



SLOW FOOD SONOMA COUNTY :: NORTH ::

APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER



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This Year's Theme: Roots and Grains

Themes

Slow Food USA, as part of the larger Slow Food International movement, often selects themes to focus on each year. These themes are chosen to highlight important issues in the food system, promote sustainability, support small-scale growers and processors, and educate our members about food that is both good for us and the planet. The focus in 2024 is on roots and grains.

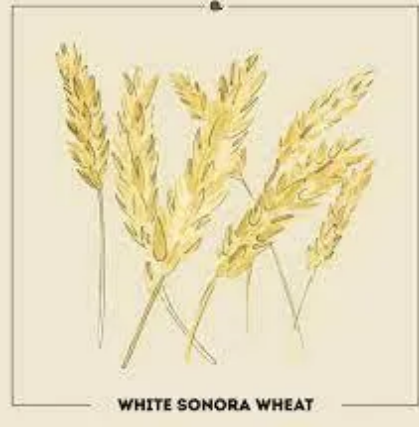
Because there is increasing interest in home-grown and -milled grains in Sonoma County, we wanted to know more about why.

Why Grains?

Cultural Significance: Grains have immense cultural significance around the world. They are foundational to many traditional diets and culinary practices, and they have shaped the way people eat for thousands of years. By focusing on grains, Slow Food aims to celebrate this cultural heritage and raise awareness about the importance of preserving traditional grain varieties and cooking techniques.

Nutritional Value: Grains, when whole and minimally processed, are nutritious and provide essential nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals. The focus on traditional grains is to reinforce the health benefits of including a variety of grains in one's diet, especially in a world where processed and refined grains dominate many food systems.

Biodiversity: There is a growing concern about the loss of biodiversity in our food system. Many ancient and heirloom grain



varieties are disappearing as industrial agriculture favors a small number of high-yield, genetically uniform crops. Slow Food's focus on grains is likely a call to action to preserve and promote the diversity of grain varieties to ensure resilience in the face of pests, diseases, and changing environmental conditions. [The Ark of Taste](#) was created to assure that threatened food crops continue to be grown. Included is White Sonora Wheat, one of the oldest dryland-adapted grain varieties and known for its exceptional flavor. It was first cultivated in California in the mid-1600s and continues to be grown and milled locally.

Support for Small Producers: Small-scale grain producers often struggle to compete with large industrial farms. By highlighting grains, Slow Food USA's goal is to support and promote small producers who grow diverse and heritage grains using sustainable farming practices.

Climate Change and Sustainability: Grains, when produced sustainably, can be part of a climate-friendly food system. Practices such as agroforestry, no-till farming, and crop rotation can help sequester carbon, improve soil health, and reduce the need for harmful chemicals. By focusing on grains, Slow Food USA advocates for sustainable farming practices that mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Theme Promotes Our Mission

Overall, the choice of grains as a theme for Slow Food aligns with our mission to promote good, clean, and fair food for all. It connects issues of cultural heritage, nutrition, biodiversity, support for small producers, and

sustainability within the context of a single, essential food group.

To learn more, watch for an upcoming tour of [The Mendocino Grain Project](#) in Ukiah.

Slow Food Events

Look for an invitation with details about a month before each event.

April

8 Slow Books, *Taste: My Life Through Food*, by Stanley Tucci

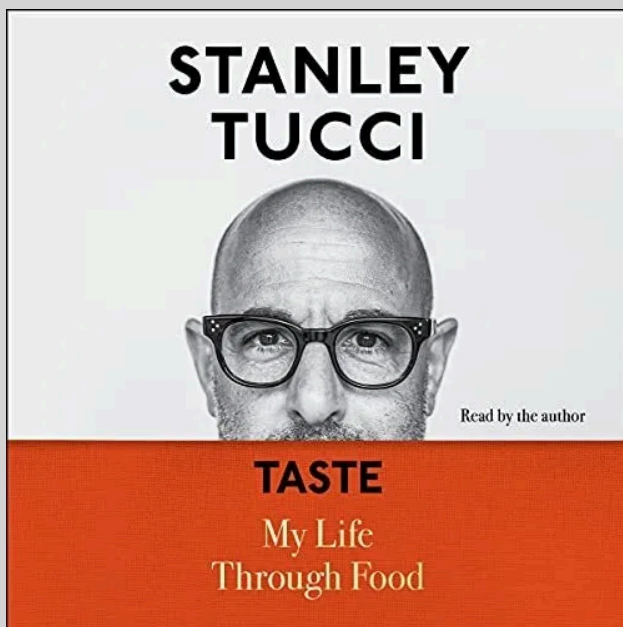
May

13 Slow Books, *The World Central Kitchen Cookbook*, by Jose Andres

15 Farm Tour: Seven Moons Farm, Sonoma

June

24 Slow Books: *How to Cook a Wolf*, by M.F.K. Fisher



Slow Books

Slow Books is an ongoing activity of our chapter. The group meets every 6 weeks to discuss a food-related book and enjoy a potluck dinner based on the book. We meet in people's homes which can usually only accommodate up to 8 people. For this reason, we are usually unable to invite others than our core group of participants.

