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## Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 96

### The Secrets to Living Farm Fresh

**Show Notes are at: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/96](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/96)**

Theresa: This is The Living Home Grown Podcast, Episode Number 96.

Announcer: Welcome to The Living Home Grown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh without the farm, to help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle, is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert, Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey, there everybody. Welcome to The Living Home Grown Podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Loe. This podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without the farm. That can mean preserving, fermenting, small space food growing, and just taking small steps towards living a more sustainable lifestyle, all the different ways that we can live closer to our food even if we have little or no garden space at all. If you want to learn more about any of these topics or my online canning academy, or any of the other trainings or workshops that I have going on, then just visit my website, [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com).

This week's episode is a group podcast. Now, I did one of these a few months ago and I've been getting so many letters from people asking me to do it again. Now, a group podcast is where I invite a whole bunch of different experts onto the show and they all answer the same question. What's fun about this is that every one of the experts gives a slightly different answer or has different insight to how they approach the question. I have to say that even though this do take a little bit more work, the group podcast are a lot of fun, because I just love how everyone approaches the answers differently, and I hope you do too.

Now, I don't give the experts any prompting. What I do is I just let them speak from the heart and answer the question however they see fit. What's great about that is that it packs a lot of information into each episode since they all approach it a little differently. Now, my first group podcast was back in last December. It was episode 83, and it focused more on organic gardening lessons from 8 different experts. This time, I shifted the focus more to organic food and sustainable living. I called to bond some experts that were in some different areas than organic gardening. Just about all of them had gardening in their background, but they are more focused in organic food, artisan food crafts, and wellness.

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These are people who are well-known in their areas of expertise on everything from certified organic eggs, to backyard edibles, to wellness, to artisan food crafts like fermenting and cheese making. I thought this would be a fun group podcast to do. I hope that you find this episode insightful and that you have as much fun listening as I did in creating it. Now, before we start, I wanted to let you know about some special free training that I have coming up that's directly related to the topics that I cover in this podcast.

Here's just a quick message about that. Are you someone who cares about where your food comes from and you've considered growing your own fresh organic produce, but you're not sure where to start and you don't have a lot of space? Are you interested in making your own hand-crafted foods like fermented vegetables, homemade cheese, fresh sourdough bread, and even fresh yogurt, but you're a little afraid of doing it wrong or making costly mistakes, or maybe you're interested in learning about all of those types of handcrafted foods, but you don't have time to cook everything from scratch or add more to your already hectic schedule?

Listen, I get it. I hear about all of those concerns every single week from my podcast listeners, and that's why I've decided to create a free workshop to help with all of that. I've drawn from my years of small space food growing and my professional training in food preservation and culinary arts to put together some workshops that will help you get more attraction towards an organic farm fresh lifestyle. Now, these workshops are completely free. At the time of this recording, we're setting up several different dates for the live workshops that will be happening mid-May 2017.

Now, if you're already one of my subscribers, then you're all set and you will be notified when the dates go live for the workshops. If you're not a regular subscriber and you'd like to be notified when these free trainings open up, then just go to [livinghomegrown.com/go](http://livinghomegrown.com/go), that's G-O, to get on the notification list. The purpose of these free workshops is just to help you get one step closer to a farm fresh lifestyle, without all of the overwhelm. I hope to see you there.

All right, so for this particular group podcast I was focusing on organic food and wellness, and I asked each of the experts the same basic question and it went like this. Many people are brand new to eating and living organically or farm fresh, as I like to say, and if you were speaking to someone who's just coming into our world of organic food and edible plants, what type of advice would you offer them in regards to starting out or experimenting within your area of expertise?

Now, each one of these experts got that same question and each one has a different area in living organically or living an organic lifestyle. They all gave great answers. Now, as I share each one of the expert's answers to that question, keep in mind that everything that they mention including their

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websites, other podcast episodes that they may have been on, or any resources or links that they mention will all be included in the show notes for this episode. You don't have to try to remember all of those websites and links, I have it all in one place for you in the show notes.

To get to that, you would go to [livinghomegrown.com/96](http://livinghomegrown.com/96). This is where I also have a full transcript of today's episode and a free PDF download that summarizes all of the tips and the websites that are mentioned. The only thing you have to remember is [livinghomegrown.com/96](http://livinghomegrown.com/96). All right, first up is Emily Aarons of Little North Farm. Now, you might remember Emily, because she was on episode 76, all about starting an organic farm from your own backyard. Emily and her husband Andrew recently started a farm in the suburbs and that's because they wanted their farm to be part of their neighborhood, so that they could provide an organic option to their customers in a really intimate way.

