



Veggies on Wheels



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"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) generally appears around the beginning of every month.

Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

Warming up... gradually!

After a harsh winter and ongoing cold and wet spring, we have finally been seeing some palpable warming up, albeit a bit hesitatingly. Of course, this means that planting season has arrived. The growing season itself has already been on the go in greenhouses all over the country, including Almut's. If you are anticipating cultivating some of your own food, now's the time to get started! If you need [Garden Seeds](#), you can still find a large selection in our online [Catalogue](#) – or give us a call at the Store.

Grow Your Own

When it comes to growing your own, other than to continue **supporting our local, regional and national economy**, growing your own food may be one of the most important things you can do in these volatile times. We would like to share some sound and practical advice in support of this by Angela Dorie which she offered in a recent edition of the [Ontario Farmer](#).

The steadily rising cost of food is the easiest to remedy yourself. Buy close to home and become an urban farmer. Two or three generations ago it was normal for people to grow a good amount of their own food. Store-bought food was a luxury. Most houses in Canada are built on prime agricultural land and, unless it was all stripped away prior to construction, much remains good land to grow food, and urbanites have easy access to water. You can use raised beds of indestructible used tires, cutting out the top side walls to increase space. Placing landscape cloth beneath them stops volunteer weeds and planting thickly stops other weeds. You can get six [cabbage](#), [cauliflower](#) or [broccoli](#) plants per tire. Fill one with [carrot seeds](#), four [tomato](#) or five [cucumber](#) plants growing up a four-foot-tall tomato cage (see [Newsletter #312](#) for cage info). Almut reminds us that it is very important to tend to your plants, so water them, cover them if the nights are cold, remove weeds... **give Almut a call for assistance if you need help!** You can use jugs with their tops cut off or blue barrels cut in half, both with holes drilled in the bottom for drainage. Have a small compost pile handy for fertilizer in the spring. Mix [vegetables](#) among your flowers, or plant [apple](#) or plum trees instead of [maple](#) or birch. You can also plant currant bushes – white, black or red – instead of spireas or other decorative bushes. Grapevines on fences can replace wild vines and provide [fruit](#) and jelly. These are all suggestions to help you reduce your grocery bill with homegrown produce.

Travel Plans

During the first two weeks of May, all Food Box customers will have the pleasure of being served and delivered to by our daughter, **Barnhild**, while I (Wolfgang) will be briefly travelling to Southern France with our oldest son, Adam. Barnhild has already filled in for me in the past and does a great job. However, should there be anything out of the habitual ordinary that you are accustomed to, we would greatly appreciate your patience and understanding in accommodating Barnhild.



Organic Alcohol Coming to Pfenning's Organic & More

Partly following the requests of some of our customers, partly to enhance the selection of items available in our Store, we applied to the AGCO (Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario) for a permit to sell alcohol – and it has now been approved. Thus, we are happy to announce that we will soon be able to offer alcoholic beverages such as organic wines and beers. We'll keep you posted when this becomes a reality!



Sikkim: the World's First Fully Certified Organic State

It may be as eye-opening to you as it was to us to learn about [Sikkim](#), a state in India, the world's first **fully certified organic region**, having already made the transition to organic farming back in 2016.

The Indian state **Sikkim** – situated in northeastern India, tucked in the Eastern Himalaya between Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan, just north of Bangladesh – became India's first 100% organic state in 2016, with no use of

chemical fertilizers or pesticides on any farmland. It is among India's most environmentally conscious states, having banned plastic water bottles "in all government functions and meetings" and polystyrene products throughout the state.

The Sikkim government decided to switch to organic farming across the state way back in 2003. Farmers were trained and supported, and the use of chemicals was banned step by step.

This shift is said to have improved soil health, biodiversity and water quality, and made food healthier and safer (see a picture here of their organic produce offered at a market in the region).

Sikkim also promotes eco-products like bamboo bottles and is now a global model for sustainable farming.

The question is out there: If Sikkim can do it, why not the rest of India? And if India should be able to do it, why not Canada?



Question for you – our Food Box Customers

From time to time, we put the question out to you, our Food box Customers, what we could do differently or better. What would you like to see more of in your Food Boxes? Are they balanced out? Are they boring? Is there not enough of something, or too much of another thing? Almut puts in a tremendous effort to plan the best possible Food Box contents for you each and every week. We try to buy frugally and economically – and as much locally as possible, of course – to get you the “best bang for your buck.” Any feedback you may want to offer is welcome and would be greatly appreciated.

Eggs Galore

We may all have been hearing about the egg dilemma and shortage that our big southerly neighbour has been facing. Fortunately, we here at home are blessed with an **ongoing and secure supply of eggs** – and our [organic Eggs](#) are not only plentiful, but still very well-priced:

\$8.50/doz. If you are interested in farmgate organic eggs (straight from the farmer), please, contact us directly.

Have a wonderful month of May,

Wolfgang, Almut and all of us at Pfenning's Organic & More

