Northeast Organic Farming Association/ Massachusetts Chapter

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Photo: Brix Bounty Farm
From the Editor

Nicole Belanger, NOFA/Mass Communications Director & Public Relations Coordinator

A warm welcome to the leaves and dandelion greens and apple blossoms. The moment we’ve all been waiting for... poof, here we are!

After scheming and dreaming all winter, we see folks are starting to get thing into the ground, connecting with neighbors, fellow farmers, friends to swap stories, seeds, and ideas (and maybe maple syrup, if we’re lucky!). We’re grateful to act as a connection point for people across the state and region, and to have so many curious and generous people in our community! Our organic gardening email list is a testament to that. Recently there have been great questions and advice on vermicomposting, chicken manure, seedling size, mulching, and quack grass to name a few topics. To join the list, email nofa-mass-subscribe@lists.riseup.net to subscribe.

There are many ways to plug into and build the NOFA/Mass community too; this issue details some such projects. Julie Rawson is looking to connect with those using cover crop cocktails (page 3). One of our members wants to connect with other members on Cape Cod (page 8). Laura Davis is offering assistance to those interested in obtaining organic certification for their farm or processing business (page 7). Jack Kittredge details the debate about hydroponics use in organic systems (page 9). We also have a guest article from Boston Area Gleaners about their anti-hunger work and volunteer and farmer needs (page 14).

Happy gardening, farming, bare-footing and eating!

Enjoy,

Nicole
Cover crop cocktails, NRCS, and soil carbon building

Julie Rawson, NOFA/Mass Executive Director

Since I handed over the NOFA/Mass Education Director job to Glenn Oliveira (and he has embraced it with all of his might), I have time for investigation and outreach in directions that never seemed to fit into my day in the past.

I try to keep up with all the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) links that Laura Davis, dual board member (finance committee chair) and staff member (certification assistance) and farmer at Long Life Farm, sends me, while also doing some of my own cover crop cocktail research and outreach.

NRCS, I am assuming under the leadership of their national chief Jason Weller, is pouring what seems to be an incredible amount of resources into building their own organizational understanding of the role of soil biology in healthy soil formation and maintenance. As I understand it, NRCS supported no till systems of farm management early. For several years now they have been doing really groundbreaking work, primarily in the Western US, on the topic of cocktail cover crops. (Cover crops become cocktail cover crops when one plants 7 or 10 or 30 crops at a time.) Leading and led by innovative farmers like Gabe Brown, Brendan Rockey, and others, they are reporting farmer successes in better water management, higher fertility, lowered chemical inputs (most of the farmers they work with are not organic), more and better quality crops, and better bottom lines.

Adding cover crop cocktails to this protocol is bringing great results. There is a lot of information on YouTube and through the “Unlock the Secrets of the Soil” portion of their website. I encourage you to check out this series of three-minute videos that follow the narrator all over the country to interview leading University and Extension scientists on the improvement of soil structure through a number of soil friendly practices, with a focus on cocktail cover crops. In their series titled “Explore the Science of Soil Health” there is a lot of food for thought.

Tom Akin, NRCS State Resource Conservationist, is back in our lives after a short gap. We used to work closely with NRCS in our Mass Grass Coalition staffed by our former dairy coordinator, Kate Rossiter. Tom attended our soil fertility workshop at board member Noah Kellerman’s Alprilla Farm in Essex back in April of this year.

I had a productive conversation with Tom recently where we investigated how NOFA/Mass can most effectively collaborate with NRCS on the topic of building soil carbon through the use of cocktail cover crops. NRCS can bring in experts for farm based tours and hands on workshops. So, on our end, I volunteered to gather up those of us in NOFA/Mass who are already working closely with cocktail cover crops or would like to start experimenting.

On my short list are Laura Davis and myself. I know that some of you folks in our midst have been experimenting and integrating the use of these methodologies into your farm practice. If you would step forward and contact me, I think we can start to talk to one another and make some rapid self-educational progress. You can reach me at Julie@nofamass.org or 978-355-2853.

