"I stuck my head out the window this morning and spring kissed me bang in the face." ~Langston Hughes

FRESH.

 Farmers Markets Start Opening for the Season!
The following markets will be open in April:

- College Park Farmers Market: 7am-noon, Saturdays, Year-Round
- Riverdale Park Farmers Market: 3pm-7pm, Thursdays, April 4th-November 21st
- Farmers Market at City Hall: 9am-2pm, Sundays, April 14th- November 15th
- The Farmers Market at University of Maryland: 11am-3pm, Wednesdays, April 17th- November 20th
- USDA Beltsville Farmers Market: 10am-2pm, Thursdays, April 25th- November 1st
- Branch Avenue in Bloom: 9am-2pm, Saturdays, April 27th-November 23rd

Stay tuned for markets opening in May and June; you can also find a complete list of markets here.

LOCAL NEWS.

 Chestnut Colt University of Maryland Campus' First Foal in 30 Years
It's a rainy Monday afternoon, and Laura Michelotti is visiting one of the Campus Farm's barns, checking in on Rebel, a thoroughbred colt born March 8th. "None of us had experience handling foaling before," the junior animal sciences major said as Rebel chewed on the front of her jacket. Read the rest of the article here.

 University Park Spreads Compost Program, First in County
University Park resident Linda Dylla said her trash can is a lot less heavy since she began participating in the town's new composting program.

Dylla and her husband are one of 150 households now participating in University Park's compost collection program, which is run at no cost to participants and no net cost to the town, according to Public Works Director Michael Beall. Read the rest of the article here.

ECO City Farms Intensive Weekend Certificate Course in Urban Agriculture
April 5th-7th
Edmonston, MD
Register now for AG 302 - An Intensive Introduction to Urban Commercial Agriculture. Offered by ECO City Farms and Prince George's County Community College and taught by ECO City Farms on the farm at 4913 Crittenden Street, Edmonston, 20781.

This 22-hour very intensive hands-on course will provide you with the sustainable strategies you require to plan and design an intensive food production system, based on your needs, goals and resources, and suited to your own individual urban space. A continuing education certificate will be awarded upon completion of all three days. $550.00, all-inclusive. Fri & Sat: 9:30am-6:00pm and Sun: 12:00pm-6:00pm. Lunch included.

To register go to www.pgcc.edu/owllink and select Workforce Development and Continuing Education Students. For more information call 301-322-0964.
**FUN.**

**Romano Vineyards Open House**
Romano Vineyard & Winery will be open Saturday April 13th and 20th, 12:00pm - 5:00pm. Directions and information at their [website](#).

You can also visit them at Decanter, A Celebration of Maryland Wine & Racing, April 20th & 21st, in Baltimore, and at St. Michaels Wine Fest, April 27th-28th, in lovely St. Michaels, MD.

**Black Swamp Creek's 4th Annual Plant Sale & Sale Grow It Fest**
Saturday, April 27th, 9:00am-1:00pm

Bring labeled plants to swap for other annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, shrubs, trees, bulbs, seeds, farm and garden stuff. Plant swap begins at 10:00am. Support local grown-compost sale, plant sale, farm displays, gardening demonstrations, land preservation information and more. FREE Refreshements!

Location: The restored Tobacco Barn at [19070 Poplar Ridge Road, Brandywine](#).

For more information call Joanne Flynn at 301-502-3261. Sponsored by [The Black Swamp Creek Land Trust, Inc.](#) & [The Greater Baden Aquasco Citizens Association](#).

**Volunteers, Apprentices and Interns Wanted**
Get your hands dirty and get involved with ECO City Farms!

Their open volunteer hours allow you to come and help out and see what they do. The next date is April 20th from 9:00am-12:00pm. A farm tour follows. Read more about volunteering at the farm and at their office.

ECO also needs talented people in organizing, outreach, office technology, blogging, photography and other work. Contact [amanda@ecocityfarms.org](mailto:amanda@ecocityfarms.org) if you have a skill you think they may be able to use!

And last, but not least, ECO is seeking farm interns and apprentices for a longer-term volunteer commitment to the farm. [Read more](#).

**The Way of Food**
12:00pm, Saturday, April 20th
Accokeek, MD

The [National Colonial Farm](#) presents "The Way of Food" - a journey through Maryland's food traditions. Join us for a kitchen table conversation as we introduce you to the epicurean delights of colonial Marylanders. Learn how our tastes and the food itself have changed over 300 years as we explore the "receipts" (recipes) and meal preparation.

This month's theme is "Sweet!" featuring Cookies of 1812, An Italian Pudding, and Apple Dumplings. Free!

**Oyster Mushroom Cultivation**
10:00am-2:00pm, Saturday, April 20th
Accokeek, MD

Join an all-around fun gal for a walk in the woods! Learn how to find and properly identify edibles, but more importantly, learn what you can do to turn 1 into 1000! This hands-on workshop will cover Stem-Butt Propagation, Wood Dowel inoculation, and Straw Pasteurization.

Participants will also plant a mushroom orchard and get to take home a log of their own. $35 Members, $40 Non-Members. [Register here](#).

**New Farmer Pathways: Local Farmers Share Success Stories and How You Can Grow the Local Food Movement**
Thursday, April 25, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
George Mason University

Whether you are interested in working on a farm for a summer, thinking about becoming a farmer, or if you just want to hear some great farmer tales, come to New Farmer Pathways, a fun panel presentation coinciding with Earth Week and Sustainable Food Day at George Mason.

For directions and more information on George Mason University's Green Week, visit the [Mason Earth Week website](#). Free; no pre-registration required!
FEATURED FARM

Piscataway Farms: Clinton, MD & Parker Farms: Oak Grove, VA

Beginning with two acres of vegetables and berries in Clinton, MD, Admiral Edelen Parker and his sons, Rhoderick and Christopher launched their "Pick Your Own" operation. By 1976 they'd expanded to 150 acres, with roadside marketing and a farmers market. Today Parker Farms plays an important role in our regional food system, brokering for family-owned and run farms up and down the East Coast, filling grocery stores and restaurants with seasonal produce.

Piscataway Farms in Clinton - a 60-acre vegetable operation run by Chris Parker, co-founder of Parker Farms - feeds into the Parker Farms system. Chris specializes in peppers and specialty tomatoes, so when you shop for these items at your local grocery store, there's a good chance you're tasting his product.

Parker Farms products are carried at our local Wal-Marts, Whole Foods, Krogers, and Safeways. And if you eat at local restaurants, you may be getting their products too, through their partnership with Coastal Sunbelt distributors.

Look for Chris in May's issue of Washingtonian magazine, where's he's featured in an article about Silver Diner's relationship with local farmers.

Water Bath Canning Class
Friday, May 17th
Clinton, MD

Food preservation has become a hot topic for residents, with increasing numbers of consumers interested in learning up-to-date techniques and safety procedures for preserving their garden's bounty.

The University of Maryland Extension Office Prince George's County is offering a hands-on food preservation class to teach basic United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved canning techniques for high acid foods such as tomatoes, fruits, jams and jellies.

$35.00 registration fee includes a copy of So Easy to Preserve, handouts, materials.

Pre-registration required; space is limited. Information and registration form here.