Obviously there's a lot to explore in order to

undertake such a commitment. At this stage, though, we're after your feedback. What do you think? We'd like to gauge whether you think it's feasible for the co-op to raise the deposit, relying as it would on members donating.

If you are in a position to buy the building as an investment or to donate money towards a deposit, please contact the chair of co-op's Management Committee (MC), Jo Rose at [redrosiejo@gmail.com](mailto:redrosiejo@gmail.com).

We're also keen to hear any other ideas you might have about how we could secure the building and provide certainty for our much beloved co-op. Again, please contact Jo.

In the meantime, Alfalfa House will, of course, continue to trade as usual. We would expect to have at least a few months' notice of any possible move, assuming the building is sold. The MC is looking around for other locations in case we have to move. Likewise, if you know of rental properties in the area, let Jo know.

**PLEASE NOTE** Opinions expressed in the eNews are not necessarily those of Alfalfa House. Any nutritional advice given in the eNews is of a general nature only and does not take into account individual circumstances or needs. It is not intended as a substitute for professional advice. Alfalfa House encourages readers to seek specific advice from health professionals as needed.

## HELP LIGHT UP ALFALFA



Do you have a torch you can donate to the co-op? Email [Rhiannon](mailto:Rhiannon@alfalfahouse.org) ([coordinator@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:coordinator@alfalfahouse.org)). Thanks.

## Inner West Seed Savers

IS HOLDING A STALL AT ARC  
2pm Sunday September 19

Addison Road Centre,

142 Addison Road, Marrickville

Bring cuttings, seedlings, seeds, food, run a workshop or speak on food issues.

e: [michele.margolis@gmail.com](mailto:michele.margolis@gmail.com)

## NEXT DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions to the next eNews is

**FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 24 • [info@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:info@alfalfahouse.org)**

## If you don't want us to tell the world...

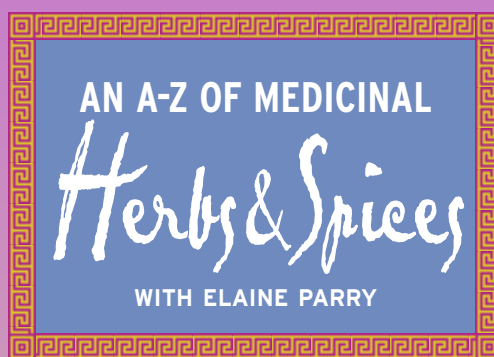
Your feedback is important to the lifeblood of the co-op. So when you respond to an item in the eNews, we'd like to share it with the rest of the co-op. If you'd prefer we didn't, please add the words Not For Publication in your email. Or, if there's a part of your letter you don't want included, let us know. Thanks.

**GARLIC** (*Allium sativum*) is a member of the Liliaceae family and is closely related to the onion, leek, shallot and chive. Garlic is arranged in a head, called the 'bulb', averaging about 5cm in height and diameter and consisting of many small, separate cloves. Both the cloves and the entire bulb are encased in paper-like sheathes that can be white, off-white or pinkish.

Garlic is among the few herbs with universal usage and recognition, its use as both a food and a medicine having been documented in many cultures for thousands of years, dating at least as far back to the time when the pyramids of Giza were constructed. It is also mentioned in the Bible and the Talmud. Hippocrates, Galen, Pliny the Elder, and Dioscorides all mention the use of garlic for many conditions, including parasites, respiratory problems, poor digestion, and low energy. Galen even purports it to be the "rustic's theriac" or cure-all. Its use in China was first mentioned in 510 AD. In more modern times, its use has been documented in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis in the early 20th century and gangrene in the two World Wars.

Garlic is widely used as a seasoning or condiment for its pungent flavour. It is a basic ingredient in many culinary dishes of various regions, especially the Middle East and Mediterranean, northern Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. Traditionally, garlic was rarely used in English cuisine, but the pervasive influence of Mediterranean cuisine on British cookery since the 1950s has secured an important place for garlic in an otherwise fairly bland style of cooking.

As well as its medicinal and culinary usage, garlic has played an important role in folklore and mythology, being regarded as a force for both good and evil. In ancient Greece, garlic was placed on piles of stones at crossroads, as a supper for the god, Hecate. It is said there are some Ancient Egyptian tribes who worshiped the onion are said to have had an aversion to both onions and garlic. In the Old Testament, it was mentioned that, after Satan had left the Garden of Eden, garlic arose in his left footprint and onion in the right.



## GARLIC

In Europe, garlic has traditionally been used for protection – perhaps owing to its age-old reputation as a potent preventative medicine, guarding against infections and symptoms associated with mental illness. Central European folklore considered garlic a powerful ward against evil spirits such as demons, werewolves and vampires. To ward off vampires, garlic was either worn, hung in windows, or rubbed on chimneys and keyholes. The practice of hanging garlic – along with lemon and red chilli – at the door to ward off potential evil is still common in parts of India today. In both Hinduism and Jainism, garlic is considered stimulating to the body. Some devout Hindus avoid using garlic in the preparation of foods for religious festivities and events. Followers of Jainism avoid eating garlic and onion.

The key constituent of garlic are sulphur compounds such as alliin, which is what gives it its pungent odour and flavour. When crushed, alliin forms allicin, a powerful antibacterial and antifungal compound. Garlic also boasts several other medicinal actions including being antiparasitic, anthelmintic (kills or helps expels worms), antiplatelet (anti-clotting), antioxidant, hypotensive (reduces blood pressure) and

hypcholesterolaemic (reduces cholesterol).

The daily use of garlic, either culinary or as therapy, aids and supports the body in many ways, probably more so than any other herb. It is one of the most effective antimicrobial plants on the planet, acting on bacteria, viruses and intestinal parasites. In 1858, Louis Pasteur observed garlic's antibacterial activity. The Cherokee Indians of North America are reported to have used garlic as an expectorant for coughs. As it contains a volatile oil, which is excreted via the lungs, it's useful in treating colds, influenza, catarrh, bronchitis and other respiratory infections. It combines well with echinacea and andrographis for microbial infections. In the gut, garlic supports the growth of good bacterial flora, whilst also killing parasitic organisms. If taken regularly over a long period of time, garlic may also reduce blood pressure via reducing platelet aggregation and cholesterol levels.

Some people are allergic to garlic and other species of the Liliaceae family. Symptoms may include diarrhoea and an irritable bowel, mouth and throat ulcers, nausea, indigestion, vomiting and breathing problems. Other cautions with regular, therapeutic use include thinning of the blood and an increased risk of bleeding, particularly during pregnancy, childbirth and post-surgery. Culinary use, however, is safe for regular consumption.

If you consume garlic regularly, you may wish to alleviate halitosis by adding some fresh parsley to the recipe, and for this reason, parsley is included in many recipes containing garlic such as garlic butter, pesto, pistou and persillade.

References are available upon request.

● ALFALFA STOCKS dried garlic powder, dried granulated garlic and fresh Elephant, Italian and Russian garlic when in season.

*Elaine Parry is a qualified and accredited naturopath, medical herbalist and clinical nutritionist. She practises at The Buddha Bar Healing Clinic, 434 King Street, Newtown. If you have any questions relating to this column or to herbal medicine or nutrition in general please contact her (elaine.parry@gmail.com).*

## FEED THE eNEWS

The eNews is your voice and a good way to communicate with other members. All regular contributors are co-op members.

Feel free to join them and send your feedback, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to [info@alfalfahouse.org](mailto:info@alfalfahouse.org).

The eNews is edited and designed by Stevie Bee, Information Coordinator, for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd

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