This year I have decided to plant my potatoes with some cover crops. Here is a thoughtful You Tube Video featuring Brendan Rockey, a potato grower in Colorado, not certified organic but with a lot to teach regardless - www.youtube.com/watch?v=GES07e7ZqvA
Have a passion for organic farming, backyard gardening and food justice? Join us at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst on August 14-16, 2015 for a weekend of workshops and fun, strengthening and transforming the food system and our communities! Choose from 144 workshops in eight 90-minute sessions. Our full schedule is online, with workshop listings by timeslot and category.

Workshops run from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon and cover a wide range of topics like nutrition, gardening, land access, crop production, cooperative economies, food politics, urban and international agriculture and much more. Dig deep with pre-conference intensives on Friday, August 14.

2015 keynote speakers are Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride, medical doctor, nutritional consultant and developer of the GAPS Diet (Gut And Psychology Syndrome), and Ronnie Cummins, consumer activist and co-founder and International Director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA).

With conferences for children and teens, this family-friendly event has activities for all ages. Budget friendly accommodations and registration options are offered, as are scholarships, work exchange opportunities, and discounts for groups of five or more. Single day registrations, camping and dorms, organic meals and carpooling are also available.

The conference has opportunities for play, inquiry, and experimenting with new skills in and out of the classroom. Participants enjoy connecting with other likeminded people, live music, dance, films, games, exhibitors, and our country fair. This year’s conference theme is “Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology.”

Learn more and register at www.nofasummerconference.org.

Five Summer Conference Workshops on Ways to Change your Life for the Better

Are you looking to make changes that enable you to achieve greater personal health, earn a livelihood with integrity and meaning, and live more in line with ecological limits? Here are just five of the 144 workshop sessions confirmed for the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference, which offer skills for somewhat unconventional ways of living that open up the horizons of happiness.

Read the full workshop program for the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference.

Systems for a Non-Electric House

We'll show the systems in our home, relate
some of the wonders and pitfalls of permitting and building it, and describe the shifting legal landscape. Includes hand pump at the sink; masonry cookstove; central heating-like wood heat; aesthetic and odor-free hand-built two-pit moulterdering toilet, emptied of soil-nourishing contents every 3-5 years; oil lamps that consume 12-15 gallons of a no-stink kerosene product per year.

With Jonathan von Ranson, stonemason, editor, past board member and president of NOFA/Mass & Susan von Ranson, retired masseuse, loves cooking, sewing, endeavors to prosper “frugally”.

Kitchen Medicine
Many culinary herbs in your kitchen cupboard can relieve stress, help prevent the common cold, support digestion, ease a headache and reduce pain tension and cramping. Learn the medicinal uses of these powerful herbs either by incorporating them into your diet or in simple remedies, such as teas and syrups.

With Brittany Nickerson, herbalist, health educator and food activist in Amherst, MA.

Making Raw Milk Kefir and Kefir Cheese
I started making raw milk kefir in January 2008 and it was the catalyst that got me out of a wheelchair. Learn about what milk to use and how to make a simple kefir cheese. I will have samples. I may have a few kefir grains to share. Handouts offered.

With Pam Raymond, who raises grass fed beef, pastured broilers, free range layers, pastured pigs, and organic vegetable gardens in Hatfield, MA.

Whole Life Design: Applying Permaculture Principles to your Life
Abundance of life, family and friends came from a garden. Do you long for the time and courage to live a life that’s truly in line with your deepest values? In this workshop I’ll show you how our family focused our life on what matters, creating abundance for ourselves and others, and freeing up time to enjoy it all.

With Jonathan Bates, who has been learning, thinking and teaching ecologically for two decades.

Crank up your Energy! – Mitochondrial Medicine and Ozone
The Mitochondria are the energy making centers within our bodies. We will discuss what helps and what inhibits your mitochondria function and how you can greatly improve it. This will help to improve your quality of life as well as increase longevity.

With Jean Nordin-Evans, DDS, Holistic Dentist, mother, farmer, owner and founder of Groton Wellness.

Five Workshops on Profitable Organic Farming Ventures for the Small Farm
Are you looking for innovative ideas to make a living doing organic farming on a small acreage? Here are just five of the 144 workshop sessions confirmed for the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference, which are designed to help you gain practical skills needed for starting new organic farming ventures on a small farm or homestead.

Read the full workshop program for the 2015 NOFA Summer Conference.

