

Needhamites ‘kick it up a notch’

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Hometown Weekly Staff

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Chef Emeril Lagasse is famous for coining the phrase “Kick it up a notch—BAM” in reference to food, but several Needham residents now can kick it up a notch, too, after attending the Herb Walk workshop hosted by the Needham Community Farm. On a visit from Scotland, former Farm Manager at Needham Community Farm Heather Borkowski returned to her roots and gave a workshop on herbs.

Included in the workshop was smelling and tasting herbs, learning about the additional benefits of herbs and identifying them, the difference between perennial and annual herbs, and making herb butter and herb salt.

There is a lot more to herbs than what meets the nose. As Borkowski taught the workshop, for example, “Lavender is very calming, very relaxing ... you can cook with the greens as well as the flower heads.” Or that “yarrow is a blood herb. You can put it on a cut and it’ll help stop the bleeding.” Or that “a lot of people think you need to dry herbs before you make tea, but you don’t have to.” Or some words that would be great for Scrabble, like “mucilaginous,” “adaptogen,” and “diuretic.”

After showing several herb beds at the Needham Community Farm, Borkowski shared some of her home-brewed herbal teas. For a typical Mason jar’s worth of tea, mix a generous tablespoon of herb with hot water. To make herbal butter or salt, let the butter soften at room

temperature and mix in whatever herbs you want.

The herb walk was just one of several aspects of the Needham Community Farm. Larisa Jacobson, the current Farm Manager at Needham Community Farm, says “it’s this whole loop of trying to provide food access and education around food in all different ways.” One way they accomplish this is through the herb walk. Another way is through partnership with the Charles River YMCA and other youth programs.

The Needham Community Farm, chiefly located at 133 Pine Street, is dependent on volunteers. According to Jacobson, “last year [we grew] about a little over 4500 pounds of food, and we donate that all. We don’t sell any produce.” More information about the farm can be found online at needhamfarm.org.