

Expert shares tips for handling, storing veggies, fruits

Handling vegetables and fruit is not for amateurs, but Al Bernardi, the produce expert, did his best Jan. 24 to help about 50 SACS members at the general meeting catch up with produce know-how he's accumulated over the decades.

Jill Rouw, vice president, shared her notes on Mr. Bernardi's demonstration with *Celiac Digest* and *SouthernArizonaCeliac Sup-*

port.org so that we can share some of Mr. Bernardi's advice with those who couldn't be at the meeting.

Mr. Bernardi is the founder of Barnardi & Associates, Inc., an Arizona-California-Florida based national supplier of fresh produce. He is in demand on the lecture circuit these days and that's not surprising considering the advice he gives:

1. Put your plastic wrap in the freezer or refrigerator. It won't stick to itself, but it will stick to whatever you are wrapping.
2. Microwave citrus to get more juice, but be sure to slice it in a bowl.
3. To ripen fruit, place it in a paper bag with an apple.
4. Clean the top layer off mushrooms under running water with your fingers or a brush. Use an egg slicer to cut them evenly.

5. Hang bananas from their stems for even ripening.
6. Olive oil on steamed vegetables is more healthful and has fewer calories than butter.
7. To store lettuce, wash, blot dry and put in a Ziploc bag with a damp paper towel.
8. Never store tomatoes in the refrigerator and never let them get close to lettuce in storage, as they will cause brown wilt on the lettuce.
9. Organic foods are grown with manure and have lots of bacteria on them, so wash them thoroughly in water.
10. Don't wash produce with soap as it will damage the skin and contribute to early rot. Use plain, clean water.

For many more of Al's tips, visit our website at www.SouthernArizonaCeliacSupport.org.



VEGGIE SECRETS: Al Bernardi, produce expert, helps Jeannine Faidley, Mary Louise Catura and Brenda Bryson, from left, determine eggplant gender.

GF diners plan for March 17, praise PF Chang's

Jonathan's Cork, 6320 E. Tanque Verde Road, Tucson, will be the setting at 6:30 p.m. March 17 (St. Patrick's Day) for a Gluten-Free Dining Club experience. To reserve your place or places at the table confirm with Karen Keating (885-4828), GF Dining chairperson, by March 13.

Although a review of the Feb. 18 event at Elle, a wine country restaurant, 3048 E. Broadway, missed February's early deadline, we do have tidings of really good cheer from those who dined Jan. 21 at PF Chang's Chinese Bistro, a chain restaurant at 1805 E. River Road. Stay tuned for an Elle review in April's *Celiac Digest*.

PF Chang's, which was given the five-star maximum on the SACS GF Dining Club scale, is a G-F menu venue. That goes a long way toward its providing

knowledgeable service and variety.

"In the past year the corporate chefs re-worked the GF menu and standardized cooking procedures at all PF Chang's restaurants," Karen reports. "This is great news -- it means we can expect consistent recipes and familiarity with GF diet restrictions and cooking procedures as we enjoy Chinese food around the country!"

"If you go to PF Chang's, please mention that you heard from the CSA or the G-F Dining Club that they offer good food and service for celiacs," Karen urges.

Phone Karen, read April's *Celiac Digest*, or click on to www.SouthernArizonaCeliacSupport.org to find out where the GF Dining Club will dine next. The group usually meets on the third Wednesday.

SACS Leadership

Contact info@SouthernArizonaCeliacSupport.org for this information.

Roundtable Forum

1 p.m. March 24th
Columbus Library

East. 22nd Street at
South Columbus Boulevard