Multi-Resource Forest Management for Small Farms
With planning and stewardship, forests can host diverse enterprises and provide many products and services. This workshop will discuss sugaring, understory forest farming, wildlife and game habitat, wild food and medicine, silvopasture, timber and cordwood, coppice, artisan materials, and ecological restoration. Throughout we’ll explore how to increase forest health, productivity, and diversity through observation and stewardship.

With Connor Stedman, ecological designer, agroforester, and educator based in the Hudson River Valley.

Grazing Livestock Practices 101
I will teach the basics of grazing livestock on pasture. Participants will learn best practices for raising 100% grass-fed beef. I will discuss recent
application process for organic certification. Open Q&A will follow.

With Matthew Koziol, a new grass and cattle farmer driving top quality MA beef.

### Woodland Duck Polycultures
I have been raising ducks for five years for meat, eggs, and farm ecosystem benefits (i.e. slug and pest predation). This workshop will cover the basics of raising ducks and how they have been put to work at Wellspring Forest Farm to support mushroom, sheep, and vegetable production.

With Steve Gabriel, author, Farming the Woods; ecologist; educator, Cornell Small Farms; farmer.

### Raising High Quality Vegetables While Building Carbon
My goal is to have the best tasting, highest yielding, most nutritious produce possible. This improves farm profitability and personal health.

We'll cover in detail 8-10 practices for building soil carbon that garnered our farm the highest marks in a 2014 carrot trial with 13 other farms. Techniques applicable for many annual crops.

With Julie Rawson, a vegetable farmer for 30 years, $30K/acre, lots of livestock too.

### Raising Heritage Thanksgiving Turkeys
I have been raising 35-45 Heritage Turkeys each year for 9 years on a small, organic, diversified farm where we keep our own breeding stock. This presentation illustrates how to get started from hatching to slaughter. It includes housing, grazing systems, over-wintering of brood stock, and sharing our mistakes and successes.

With Lisa McCrory, organic diversified farmer and consultant, trained in Holistic Management.

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### Accepting 2016 Winter Conference Workshop Proposals

We are now taking workshop proposals for the 29th annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference on Saturday January 16, 2016, at Worcester State University. Submit one before the summer gets away from you! Proposal deadline is September 1.

More certified organic food now available in Massachusetts
Laura Davis, NOFA/Mass Certification Assistance Coordinator

I am pleased to report that NOFA/Mass’ new certification assistance program has been well received with eight farms jumping on board this winter and filing their applications with Baystate Organic Certifiers. While I won’t divulge the names of our farms until they are approved, a variety of farms took advantage of this program. There will be 100% grass fed cattle, organic pork, goat, lots more vegetables, herbs, soup and herb mix, and tea. They are currently being scheduled for their first inspections, but I expect them to come through with an approved certificate. Congratulations to Jason and Nicole Lobisser from The Pumpkin Farm in Medway, MA for being our first farm out of the gate to gain organic certification.

While a farm can apply for certification anytime of the year, many farms utilize the extra hours over the winter to get the work done. As a certified organic grower myself assisting farms with certification, this schedule worked out great for my schedule as well. Baystate Organic Certifiers generally will take between 6-8 weeks to review, inspect and approve qualified operations once a complete dossier is received. If you are ready to give this extra level of confidence to your customers, get on our schedule now for November 2015 through April 2016. General certification or program questions are welcome. Contact me at LauraDavis@nofamass.org or 508-596-1651

With financial assistance from the Sound and Sensible contract from USDA, NOFA/Mass launched this program last fall. It will officially end in September 2015. We believe giving farmers that extra help they need with paperwork, strategy and answers to common questions is extremely valuable. We want to be able to fund this program into the future. We are currently looking for ways to fund this program for 2016. Please join us in support of this worthy cause.
Outreach events, new intern and Cape Cod member network
Sharon Gensler, NOFA/Mass Outreach Program Coordinator

Wow! It’s been a busy time, again, here at Outreach. Several new and several faithful volunteers represented us at nine events. A big thank you to: Charlotte Vessel, Jaya Karlson, Kate Kennedy, Mary DeBlois, Mandy Burton, Douglas Frink, Maureen Doyle, Julie Rawson and Jamie Hall.

