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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GET LOCAL Features Greens

Turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, kale, collards, chard, and spinach. They aren't just side dishes—greens are in spotlight for GET LOCAL. A collaboration between Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), and Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR), GET LOCAL is a seasonal celebration of foods from local farms creatively prepared by local chefs. During the month of October, area restaurants are joining together to serve greens, each interpreting the local produce in their own way.

Greens are in good company at The Market Place, where they're plated with pear mustard compote, smoked duck breast, and herb quinoa. Many dishes created for GET LOCAL combine familiar Southern foods and fine cooking. One of Bistro 1896's many changing nightly specials was chard accompanied shrimp and grits. Square One Bistro in Hendersonville is serving braised collards with smashed black eyed peas and stuffed quail. Square One is also offering mahi-mahi florentine with local spinach, a spinach salad with marinated mushrooms and local pumpkin, and an entire small plate menu highlighting a spectrum of local greens.

Cathy Cleary of West End Bakery uses Thatchmore Farms' greens, grown in Liecester. She describes the benefits of buying local, and the close relationships formed. "I love working with them and getting their wonderful product. And when they come, they always buy breads and pastries. It is a win-win relationship."

Other participating restaurants are Luella's Bar-B-Que, The Lobster Trap , Savoy, Rosetta's Kitchen, Laurey's Catering and Gourmet to Go, Lomo Grill (Waynesville), Bouchon French Bistro, Tupelo Honey Cafe, Early Girl Eatery, and North Star Diner, (Weaverville). See the complete list at <http://www.asapconnections.org/getlocal.html>.

GET LOCAL's goals are to 1) support the survival of family farms in the region, 2) bolster our reputation as a top-notch farm-to-table city, 3) further establish the essential role of independent restaurants in our community, and sustain those restaurants during the current economic downturn, and 4) fulfill the promise of the Asheville CVB's *Foodtopia* campaign, which is working hard to bring "culinary tourists" to the Asheville area, and has a strong farm-to-table element.

FEATURE IDEAS

Greens are a regional specialty and a great fall food. Towards the end of Southern Appalachian's long growing season, as other vegetables are dying down, greens flourish, providing welcome freshness and color. Here are some ideas for greens features to tie into your coverage.

Farmer profiles: The stories of the farmers who cultivate greens are as rich as the dishes made from them. Calvin Freeman of Freeman Farms grows greens year 'round in Lake Lure. The 15 acres Freeman farms are in sight of the house where he was born. ASAP can provide photos.

Read more about Freeman at <http://asapconnections.org/who%20grows%20profiles/freeman.pdf>. Search for more local farmers who grow greens at www.buyappalachain.org. Or contact Rose at rose@asapconnections.org for contact information for farmers or help with setting up interviews.

Recipes: There are more possibilities for preparation than the two extremes of spring mix salads and Southern style boiled greens. Here's a primer to lightly cooking greens.

For all preparations:

Wash the greens. Cut or tear out the stems. Chop the stems, if you wish to eat them. You may also want to tear or cut large leaves into smaller pieces. But remember that greens shrink substantially when cooked.

Cooking times vary somewhat depending on the texture of the greens. Softer spinach takes much less time than tough kale.

Steaming:

Cover the bottom of a pot with about an inch of water. Add a teaspoon of salt. Bring to a boil. Add stems first, if using. Then add greens. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally for just 2 or 3 minutes, or until greens are soft. Drain, flavor, and serve hot.

Sautéing:

Warm a splash of oil in a pan over medium heat. Add garlic or other flavorings and stems, if using, to the heated oil. Sauté for about a minute. Then add the greens and cook until wilted. Stir and check consistency frequently. Sautéing takes only a few minutes.

Seasonings:

Try some of these on your greens.

Lemon juice

Garlic

Onions

Crushed red pepper

Butter

Vinegar

Soy sauce

Boiling:

If you do want to make southern style greens, forget cautions about overcooking. Cover greens in boiling water for an hour. For truly authentic flavor, add pork fat to the water.

Salads:

Salads are best made from baby greens—little leaves that have just come up.

ABOUT APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project is a nonprofit organization with the mission to create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable and health-promoting. Among many other projects, ASAP works to match chefs and local suppliers, help restaurants advertise local ingredients, and organize events featuring local foods.

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