When I asked Emily to give some tips and advice on living a more organic lifestyle, she had a great answer. Here it is.

Emily:

Hello, Living Home Grown Podcast listeners. Hi. I'm Emily Aarons from Little North Farm in Georgetown, Massachusetts. We're a certified organic chicken farm, where we sell eggs and we also sell some produce in the warm summer months. I want to share with you my three tips on how to live a little bit more organically or farm fresh. Tip number one is, I know we all struggle with this, it's writing out a meal plan Monday through Friday. I actually love my fridge magnet I got on Amazon and you can just use a chalkboard marker and write in every single week what you want to have for your meal plan and then wipe it away at the end of the week.

Now, I only plan Monday through Friday, because who knows what happens on the weekends. Maybe will go out or get takeout. Monday through Friday, I write it down. The second tip is to find out if there are local farmer's markets that you can go to or even a mom-and-pop shop that you can go to, to source some of the ingredients. Of course, if you're going to a farmer's market, it's probably really fresh and it's going to be probably local and definitely seasonal. There are definitely not farmers around New England who are offering tomatoes in the dead of winter. You're always going to eat more locally and seasonally when you go to farmer's markets, or even the mom-and-pop shops.

The other really fun thing is when you go to the farmer's market or the mom-and-pop shop, you might find a new ingredient that inspires you to try a new recipe where maybe you've never heard of it before, maybe you've thought of using the spice, but you didn't know what to do with it, but it will inspire you to get out of a rut with making the same old, same old. Now, my last tip is if you're going to go to the big name markets, which of course we all do, it's convenient, sometimes it's cheaper. If you go to your regular big name market, I would buy organically, if you can, if it's affordable, if it's in your budget, there are of course

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certain items that you want to stay more organic with and some that don't really matter as much.

One place that I love to shop at a lot is Costco. Costco is a great place to make big bulk buys. You can get a big bag of spinach that's organic or other veggies. They actually have a fair amount of foods that are organic that are packaged as well. If you're not doing the local thing, maybe not the seasonal thing, but you want to buy organically, Costco is a great place to buy them where you'll save a lot of money. I always offer my customers to join. We do a seasonal locavore challenge. You can find it on our Facebook page and join us on our next locavore challenge. Those are my few tips. I hope you enjoyed them and I'll see you soon. Bye-bye.

Theresa: I really like Emily's suggestions, because here's the thing. If you are just starting out in the world of eating organically, it can feel a little overwhelming and even expensive. That's why I encourage people to take baby steps. You may be wanting to step away from conventionally grown food and you may be wanting to be more assured that your food is GMO-free and is free of harmful pesticides, but you may not have the budget to buy 100% organically overnight, or maybe you're not completely sure where to get your organic food or produce. It may take a while to get find good and inexpensive sources and that's totally okay. You just start with baby steps and you make the shift slowly.

You'll be surprised how many of those little steps add up, so that you have a big impact at the end of the month. You may also find that as you start looking for more organic labels and organic produce, that certain vegetables are just not available to you in your area in an organic way. That's usually when people start to decide to grow a few things themselves. It doesn't mean that you have to rip out all your landscaping and just grow edibles, although that can be fun too. It just may mean that you can grow a few tomatoes this year and maybe try your hand at that. Those baby steps and the journey along the way can be super fun and delicious.

Okay, so next up, we have Ellen Zachos who is the author of many books including, "Backyard Foraging." Now, Ellen was just recently on the podcast. She was on episode number 93, and she came on to talk about how to forage foods safely by starting in our own backyards. It's a great way to get started into the world of harvesting found or discovered edibles, and you can just start by things that you are already growing that are edible and safe. Here's what Ellen had to share about starting out in the world of foraging for organic and delicious edibles.

Ellen: Hi. My name is Ellen Zachos and my website is [www.backyardforager.com](http://www.backyardforager.com). I'm a forager. I'm a forager who loves to preserve wild foods in many different ways. It's the thing I'm most passionate about. If I were just starting out right now, I think one of the most helpful things to know would be that even though we, in

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the United States have gotten away from processing our own food and foraging for our own food, other cultures around the world still do that. By looking to those other cultures, you can find some really interesting plants that you already know, that are familiar to you, that you may be growing, but that you didn't realize you could eat.