Volunteer Maureen Doyle enjoyed her experience at the Charlton Earth Day Festival and says:
“We talked to several folks and got a positive response... One couple, with a very enthusiastic teenage daughter, shared that their switch to organic foods made all the difference in the daughter’s not taking Ritalin. It was a good positive story!”

We have had to decline several invitations due to lack of volunteers to represent us. We’d love to be able to say YES to every one who wants to help connect their community with NOFA/Mass. Everyone attending a Spring Festival or Earth Day event is a possible ally, someone who if exposed might benefit from NOFA/Mass and our educational programs.

Another volunteer, Jaya Karlson, expressed an interest in knowing other members in her area, and now is working to organize a Cape Cod member network.

We also want to welcome Mandy Burton as our new summer Metro Outreach Intern. She will be attending events, conducting research and also helping Jack Kittredge with Policy work around the issue of soil carbon. Mandy is studying Food & Environmental Policy at Tufts University. Watch for Metro events and go say ‘hi’ and welcome her to NOFA/Mass. Says Mandy:
“I am interested in how individual farmers, grassroots organizations and policy can work to create a more sustainable food system that increases resource conservation and mitigates environmental impacts while creating an accessible, local food system.”

What about YOU? Are there ways you want to be more involved in NOFA?

Remember to check the website to find an event near you, so that you can join the ranks of our Volunteers Extraordinaire! Contact me at outreach@nofamass.org.

Below are our upcoming outreach events. Offer to volunteer or come say ‘hi’ if you happen to be there.

May Events
May 16: REC Spring Festival & Plant Sale, Worcester
May 30: Powisset Farm Spring Festival; Dover
Keeping organics meaningful
Jack Kittredge, NOFA/Mass Policy Director

As you no doubt have heard, organic food is continuing to enjoy a spectacular growth in the American marketplace. It went up over 11% last year and now accounts for more than 5% of the US food market. Organic products have been called the “fastest-growing” consumer food trend in modern history.

As you have also no doubt heard, this market growth is both the cause, and also the product, of major food companies like Kellogg, General Mills, Campbell Soup, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nestle, Smucker’s, M&M, Cargill, Dean, Danone, Post, ConAgra, and Hershey getting into the organic business.

One can debate whether this is good, bad, or both for the organic movement as most of us have known it. There is no question, however, that their increased muscle is having an impact on what has, heretofore, been seen as the “integrity” of the organic brand. More and more the goal of the USDA and its creature the National Organic Program (NOP) seems to be to increase the growth of the organic label and its penetration into our food supply, even at the risk of undercutting the strict standards for which that label is supposed to stand.

A case in point is hydroponics, or the growing of plants such as tomatoes or lettuce in water, their roots anchored by some sort of impervious substrate such as rock wool. Nutrients are delivered in a water-soluble form directly to the plant roots in a precisely controlled fashion. If the nutrients used are in a form that would be allowed in organic agriculture, is there any reason hydroponics itself should be prohibited? Yes, say many organic advocates. Why?

Hydroponics do not involve soil.

The original USDA definition of organic acknowledged the key role soil and the wealth of life it contains play in mediating plant growth. It stressed “soil biological activity” as key to organic production. The National Organic Standards Board, in their recommendation rejecting hydroponic farming, wrote:

“The abundance of organisms in healthy, organically maintained soils form a biological network, an amazing and diverse ecology that is ‘the secret’, the foundation of the success of organic farming accomplished without the need for synthetic insecticides, nematicides, fumigants, etc.”

Yet the final USDA definition of organic, written in 2002, removed any reference to the word “soil”. And now NOP director Miles McEvoy has allowed hydroponic food to be sold as organic and many accredited certifiers have begun certifying hydroponic operations.

The industrial nature of this kind of production,
in sealed buildings with LED lights and nutrient pumps replacing sun, rain and soil, has attracted investors interested in “scaling up” this kind of farming. It has also begun to put soil-based growers out of business.

Protests from organic growers around the country have merely resulting in the NOP calling for a “task force” to study “emerging technologies” in hydroponic production and “seek the most current information and opinions of industry experts.” Some observers suggest that the decision has already been made and this task force will simply rubber stamp it. There are organic growers and advocates, however, actively trying to influence the decision of the task force. David Chapman of Vermont’s Long Wind Farm has started a petition at www.keepthesoilinorganic.org for farmers and consumers to sign stating that soil is fundamental to organic growing and must be central to any definition. Let him know what you think!

