



# The Pod

## Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

*World PEAS is a program of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project*

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### Meet Your Farmer: Seona Ban Ngufor

Immigrating to a completely foreign country and culture is a challenge that offers no easy solutions. Trying to take with you a hobby as strenuous and demanding as farming is an even greater challenge. For Seona Ban however, she has not only become a successful immigrant from Cameroon, but a successful farmer as well. Although farming in New England was much different from the year round growing weather in her native country, Seona, thanks to the help of New Entry, planted a seed of ambition in her new home soil.



"I just chanced [upon] seeing a [New Entry] sign in downtown Lowell," Seona said, grateful for the lucky encounter which enabled her to pursue her farming interests in earnest. Now, six years later, Seona has become a successful farmer. She currently is renting land in Groton and looking for a plot somewhere a little bit closer to Lowell where she can establish herself permanently.

Seona credits New Entry with helping her in many aspects of the farming process, especially crop planning, business planning, and finding a market in which to sell her produce. She began her farming endeavors on a starter plot provided through the New Entry program.

"They helped with so many things," says Seona, who has definitely benefitted from the help.

Over the past couple years, she has had great success growing a variety of produce, but her greatest success has come with tomatoes, eggplants, collard greens, and cabbage. For this year's upcoming growing season, Seona would like to continue building on her success with her group of staple plants, as well as expand into growing varieties of peppers and even bok choy.

Outside of the growing and planting process itself, Seona participates in the World PEAS food hub. She states that not only is it good to be a part of because she is able to spread her wealth of healthy, organic and locally grown produce to the immediate community, but she also doesn't have to bring any vegetables back home with her! Seona believes it truly is "a great idea."

Over the past six years, Seona has not lost her desire or passion for farming in the slightest. She believes it truly is vital for communities close by and across the country to buy and consume fresh, organic produce. As for herself, Seona says that her favorite part of farming, besides the memories it brings back of Cameroon, has been the process of working in the field and harvesting her plants.

### Produce this Week:

Chinese Broccoli • Potatoes • Green Beans • Summer Squash • Eggplant  
Green Pepper • Cherry Tomatoes  
Watermelon

**Also in Large Shares:**

Heirloom Tomato

### Crop Information: Cherry Tomatoes



Although many associate the tomato with traditional Italian cuisine, the tomato genus actually originates in the South American Andes, and was probably domesticated in Mexico around 500 BCE. Tomatoes were introduced to Europe in the 17th century by early explorers, making it a relative newcomer to European dishes. Even after its first introduction in Europe, tomatoes were only grown as decorative plants due to the fact that some early varieties of this plant were poisonous. Eventually the tomato became fully domesticated and a very popular cultivar in Italy, Spain and other Mediterranean countries. Cultivation of tomatoes later spread to the United States, Africa, and the Middle East. Today, the tomato is one of the most widely consumed vegetables in the world.

Small tomatoes come in a variety of shapes [cherry, grape, pear] and colors [dark red, bright red, yellow, almost purple].

**Handling:** Wash cherry tomatoes, remove any stem, and eat raw! Cherry tomatoes can also be sautéed or roasted.

**Storing:** Tomatoes will last up to 1 week stored at room temperature and longer if still ripening. Not fully ripe tomatoes will continue to ripen at 60-75 degrees out of the sun.

# Eggplant & Tofu Stir Fry with Green Peppers

*Adapted from "Real Simple"*

## Ingredients:

1 cup long-grain white rice  
1/2 cup hoisin sauce  
3 tablespoons rice vinegar  
1 teaspoon cornstarch  
4 tablespoons canola oil  
1 pound firm tofu—drained, patted dry,  
and cut into 1-inch cubes  
1 small eggplant (about 1 3/4 pounds),  
cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
4 scallions, sliced, white and green parts separated  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 green bell pepper  
kosher salt  
1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, torn

## Preparation:

Cook the rice according to the package directions. In a small bowl, whisk together the hoisin, vinegar, and cornstarch.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the tofu; cook, turning occasionally, until browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil to the skillet. Add the eggplant, scallion whites, garlic, chili, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook, tossing frequently, until the eggplant is tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the hoisin mixture, tofu, and scallion greens and cook, tossing gently, until the sauce is thickened, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve with the rice and sprinkle with the basil.

# Garlic Mashed Potatoes

*Adapted from epicurious.com*

## Ingredients:

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil  
3/4 cup chopped onion  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
3/4 cup whipping cream  
2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter  
1.5 pounds potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces

## Directions

Heat oil in heavy medium skillet over medium heat. Add onion; sauté 5 minutes. Add garlic; sauté until onion is golden, about 5 minutes longer. Add cream and butter. Bring to boil. Remove from heat. Cover; let stand 20 minutes. Meanwhile, cook potatoes in large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Transfer to large bowl. Mash until smooth. Stir in onion and garlic mixture. Season with salt and pepper



# Green Bean Salad with Cherry Tomato Chutney

*Adapted from Bon Appetit*

## Ingredients:

1 pound green beans, trimmed  
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved  
1 tablespoons dark brown sugar  
1 garlic clove, chopped  
1/2 tablespoon chopped peeled fresh ginger  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/4 teaspoon chopped seeded serrano chili

## Preparation:

Cook beans in large pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 6 minutes. Drain; rinse with cold water and drain again. Pat dry. [Beans can be made 1 day ahead. Wrap in paper towels and store in re-sealable plastic bags; refrigerate.] Chop tomatoes in processor using on/off turns. Add brown sugar, garlic, ginger, cumin, and chili. Process until almost smooth. Pour tomato mixture over beans; toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate until cold, about 4 hours. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Arrange beans on large platter and serve.

