

beyond health benefits

A dear friend of mine was diagnosed with cancer late last year, and like all too many of you who have had family and friends go through the same disease, you know it does not discriminate.

This particular friend of mine is in her 30s. We met through the Chicago fitness community. She's always been extremely active. And the doctors say her cancer is environmental, not genetic.

The reason I bring up her story is because at a recent game night in the hospital — something both her and us friends look forward to during her weeks of chemo — we got to talking about food. This is just one of numerous factors the doctors say could have caused her type of cancer.

I won't go into too many details, but some foods are off the table simply during treatment — the "pregnancy diet" as she jokes — while others will no longer be making their way back into her lifestyle after the research she's done.

The whole conversation really got me thinking, as I wouldn't say I've been a particularly mindful eater in my life.

A few months ago I made a commitment to cooking one recipe a week that I've never tried before. This doesn't seem like a lot, but I've stuck to it and had some successes — healthier veggie-packed crab cakes proved delicious — and some failures — I'll keep trying to get on board with cauliflower rice.

Cooking more and having a new perspective after these conversations with my friend are what I think got me to open the book "The Edible Balcony" by Alex Mitchell. This book showed up at my office probably three years ago, so to say it's long overdue is an understatement.

Now it's time for the fun part and to actually start growing some veggies and herbs among my flowers!

tasty features

Who knows why your customers, like me, initially decide to start planting tomatoes, strawberries, basil and so much more? There are a million reasons and every one is as good as the next.

A lot of the content in this issue is all about edibles. On page 10, Andrew Joyer from Waldoch Farm Garden Center will share which veggies are hot right now for its customers, and how he and his family have built a century-old business having edible gardening at its core.

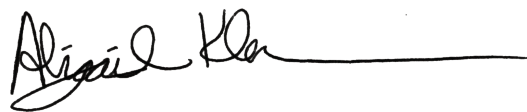
Keeping things fresh is crucial. Christina Salwitz has new ideas to help you sell more edibles on page 14. Then, flip to page 20 to read about some of the latest vegetables to hit the market and how they could fit into your lineup.

Foodscaping is a growing trend for everyone from homeowners with large landscapes to apartment dwellers with small balconies. Brie Arthur is the pro on this topic, and the author of "The Foodscape Revolution." On page 30, she'll help you become a pro as well with all her tips for combining ornamental and edible pairings.

don't forget

You have until June 9, 2017, to submit your entry to become Lawn & Garden Retailer's 2017 Merchandiser of the Year. You can find all the details on page 19. Feel free to head to www.lgrmag.com/merchandiser-of-year to see past winners.

The 2015 winner, Molbak's Garden + Home, increased edible sales by 20 percent with its veggie displays!




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Abby Kleckler, managing editor
Phone: 616.520.2163 | E-mail: akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com



EDITORIAL

Tim Hodson
thodson@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2161
Editorial Director

Abby Kleckler
akleckler@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2163
Managing Editor

Jasmina Dolce
jdolce@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2162
Green Goods Editor

Ana Olvera
aolvera@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2171
Assistant Editor

Allison McKenzie
amckenzie@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2142
Multimedia Designer

Samantha Orsi
sorsi@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2148
Production Assistant

Kristina Howell
khowell@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2168
Creative Director

ADVERTISING

Bob Bellew
bbellew@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2164
Vice President, Group Publisher

Amanda McAdam Brown
amcadam@greatamericanpublish.com
708.560.4046
Integrated Media Consultant

Kim Sammartino
ksammartino@greatamericanpublish.com
630.901.4735
Integrated Media Consultant

Felix Schilling
felixschilling@sbcglobal.net
817.731.9352
Integrated Media Consultant

Kim Meyers
kmeyers@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2137
Classified Ads

STAFF

Melissa Gray
mgray@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2153
Group Marketing Director

Becky Stovall
bstovall@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2138
Audience Development

Courtney Coon
cculey@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2141
Custom Media Editor

Sally Ostman
sostman@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2136
Accounts/Billing

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CORPORATE

Kimberly Baker
kbaker@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2135
COO

Matt McCallum
mmccallum@greatamericanpublish.com
616.520.2133
CEO



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