Looking for local, organic produce in season?

Check out the NOFA/Mass Organic Food and Products Guide!
Find farms and businesses all across the state selling the products you want!
(You can search by region or product.)

thecorganicfoodguide.com
We partner with local farmers to bring organic produce to the people of Boston.

Learn more and sign up at BostonOrganics.com

Greenleaf Foundation

Making Small Grants to non-profit organizations that promote organic farming and gardening and community development throughout New England.

For more information please contact:

Greenleaf Foundation
551 Harlemville Rd, Hillsdale, NY 12529

GET FRESH WITH A LOCAL FARMER

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation
Helping small farms since 1915.
You can help too
Join at www.MFBF.net
Homesteading observations: Busy! Busy! Busy!

Sharon Gensler, Homesteader

The pace has certainly picked up around the homestead. It seems like we had two feet of snow on the ground, then almost immediately the crocuses and daffodils were in glorious full bloom and the earth had thawed. Pru had to use snowshoes to prune the fruit trees in March and now they are in bud break and it looks like they will be loaded with blossoms by the time you read this. She has already been spraying them using Michael Phillips’ organic techniques.

I’ve been focusing on preparing garden beds for planting. The soil is vibrantly alive! The effects of many years of cover cropping are astounding. This spring, I’ve sown a combination of oats, field peas and forage radish almost everywhere. Some will only grow a few inches before I need the space for early veggies, some will grow until June when space is needed for the hot weather veggies, and the rest will remain as full-year cover cropped beds. And remember, by doing this I not only improve the soil, but also store carbon deep within the soil thus helping lower my carbon footprint!

Recently, looking out the window while eating supper, the scene reminded me why we named the homestead Wild Browse Farm. A wild tom turkey was grazing in our pasture. Three deer soon followed him. All were dining on the newly greening grass (and I hope making fertility deposits along the way). The hens are still in their winter quarters and are enjoying being free range until we think it’s warm and safe enough to move them further from our house. Once the electro-mesh fence goes up and they move to pasture, the deer graze further out. It was sweet seeing them a bit closer.

The greenhouse is getting full with seedlings and transplants crowding out the parsley, kale and other greens we’ve been eating all winter. That’s okay though, because soon we’ll be eating those crops from the garden. After the transplants move outdoors, I think I’ll try for a greenhouse crop of sweet potatoes, which I haven’t grown successfully outside. I might also try a couple of ginger plants too. I make a lot of ginger flavored kombucha and our own ginger would be a great addition to the homestead.

Some time ago the wild browsing got to be a bit much and we fenced the garden, keeping out the deer, raccoons, porcupines, woodchucks, rabbits, and dogs, though I think the moose and bear could have gotten in if they’d wanted to. Now, if I could only think of a way to keep out the voles and prevent the squirrels from getting our hazels and chestnuts, I’d be rich and famous!

The other thing that keeps us busy, especially in the spring, is wild foraging. We’ve been eating ramps, wild garlic, chickweed, dandelions and
winter cress. Soon the nettles, lily shoots and fiddlehead will be available. Have you ever tried any of these delicious and nutritious spring tonic foods? If not, give them a try. They fill in nicely during the “in between” time while we wait for those less hardy domestic vegetables. Get a good identification book, learn how to cook them for best flavor, and/or take a workshop. (NOFA/Mass just happens to have one May 17, Edible Wild Plant Walk, in Greenfield.)

Well, time to take a walk to loosen the gardener’s kink from my back and to enjoy this lovely spring before the black flies become too unbearable! Stay well, and happy growing.
Since 2004, Boston Area Gleaners (BAG) has been harvesting surplus crops from farms in eastern Massachusetts for those in need. A non-profit organization, BAG delivers high quality, local produce to pantries and meal programs by working closely with local farmers, providing volunteer labor to harvest what would otherwise be plowed under or what was specifically planted for donation.

In the coming years, BAG hopes to continue to build its capacity and expand into more regions in Eastern Massachusetts. Presently, BAG is constrained geographically to approximately an hour out of Waltham. However, within these geographical limitations, there are numerous farms with whom BAG does not yet partner. As BAG continues to grow and expand, it is counting on partnerships with new farms.