For example, in Japan, hostas are grown as a commercial crop. Who knew that? Hostas are delicious. You're already growing them in your shady garden. In Japan, they know they're also tasty. In Central America, Dahlia Tubers are eaten either raw or cooked. In Asia and in Africa, Malabar spinach, which is a great and really adaptable, attractive foliage vine that can take summer heat, we grow that as an annual, but it's considered a leafy green vegetable in parts of Asia and Africa.

In Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, rosehips are a beloved fruit and vegetable. In the Middle East, they use dried sumac fruit as a spice. These are all plants that you already know, but not many of us eat them. I think that's a really good place to start, especially if you're nervous about whether foraging is safe or not. Look to other cultures, see what they are eating, and think about growing some of those plants in your backyard, not only for their beauty, but also for their deliciousness.

Theresa:

I love that. Ellen is so right. We should try to not get stuck into our own little world of food. There are so many different foods and different flavors out there that are just waiting to be discovered. Sometimes, it takes a little effort on our part to step outside our comfort zone and try new flavors or new tastes. One place that that is really evident is in the world of fermented foods. You may have read that fermented foods are extremely healthy for us to eat. They have tons of probiotics that help us build up our immune systems and keep our bodies running smoothly.

I've talked about fermentation on this podcast several times. There are so many different fermented foods that are gaining popularity like kimchi, fermented pickles, and so much more. Although there's a lot of interest in fermented foods, I find that there's also a lot of fear. That's why I've had fermentation expert, Karen Diggs on the podcast several times. Karen is a chef and a nutrition expert. She's also the developer of the fermentation tool called, "Kraut Source," which is this really cool tool that lets you ferment small batches of food inside a mason jar.

Now, Karen has been on podcast episode number six. She's been with me since the beginning, which that topic was on fermentation 101. Then she came back and was on episode 39 all about troubleshooting ferments. Now, her episodes are always popular, because there's a lot of fears or ground fermenting foods and because Karen is really good at dispelling those fears. I asked her to be one of the experts on today's episode. If you have a little bit of fear around

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fermenting food or fermenting vegetables, don't feel bad about that at all, because it's a whole different game that you're not used to doing.

When you lacto-ferment vegetables, what you're doing is placing raw veggies in a container and then you're covering it with a salt water brine and you weigh them down under the water and you wait. That part can feel a little freaky, because you're setting these vegetables on the counter at room temperature for days or weeks and your brain starts to think, "Oh my gosh, I'm going to kill somebody with botulism or something." Fear not, all you have to do is have the correct ratio of salt to water and when you start with that salt water brine, the veggies stay perfectly safe until the whole fermentation thing happens. The fermentation itself changes the PH in the jar to a high acid environment, and that's what keeps it safe.

It's like a mad science project going on, but it really is a safe thing to do, once you get over the idea of setting the vegetables on the countertop at room temperature. The most important thing is that when you're starting to ferment, that you have a solid recipe and a few tips. We have links in the show notes for today's episode with some recipes and Karen is going to give you some great tips for beginners right here in her answer. Here's Karen with some fermentation tips for beginners. Remember that all of the tips that she talks about are in the free PDF download that goes along with this episode.

Don't worry about writing everything down, just listen and absorb what she's saying. We have all the tips included in the PDF. Here we go.

Karen: Hello, everyone. My name is Karen Diggs. I am a chef, a nutritionist, an author, and chief fermentation officer at Kraut Source. Our web address is [krautsource.com](http://krautsource.com). That's kraut as in sour kraut. Indeed, that is our topic for today, making sour kraut, and pickles, or kimchi, and other lacto-fermented vegetables at home. The first thing I want to say is that it is super easy to make your own batch of fermented vegetables at home. The second thing is that when that batch is ready, it is a super food, because it provides naturally occurring probiotics.

As many of you probably know, probiotics are great for your digestion. It strengthens your immune system. It helps to prevent cancer and it's even good for your brain. There are some steps to keep in mind. There are different ingredients that you use in fermentation. Other than the vegetables, there's water, there's salt, and there's spices. In terms of water, if you have fluoride or chlorine in your water, it should be filtered out. You can also boil the water for about a minute and then let it cool off completely before using.