But we're learning a lot from the books we've read, and thought you might want to enjoy the books as well. We will therefore let you know what we're reading each meeting through the newsletter and our [website](#).

April Slow Books Selection

Taste: My Life Through Food, by Stanley Tucci

From award-winning actor and food obsessive Stanley Tucci comes an intimate and charming memoir of life in and out of the kitchen.

[Read more here.](#)



Special Slow Wine Event on April 9

The [Sonoma County Wine Library Association](#) will host a special Slow Wine discussion, book sale and signing, and a wine tasting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 9, at the Healdsburg Regional Library, 139 Piper Street, in Healdsburg**. The discussion will be led by renowned wine writer and educator Deborah Parker Wong, national editor of the *Slow Wine Guide*.

Slow Wine is an arm of Slow Food, which advocates for quality ingredients from local growers and artisans; Slow Wine shares these same principles.

Sign up

at sonomawinelibraryassn@gmail.com.

[Spotlight on Ridgely Evers, DaVero Farms & Winery](#)

Allison Eckert works on a farm in Petaluma. She interviewed Ridgely Evers, the co-owner of DaVero Farms & Winery in March, 2024.

During the transition from winter to spring, the farm where I work is at its least impressive. Highlights include sodden cover crop, damp mulch, and hens who seem to be waiting for daylight savings time to deign to lay an egg. But during my visit to meet Ridge Evers of [DaVero Farms & Winery](#) (located in Healdsburg), despite dark skies and pouring rain, the property teemed with life: birds, insects, budding vines and trees drinking the downpour, charmed guests learning the finer points of biodynamic viticulture over a glass of lively Sangiovese.

Evers is a recovering business executive with a laundry list of tech sector successes under his belt, including cutting his teeth by creating Quickbooks in the early nineties. These days, he's "in the process of shifting [his] life from required courses to electives," focusing on his reverence for nature's perfect balance on his biodynamic farm at DaVero. He's even exploring ways to utilize his unique combination of skills in business management and land stewardship to sequester carbon at scale at his other venture, [Avivo Wines](#).

While we're sometimes tempted to think of biodynamic agriculture as on the cutting edge, Evers points out that the term "[biodynamic](#)" [turns 100 this year](#). "All farming before WWII was more or less what we'd now call organic," he adds, but now is the time to push beyond organic into biodynamic and regenerative practices. Sustaining our earth is insufficient; the climate crisis demands more of us. "I'm very much of the belief that, when something is sick, you first have to heal it," says Evers. "Regeneration is about healing the damage that we've done."



When Evers first bought the Healdsburg property where he now lives and farms, it was “massively degenerated,” almost totally lacking in soil organic matter and biodiversity. It’s hard to recognize the thriving DaVero plot in Evers’ description of the property as it once was. Throughout the process of healing his land, Evers learned “if you simply embrace the fact you’re not going to improve on nature, then you know what you really need to do is stay as close to nature as you can.” This philosophy still undergirds DaVero’s approach to biodynamic wine and olive oil production.

Like Slow Food USA, one of Evers’ primary concerns is biodiversity. When rehabilitating degenerated land, Evers recommends that you reverse monoculture by mimicking nature’s “diverse, rich, multi-species environment,” then get out of the way. Ideally, Evers sees farmers playing a facilitative—not a controlling—role as land stewards. “The big idea behind biodynamics is that the farm is a living organism, and you focus on the health of the whole, not the crop,” Evers adds, “and so you focus on the wellbeing of the intentional plants, but also the wild plants, and the intentional animals and the wild animals and the farm workers, and, in our case, we also include our club members in that.” Evers recommends working with the guidance of biodynamic certifiers, who offer site-specific suggestions tailored to each field’s microbiome.