Gleaning has been a method of improving community food security since ancient times (playing a major role in the Old Testament’s Book of Ruth). Farmers would let the poor members of their communities onto their farms after a harvest to “glean” whatever crops were left in the fields.

Today, there are many reasons why farmers choose to donate crops. For example, in the summer of 2014, a farmer called BAG because the market price for tomatoes had dropped due to a saturated market, and he would actually lose money if he sent any of his workers out into the field. He called on BAG to assist him in donating this surplus crop rather than letting it rot in the fields. Other reasons farmers donate include bumper crops, succession crops ripening at once, impending weather damage with no time to harvest a crop, assistance with harvesting crops planted for donation, and end of season surplus of storage crops (potatoes, squash, apples, etc.).

In 2014, BAG gleaned over 175,00 lbs of fresh fruit and vegetables from 34 partner farms. Through partnerships with Food for Free in Cambridge, the Greater Boston Food Bank, and a number of small, local pantries near their office, BAG’s produce was distributed among a network of over 500 food pantries, meal programs, and shelters in eastern Massachusetts.

BAG would not be able to do the work that they do without its strong network of volunteers. If a farmer calls with a glean request on a Friday, BAG typically can have a volunteer group of 6-12 people organized to glean that Sunday. This is especially important for crops that ripen quickly and need to be harvested quickly (such as corn). Volunteers are always needed.

Learn more about gleaning, donating surplus produce, or sign up to volunteer at www.bostonareagleaners.org.

Matt Crawford is the Lead Gleaning Coordinator for Boston Area Gleaners. He is responsible for receiving calls from farmers interested in donating produce and managing its 1000+ volunteers.
To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and the earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.

Howe Farm, VT
One of the Organic Valley family farms that supply milk for our yogurt.
NOFA/Mass Workshops & Events

Visit nofamass.org/events for workshop additions and updates.

Edible Wild Plant Walk with Hannah Jacobson-Hardy
Sunday, May 17 - 2:00pm to 4:00pm
Greenfield Recreation and Swim Area, Greenfield, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost, $30;) Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost, $36)
Learn to identify edible wild plants and medicinal herbs with Hannah Jacobson-Hardy, holistic health coach and community herbalist of Sweet Birch Herbals. Participants will learn how to respectively harvest each plant and use them for making salads, soups, and skin care products. We'll be identifying spring ephemerals such as ramps, dandelion, Japanese knotweed shoots, burdock root, and nettles, which are deliciously pungent and bitter treats that promote spring cleansing. After a winter of eating dense, heavier foods, are you craving more fresh green foods? Join Hannah for an educational walk that includes recipes and tastings.

Growing Vegetables For Health, Quality, and Profit - A Season Long Series
Sunday, June 14 - 2pm to 5:30pm (workshop 2 of 3)
Brix Bounty Farm, Dartmouth, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $36; Non-member $45
Learn about profitable, small-scale vegetable production throughout the 2015 growing season with farmer Derek Christianson at Brix Bounty Farm.

Fertility Foundations: Dry Mineral Applications & In-Season Management (Crop Monitoring, Water Management, and Foliar Sprays) - a focus on alliums, lettuce, and tomatoes. (Includes discussion on lettuce harvest and post-harvest management, allium varieties and distribution schedule throughout the season, and tomato succession management).

Participants will see and experience how Brix Bounty’s production evolves from early season fertility and plant propagation to mid-season management and fall harvest rhythms. The workshops will focus on the practices and key information essential to grow and sustain this commercial farm. Each workshop will build on information presented in previous sessions. Attendees are highly encouraged to register for the full series.