The quality of the salt does matter, so don't use table salt, because it is highly processed. I like to use Celtic sea salt, but other good sea salts will do just fine. Your vegetables should be fresh and ideally from your own garden or from your

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neighbor's garden or from the farmer's market. Then beyond that, depending on what you're making, you can add in spices and herbs. You can be super creative when you're making it at home. Temperature is important, so fermentation of vegetables ideally between 70 to around 75-degrees, if it's warmer than that, you can use more salt, because salt slows down the fermentation.

If it's cooler, then use less salt, and your product will ferment faster. Other things to keep in mind, it is very important to keep the vegetables submerged underneath the brine. You need to weigh it down or create some weight to push the vegetables, submerge beneath the brine. While it's fermenting, there's carbon dioxide, so that needs to escape or gas out. New oxygen should not go in. Whatever device or fermentation system you're using, those are the basic steps to keep in mind.

I like to ferment in a mason jar, because, well, kraut source actually sits on a mason jar. Using a mason jar also has other benefits. It will ferment faster, because there's less volume, but a minimum of five to six days, because it takes that long for the probiotics to develop. Once your batch is ready, you can remove whatever device you're using, put a lid on the mason jar and it stores in the refrigerator. It's very simple when you're using a mason jar as opposed to a big fermentation crock. It's also less work.

Basically, that's it. As a nutritionist, I also want to share with you the phenomenal information that's coming through researchers and people in the health industry. Right now, I'm actually reading a book called, "The Brain Maker," and it's by Dr. David Perlmutter. On the cover, it says, "The power of gut microbes to heal and protect your brain for life." People in scientific and health research are really validating the power of fermented foods, because when we eat fermented foods, it introduces probiotics into our gut and it feeds the good bacteria. We live in symbiotic relationship with our gut microbe.

It is my vision, my dream, that making a batch of fermented vegetables at home will become as common place as baking a loaf of bread or making a pot of coffee. I hope that this will encourage you to start your first batch if you have been sitting on the fence. Really, it's so easy. If you have kids, it's a fun project for them. Especially if you're doing it in a mason jar, because they can see the transformation day to day.

Beyond that, if you have any questions, you can visit our website. There are plenty of good recipes that you can find online. Don't wait. It's so easy to just grab a head of cabbage, some salt and start creating your own super foods at home.

Theresa: Okay. From fermented foods, we're going to now shift gears a little it into overall wellness. A big part of what I teach in my workshops or on my website is

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how to balance a farm fresh lifestyle. We live in a world that moves really quickly, and there's a lot of technology in our world. All that technology can be extremely helpful, but it can also cause a lot of us to disconnect from nature. We see this with children all the time. You've read about it. How more and more kids are no longer playing outside but instead are spending all of their time in front of a computer or a TV screen.

The thing is, the same thing is happening to us as adults. People don't really talk about how much of the disconnect we have as adults as well. In fact, this is part of the reason why I do this podcast, to help people make those connections back to nature, to organic food, to incredible seasonable flavors. It's all so important and can give us more balance in our life, as well as incredible taste and flavors and adventures in the kitchen and in the garden.

The next expert that I brought in for this particular episode is my friend, Jenny Peterson. She is a big proponent of making those connections as well. Jenny is a landscape designer, a speaker, an author in Austin, Texas whose work focuses on wellness gardens and making the connection between mind, body, and spirit. Now, she was on episode 82 of this podcast, where she talked about healing gardens and how we can make the connection each and every day back to nature. I really love what Jenny says in this upcoming clip, because it doesn't matter if you're a gardener or not. These tips will help you slowdown and connect. With that, let's listen to Jenny's tips.

Jenny: Hi, everybody. This is Jenny Peterson of [jennynybropeterson.com](http://jennynybropeterson.com). I would like to share some advice for living a more balanced and grounded lifestyle. That's something we all want, right? The first thing, this is really important, is don't aim for perfection. I am a firm believer that perfection is an unattainable goal. The minute you try to attain an unattainable goal, you set yourself up for failure. That is really the opposite of being balanced and healthy and feeling well, right? It's okay if overall, you just aim for balance not perfection. If you have a day where you're really off and we all have those days or even a couple of days in a row. Sometimes it's a season in your life when you're off.

