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Section: Entertainment

Lifestyle

Home and Garden

Fine living: Sharing when the backyard turns bountiful

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Red, white, blue and green Got lemons? Want peaches? Julie Hanft and Hilary Jeffris, two Mill Valley entrepreneurial moms, have taken the farm-to-table concept to a more personal level - a garden-to-garden-to-table one - with their Marin Open Garden Project.

"It's all about sharing what we each grow," Hanft says. "One of the catalysts was the horrifying statistic that 90 percent of what's grown in Marin, leaves Marin and 90 percent of what's consumed in Marin, comes into Marin. We want to be part of changing that distribution of food." In May, they took their class project (germinated at the Environmental Forum of Marin and later refined at Dominican University) and turned it into weekly neighborhood exchanges of backyard produce in Mill Valley, Larkspur, San Anselmo and San Rafael. There are plans for one in Novato.

"It's been going really well," Hanft says. "Right now, people are bringing lots of lemons, lettuces, fava beans, plums and apples, seeds and seedlings, and flowers and they're leaving notes on our bulletin board offering free rocks, free dirt, free wood chips and compost."

Everything's on the honor system, she says. Participants bring what they want to share and take what they want to eat, and while there are no organic requirements Hanft says, "most people are raising produce with organic principles in mind."

What's next? She and Jeffris are forming partnerships with nonprofit groups to receive any remaining produce from the exchanges and initiating a harvesting program where gleaners are trained to harvest homeowners' fruit trees and vegetables gardens and share the bounty with each other. Marin Open Garden Project exchanges are from 9 to 10 a.m. Saturdays at Boyle Park in Mill Valley, the San Rafael Library and Sun Valley Park in San Rafael and Creek Park in San Anselmo, and from 5 to 6 p.m. Saturdays at Piper Park in Corte Madera.

For more information, call 264-2828 or go to www.opengardenproject.org.

Soaking it up Laurie Krashanoff of San Anselmo went to the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York last month with the prototypes for a new designer line of teak tubs and sinks and came back with a good story.

The San Anselmo resident is the marketing director for Gardenside, Ltd., a company that distributes, among other products, Forest Stewardship Council-certified teak benches and the new Lister Purify Collection line of teak tubs and sinks. At the show, a developer stepped into the Purify Collection's prototype of a large soaking tub, laid back in it, liked it and wanted to take it

with him back to South Hampton for a condominium complex he's building. If it worked out, he would order 19 more. "He was really excited about not only the lines but the concept of a soaking tub and fell in love with it," Krashanoff says. "It's got a very Zen-like feel to it and it's soft, the wood is very forgiving and not cold, like porcelain, when your skin touches it."

The collection is composed of ecologically engineered teak finished with a solid, smooth veneer. The tub retails for \$6,600; the coordinating sink, mirror and shelf unit costs \$,2200. In the end, the Gardenside team decided to let him buy the prototype after realizing they would save shipping costs and build goodwill at the same time. He came back at the end the show, and loaded the tub into his SUV even though much of it was sticking out the back, Krashanoff recalls. "I told him I thought he might get a ticket. He just said, 'Oh, I'll deal with it.'" Maybe with a long soak in his new tub.

For more information, call 455-4500 or go to www.gardenside.com.

Branching out Looking for a fire pit for summer's cool evenings? San Anselmo interior design company Hershon Hartley Design has unveiled its Tiburon fire pit in a debut collection of furnishings featured at the Dunkirk Showroom in the San Francisco Design Center. It's not like a fire pit you might find at a big box store, says Jo Ann Hartley. "It's substantial and it's art; it needs a space that can take a big piece." And, she adds, "it's fabricated by a local artisan in Novato. Nothing's made offshore."

The fire pit was inspired by a client's deck in Tiburon. "It had a radius edge to it and there were barrel back chairs so we wanted something curvilinear with an organic feel to it," she says. The corten (recycled) steel bowl has a twig motif for its base, grate and the knob atop the retractable domed spark arrestor. It's gas or propane - ready and is available in either 36- or 48-inch diameters. Price ranges from \$6,000 to \$7,000.

Hershon Hartley Design, a green-certified company with a second design studio at Lake Tahoe, has also unveiled the Tahoe bench. This rustic seat made of quarter-sawn figured maple and patinated corten steel can be customized with a different FSC-certified wood or be made entirely out of steel. Prices start at \$4,000. For more information, call 459-4044 or go to www.hershonhartley.com

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