Organic Small Fruit: Raspberries, Blueberries, Currants and Goumis
Sunday, July 12 - 2pm to 4:30pm
Old Frog Pond Farm, Harvard, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
Join Linda Hoffman and Charlotte Trim for an afternoon of berry talk. We’ll meet at Old Frog Pond Farm in Harvard where Linda grows 1/3 acre of fall raspberries for her pick your own operation and blueberries for their farm stand. Charlotte grows berries, goumis, and currants at her home in Lincoln and sells her crop to local restaurants. We’ll talk about remineralizing the soil, foliar sprays, and getting your raspberries healthy enough to ward off the the Asian fruit fly that arrived in the Northeast in 2011 and has been a challenge for small fruit growers. Join us for an enjoyable and informative afternoon.
Growing Certified Organic Cut Flowers
Wednesday, July 29 - 3pm to 5:30pm
Natick Community Organic Farm, Natick, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
During this mid-summer workshop, Lynda Simkins, Executive Director of Natick Community Organic Farm and long-time organic flower grower, will welcome participants to the farm to learn about all aspects of organic flower production. The workshop will explore harvest and post-harvest of certified organic cut flowers, weed management, marketing and selling, and strategies for season extension. This is fantastic opportunity for those who are just starting or those who would like to transition to organic flower production.

2015 NOFA Summer Conference – Save the date!
Friday, August 14 – Sunday August 16, 2015
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
Cost: Prices range. Early bird pricing through July 17.
Features three days with 144 workshops on farming, gardening, nutrition, land care, food politics and much more. The conference is fun for the whole family with 100+ exhibitors, contra dance, country fair, organic meals, in-depth pre-conferences, meet-ups and children and teens conferences.

Budget conscious accommodations are available, including camping and dorms. Group registration discounts and limited scholarships and work exchange opportunities are available.

This year’s keynote speakers are Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride, a medical doctor and nutritional consultant, and Ronnie Cummins, a consumer activist and regenerative agriculture advocate. The theme for this year’s Conference is “Healing the Climate, Healing Ourselves: Regeneration through Microbiology.”

Organic Apple Growing
Sunday, August 23 - 2pm to 4:30pm
Old Frog Pond Farm, Harvard, MA
Cost: NOFA/Mass Member $25 (Walk-In cost $30); Non-member $31 (Walk-in cost $36)
Spend the afternoon with grower Linda Hoffman in the orchard, where over fifty varieties of apples are growing. She will discuss her yearly schedule of care, show how she has grafted a number of rows to change Red Delicious trees to new varieties, and share all things practical about planting, staking, and protecting young trees. You will also walk through the farm’s new Asian pear orchard and learn about growing this delicious fruit.

Support NOFA/Mass’ work

Here’s a simple way to support our work. Buy local when you can, but if you do use Amazon, they will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to NOFA/Mass whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

To sign up, visit www.smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2987723.

Thank you for your support!
Red Fire Farm Hiring
Contact: Kristi; jobs@redfirefarm.com
Red Fire Farm, an organic veggie farm in the Pioneer Valley, is looking for a Lead Driver and other transportation support for the growing season. The Lead Driver is the main liaison between our two farm locations; other drivers deliver wholesale and CSA produce to the Boston area. No CDL necessary; we’re willing to train the right person!

Goat Dairy Seeking Help
Contact: Melissa Hoffer; melissa.hoffer@gmail.com
Looking for an energetic, responsible person to help out on a part time basis (10-12 hours per week) with our small goat dairy in Barre MA. Must love goats! Work includes helping with feeding and barn cleanup and composting. Hourly wage is commensurate with experience.

Plant Sale - Native, Hardy, and Beneficial Attracting Perennials
Contact: Cathy Harragian; birdofthehandfarm@gmail.com; 978-422-6217
Perennials for Pollinators - Native woodland plants, beneficial attracting plants, hardy perennials, Japanese maples, sugar maples. 32 School St Sterling Ma 01564 - Hiram O Taylor Legion Hall, May 9th 8am-5pm.
Events

Pollinator Conservation Short Course  
**Wednesday, May 20 - 9am to 4:30pm**  
**Powisset Farm, Dover, MA**  
Learn how to attract pollinators to fields, farms, and orchards! Pollinators provide an essential ecological service for the environment. Conservation of pollinating insects is critically important to preserving both wider biodiversity and healthy agricultural systems. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation developed the Pollinator Conservation Short Course to educate producers of bee-pollinated crops, agriculture employees, natural resource specialists, land managers, and conservation organization staff. More info at [http://conta.cc/1dQaGwv](http://conta.cc/1dQaGwv)

Slow Money Regional Gathering  
**Wednesday, May 20 & Thursday, May 21**  
**Mass Challenge, Boston, MA**  
Join Slow Money Boston for an engaging event with the theme “Slow Money: Turning Thought Into Action”. Neighbors from Greater Boston, Pioneer Valley, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and beyond will explore the similarities and differences across Slow Money communities, and discover the diverse portraits of Slow Money investors. The event features a keynote address from Gary Hirshberg and panel discussions on lessons learned, best practices, and expanding the Slow Money movement. More info at [www.slowmoneyboston.org/register](http://www.slowmoneyboston.org/register).