It's okay. That's a normal wave of life. Everybody goes through that. Just take a deep breath and regroup and restart whether it's about what you're eating, how much you're moving, how you're interacting with other people or creating some space for yourself. Just get good at regrouping, because that's all anybody can do, right? Okay, so the second thing is really try to be present and mindful. I know the word "mindful" is a little bit of a cat phrase right now, but all that really means is to try to really be in that moment to be aware and to pay attention to what it is that you're doing, whether it's preparing food for yourself, for your family, whether it's eating, whether it's praying or meditating, whether it's exercising, whether it's your work, whatever it is, really have your mind focused on what you're doing and really experience the fullness of what you're doing.

Doing that will really decrease your risk of feeling overly stressed, of feeling anxious, of feeling depressed, because all those feelings are based in focusing on either the future or the past. The more you can really focus on the present and be mindful throughout your day, the better, right? One thing that really helps me to do this is when I take my yoga, meditation, and prayer practice out into my garden, just a beautiful way to center my mind to disconnect with the world around me and to reconnect with myself. The more I do that, the better I get throughout my day of remaining present, and mindful, and less stressed.

That for me is what helps me to stay balanced and grounded. I hope this has been helpful to you. If you're interested in hearing some more, please follow me over on Facebook. It's on my personal page, Jenny Nybro Peterson. I do a wellness tip of the day on Facebook. I hope you will join me for that. Until I talk with you next time or see you in any other way, be well and keep gardening.

Theresa: Those are all such excellent tips. In the show notes, I also have links to Jenny's Facebook page so that you can get her daily tips as well. Now, my last expert is Claudia Lucero of Urban Cheesecraft. Claudia was on episode 72 of this podcast, where she taught everyone how to make delicious homemade cheese in less than an hour. That was a very popular episode. Her company, Urban Cheesecraft, makes easy to use cheese kits, and they are so delicious. You can make these cheeses at home. Then she also wrote an entire book on making cheeses in less than an hour. That book is called one hour cheese.

Now, I wanted to share Claudia's clip last, because what she's saying here really applies to any aspect of a farm fresh lifestyle. When you're learning a new skill like cheese making or fermenting or gardening or anything else, you can get so caught up in not making a mistake. In other words, you end up worrying so much about making a mistake that you might not even get started. I want you to listen to the advice that Claudia gives about what she wished she knew when she first started out into the world of cheese making, because it applies to everything. It's great advice. Here's Claudia Lucero.

Claudia: What I know now that I wish I knew then was that failure when making cheese was going to be my best teacher. In the beginning, I'm following recipes and if it wasn't exactly a stretchy of a mozzarella as I thought it should be, I was bombed. Then what I started realizing is when I made it too firm, it was really close to Halloumi. When I made it too tender, it was a lot like burrata and sometimes even like a goat cheese. That actually, all those lessons accumulated and allowed me to create new recipes. I thought, "Okay, it's just these little changes in temperature and the science and the type of milks that I use." Really, all of those failures were my lessons and allowed me to write a book and create new recipes for my cheese kits. Now, I tell people, "Embrace failure. Go for it," and I'm really into it. It makes me so much more playful in the kitchen too.

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Theresa: Yes, embrace failure and don't be afraid to start. Don't be afraid to learn a new skill or try your hand at a new recipe or even try your hand at growing something, because it's in that moment of trying that you grow as a person. Otherwise, you can end up staying at the same place forever. Life is really about experimenting and expanding ourselves. We can't let the fear of making a mistake stop us in really living our lives. I hope you enjoyed this podcast episode. Remember that everything that was talked about, everybody's links, all of the websites, all of the other podcast episodes that were mentioned are all in the show notes for today's episode. Just go to [livinghomegrown.com/96](http://livinghomegrown.com/96) and we will have everything there for you including a free PDF download.

In addition, if you are interested in learning more about having a farm fresh life or managing a farm fresh life, then be sure to sign up for the waiting list of my free workshops that are going to be coming available mid-May 2017. To get on the waiting list, go to [livinghomegrown.com/go](http://livinghomegrown.com/go), that's G-O. Thank you so much for joining me here today. I know you're super busy and I appreciate that you took time to listen to this podcast. Until next time, just try to live a little bit more local, seasonal, and home grown. Take care.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Home Grown Podcast. Visit [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com) to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Home Grown Podcast.