

# Permaculture in Practice

## Patriots buy at local-based markets

Thanks to this summer's relatively strong monsoon season, business at farmers' markets is blossoming beautifully in northern New Mexico. If you have not gotten out to a local market this year, don't delay. Now is the peak of a fabulously fruitful season.

Don't miss the mouthwatering, nutritious, fresh food traded at competitive prices. Don't miss the smiling faces, fresh scents, dazzling colors and sweet, live music. Don't miss the chance to run into old friends and make new ones. And, most importantly, don't miss various opportunities to build a more sustainable local economy, to grow a cleaner environment, and to preserve our tradition of local farming, which is so often threatened by powerful forces imbedded in our culture.

No, I'm not referring directly to threats from al Qaeda but to multinational corporations and their associated politicians attempting to monopolize the

food chain for a profit. In a multitude of ways ranging from the patenting of genetic material and the centralization of food-distribution systems to the poisoning of our soils and the production of unhealthy foodstuffs, these corporations make our culture more vulnerable to terrorist attack:

This means that making regular trips to farmers' markets throughout the year should be seen not only as something good for you and your family and a practical way to act ethically, but as an easy way to be patriotic.

Our nation has a long history rooted in land-based patriotism.

\* The "back-to-the-land" philosophy played an important role in the larger peace movement during the ill-conceived Vietnam War.

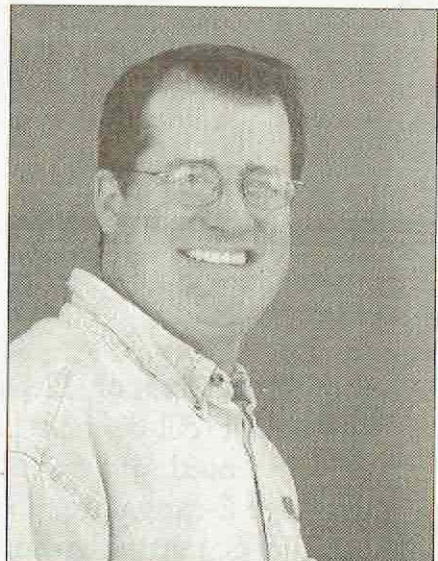
\* Victory gardens during the Roosevelt era's just war against fascism were not only useful in times of government rationing, but those food-filled front yards were also symbolic of America's independent nature.

\* The populists, who fought the robber barons of the late 1800's and whose political descendents ultimately created laws we all take for granted — such as child labor, minimum wage, forty-hour work week and workman's compensation insurance — were farmers.

\* The Homestead Act of 1862, which gave 160 acres of land to anyone who would farm 10 acres of it, shaped the American West like few other pieces of legislation in our history.

\* And let's not forget the author of the Declaration of Independence and his notion that a nation chock full of self-sustaining communities would epitomize the most healthy face of democracy.

Permaculturalists understand that nations cannot be permanent without sustainable systems for producing and distributing sustenance to their citizenry. The best of these systems are decentralized, cooperative, synergistic, efficient and productive. In our post-9/11 world, the



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American people are far too dependent on non-local food sources that could be disrupted as a result of various forms of attack. Reforming our system of agriculture by supporting local farmers ought then to be one of any patriot's highest priorities.

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