Herb & Garden Day  
**Saturday, June 6 - 9am to 5pm**  
**McLane Audubon Center, Concord, NH**  
Herbal educators and seasoned growers from all walks of life come together to share their unique knowledge and build upon a tapestry of age old wisdom about herbs and natural medicine, native plants, organic gardening, permaculture, traditional homesteading practices, beekeeping, brewing, and the power of nature to heal. More info at [www.nhherbalnetwork.wordpress.com/herbday](http://www.nhherbalnetwork.wordpress.com/herbday)

Announcements

Boston Area Gleaners Seeks Intern  
Get to know the local food shed, and gain valuable experience in working for a small, community-supported, agriculturally related, hunger-relief non-profit. Work addresses food security and access issues, nutrition, local farming, and resource management. The intern will be assigned research projects that will assist us in continuing to build a fully informed picture of the active components of our supply chain. Strong writing skills will also lend to producing work for media and publications. Other duties will vary so flexibility is expected. 10-15 hours/week May or June through August. Unpaid except in extra produce, gained experience, and references. Send resume and a letter of interest to: Duck Caldwell, Executive Director at director@bostonareagleaners.org.
New and Renewing NOFA/Mass Members in April

Virginia Adams and Diane Johns
Margie Baldwin
Ann Banks
Jeremy Barker-Plotkin
Joanne Benkley and Paul Wentzel
Judith Black
Sarah Blackburn
James Bradley
Ellyse Briand
Lisa Brukilacchio
Paul Bryant
Elizabeth Bukolsky
Katie Campbell-Nelson
Cape Cod Organic Gardeners
Tim Carroll
Melissa Carter
Ashley Carter
Cindy Cheever
Hao Chen
Colchester Neighborhood Farm
Jennifer Collins and Ruth Ewing
John Coppinger
Mike DeRosa
Duane Desilets
Karen DiFranza
Diane Dussault
Amy Ferber and Anton Prenneis
Pat Fiero
Alden Fish
Lisa Fox
Charles Gamble and Susan Maki
Richard Garabedian
Richard R. Gordon
Donna Green

Jane Hammer
Cathy Harragian
Pamela Harrington
Ryan Heisler
Susanna Hilfer
Laura Hill
Timothy Hines
Holly Hill Farm
Walter Jaworski
Donna Jewett
David Kelly
Kate Kennedy
Heather Kleinman
Linda M Kowalski
Mary Kraus and family
Jim Lackovich
Henry Lappen
Rebecca Levi
Mohammed Shedly Louati
Dave and Kerri MacDonald
Linda MacDonald
Geoff Mamlet
Erin and Daniel Matica
Michael McMannon
Jono Neiger
Dana Nicoll
Jodi Nishman and Penny Schultz
Sandy Nolden
George Northrop and Kathleen Collins
Park Hill Orchard
Skip Paul
Matthew Perreault
Rebecca Peters

Susan Phelan
Pleasant Lake Farm LLC
Jamie Pottern
Dr. Maureen E. Power
Amy Pulley and Alice Cozzolino
Laura Reiner
Conor Rice
Clint Richmond
River Rock Farm
Jean Rogers
Carolyn Roux
Attila Sala
Kenneth Santos
Jeanne Sargent and John D. Nelson, Jr.
Hale Sofia Schatz
Toby Schneider
Michele Fronk Schuckel
Susan Sellew
Shaw Farm Dairy, Inc
Soule Homestead Education Center
Nancy B. Soulette
Vera Spohr Cohen and R. B. Bigelow
Mary Tierney
Karlene Valente
Andrew Van Assche
Dorothy Weaver
Teresa Weber
Don Zasada
Heather and Peter Zine
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