One key to achieving a more natural agriculture is to choose climate-appropriate plants native to a Mediterranean climate like ours. “With climate-appropriate varieties, the plant is in balance, so you’re not fighting the plant,” which Evers feels makes it “relatively straightforward to grow regeneratively, in turn creating the conditions for the fruit to be in perfect balance to make itself into wine or olive oil.” DaVero’s Italian wine grape varieties

and olive trees are well-suited to their North Bay home, which shares the approximate latitude of their northern Italian origin. In fact, DaVero's olive trees are Italian *nonnas* over 800 years old, imported directly from an Italian orchard that has stood since the Middle Ages.

Evers and his team at DaVero offer our community an old world lens steeped in homegrown Bay Area ingenuity. If you want to learn more about how wine can change the world, heed Evers' invitation to [visit DaVero](#) and "come learn, come experience, come enjoy our farm." DaVero's 90-minute tastings "emphasize teaching and learning"; each DaVero visitor and [wine club member](#) will leave their experience understanding how and why to grow regeneratively.

DaVero Farms & Winery is a Snail of Approval - Slow Food in Sonoma County recipient, and is co-owned by Ridgely Evers and Colleen McGlynn.

Snail of Approval

Congratulations to our new Snails for 2024!

[Golden State Pickle Works](#) focuses on healthy probiotics, making artisanal fermented vegetables and thoughtfully crafted condiments here in Sonoma County. They use local ingredients and support food purveyors from Northern California. You can find their products



online as well as in various retail outlets, farmers' markets, and restaurants. Visit their website to learn more.

The bakery operations of [Nightingale Breads](#) in Forestville are centered around their wood-fired oven, which produces a delicious hand-made selection of organic artisan breads. A selection of "sweet stuff" is also available, including babka on Thursdays, cinnamon rolls on Saturday, and scones on Sunday. Nightingale employs dedicated bakers, supports and purchases from the local food community, and uses seasonal produce in their specialty breads. A small selection of local cheeses, olive oils, preserves, and salamis are also available in their shop.



[Woodlands Charcuterie](#) is honored for their snout-to-tail philosophy of animal use, for purchasing from farms that support regenerative or traditional agriculture, and a focus on animal welfare as a guiding principle. Their products are crafted with care, thought, and creativity. They also support and are involved in the local food community in Sonoma County. You can find them at the [Santa Rosa Original Certified Farmers Market](#), the [Sebastopol Farmer's Market](#), and the [St. Helena Farmers Market](#). They also appear at pop-ups, catering, and private dinners.





Spot the Snail

Let's play "Spot the Snail!" When you visit one of our Snail of Approval food businesses (restaurants, bakeries, artisan producers, farms or ranches), take a "selfie" with the Snail decal, or just the decal if you don't want to be in the picture! Then, post it to your social media accounts and tag the @business and @snailofapprovalsonomacounty.

If you don't use social media or prefer not to post, then please send us your photo and we will post it to our social media accounts with your permission: snailofapprovalsc@gmail.com

Help show appreciation for our Snail of Approval businesses by showcasing them online. Join us in Spotting the Snail!

For a full listing of our Snail approved businesses, visit our [webpage](#).

[Recipe of the Month: Radish, Carrot and Cilantro Salad](#)

Slow Food USA is focusing on the importance of roots and grains in 2024. This year our newsletter recipes will include these ingredients.

Radish, Carrot and Cilantro Salad

Taste of Home

Carrots and radishes pop in this citrusy salad. Try it with anything from the grill or pile it on tacos.

Visit our [website](#) for more details and a printable copy of this recipe.



photo by Taste of Home

[Bodega Red Potato Presidium](#)



Cole Anastassiou, Brisa Ranch, Pescadero

On March 11, our chapter distributed 3,780 pounds of Bodega Red Potato seed to 21 farms, 5 local nurseries and farm suppliers, and 4 master gardeners/home gardeners/community projects. We provided Ojai Pixie tangerines, on the [Ark of Taste](#), to everyone.

We thank Shone Farm for their generosity in providing the space and equipment needed for the seed pickup.

Slow Food Sonoma County is the sole source of Bodega Red potatoes. Go to our website for information about the [Bodega Red Potato Presidium](#).

Membership

Welcome New Chapter Members!

Amy Dyer Jim and Rita Mize Madelene Parks

[Join or renew your membership online](#) and list Sonoma County North-CA as your chapter. If you prefer to renew locally by check, please download our [membership form](#) and follow the instructions. Several times a year, Slow Food USA promotes **Pay What You Can Day** where you can join or renew for any amount on one day only. Watch your email for these promotions.

Newsletter: Carol Diaz, Allison Eckert, Kate Hendricks, Lisa Hunter



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