

Every Bite Affects the World

Recipes, eating and choices that have consequences...

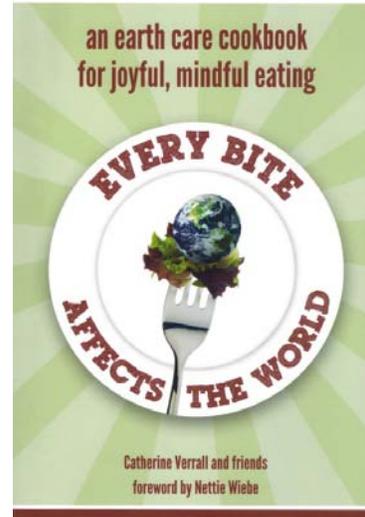
2014

by Catherine Verrall and Friends

Review by Colleen Rickard

My friend Nettie told me about a new book titled *Every Bite Affects the World: An Earth Care Cookbook for Joyful and Mindful Eating*. It's Canadian. And it's delightful because it teaches, tantalizes and challenges the reader towards healthy, ethical eating.

In truth, it's not just a cookbook. As Nettie describes it, "It's a recipe book that combines the key ingredients of good living: healthy food, love of others, ecological care and political justice."



Catherine's book is part of a larger project - The Every Bite Project - established to inform and transform lives. It grew out of her Saskatchewan church congregation's World Food Day service titled *Nourishing the World*. Book sales will generate seed money for community gardening, cooking classes (based on ideas from the book) and outreach workshops.

Let me share a poem from the book. It's called 'EATING'.

EATING connects us to the Earth

EATING links us to the sun and wind,
to waters and bees
and zillions of soil's micro-organisms.

EATING binds us to plants
and animals and fish.

EATING connects us to
people here and far away ---
all our fellow eaters

people who laboured to grow
and process and transport and sell
and then prepare our food -
people whose food source is stolen,
in part because we have so much.

Eating unites us with the radiant
energies in all this holy creation
given to all of us eaters, everywhere,
that we might have healthy life.

Every Bite talks about some of the first plant foods of the Americas, about food sovereignty and about pollinators (bees). It discusses genetically modified organisms (GMOs), organic

and inorganic foods, food handling and storage, eating local and composting. It talks about lentils and beans and sweeteners and yogurts and grains and cooking oils and herbs and spices. It talks about baby food and sources of meat, fish and fruits. It's glossary takes out some of the mystery around words like flavonoids, glycemic and pro-biotic. And of course... the recipes....for breakfasts, for soups and salads, meats and veggies, pulses, sauces and baking... And much more.

I smiled at the section on dandelions --- the prolific little plant with beautiful yellow flowers that almost everyone (in North America) loves to hate. I knew the flowers and leaves were edible; my parents use to make dandelion wine and others put the greens from young plants into salads. But I didn't know that "dandelion leaves are the queen of greens -- the top-most nutritious leafy vegetable. They give more vitamin A and beta-carotene than carrots, more potassium than bananas, more iron and vitamin A than spinach; as well as vitamins C, B, calcium, iron, magnesium." And this copious plant can be combined with or substituted for other greens in recipes for lasagna, soups, stews, stir-fries, salads, etc. So... instead of battling and disposing this so-called 'weed', I think that from time-to time I'll pick the tasty, nutritious parts and add them to some of my culinary dishes.

In closing, a quote from the book's chapter titled *Vision Voices...*

"I believe in a gospel that reaches right into the digestive system".

Menno Wiebe, Mennonite Central Committee.

Bon appetite!



Catherine Verrall is a retired teacher. She makes her home in Regina SK on Treaty Four Territory.

Verrall, Catherine and Friends. 2014. *Every Bite Affects the World: An Earth Care Cookbook for Joyful and Mindful Eating*. Friesen Press, Victoria BC. 239 p. Available in hardcover, paperback and e-book.