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FROM THE EDITOR

Mindy Harris
NOFA/Mass Public Relations

Without fail, Labor Day ushers in the fall in New England. We shift from the sun-filled days of summer, to the breezy hours filled with yellows, browns and oranges of September. Growers are thinking about a different set of crops, plowing under harvested fields, preserving the bounty, and extending the season. At NOFA/Mass we take a bit of a sigh, across the staff, after a very busy conference season, and we start gearing up for the Advanced Growers Fall Seminar in November, and — believe it or not — the Winter Conference and Organic Lawn and Turf Course, which comes right in the beginning of 2013. Farmers across the state just opened their doors for Raw Milk Dairy Weekend, the 2nd weekend in September. NOFA/Mass continues to be the primary advocate for Raw Milk access in this state. We hope you had a chance to visit a Raw Milk farm to see how the production works, and to taste raw milk, and will continue supporting our Raw Milk farmers year-round. And speaking of dairy, back by popular demand, are our Fall Cheesemaking courses. Robinson Farm, Cricket Creek Farm, and Uppingill Farm will be sharing knowledge on soft cheeses, semi-soft farmstead cheeses, hard cheeses, and alpine cheeses. These classes are always fun and hands-on. We encourage you to go and learn from our cheese gurus.

As many of you have probably seen, ORGANIC has been in the media recently. The public debate on whether organic is really better is now underway in mainstream publications in a way we haven’t seen. The level of interest is high, and coverage is spreading. This is a great thing. Organic is one of the fastest growing segments of the food industry, and we’re very proud to be on the positive end of a food movement, that is hopefully going to change the way we eat in this country. We’re hoping to step into the media fray and offer our philosophy as one of the leading organic advocacy groups in the Northeast. We believe that growing food should be an environmentally friendly endeavor which produces food that has high nutritional value and is healthy and tasty for consumers. And we believe that folks should have access to organic food, no matter what their income level. We recognize that this issue is a multi-dimensional one for us as growers and advocates. We certainly have always advocated for as much clarity as possible around product labeling, and clarification/education around what
organic is and what the certification means for consumers. We will continue to try to explicate what organic is, and what it isn’t. This clarity is a critical piece of changing hearts and minds. We also hope that folks understand the value that goes into organic production, and realize that large-scale industrialized commercial food comes with serious hidden costs. At NOFA/Mass, we support small and medium sized local growers, as a means of sustaining a strong, decentralized local food system. We believe this is critical for strong economies, and is essential for food security. In the midst of these public debates, we also encourage you to write letters to your local newspapers, OpEd pieces to larger newspapers, and get out there to share your voice.

Mindy

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September 2012 Newsletter
I started the farm morning this morning moving 12 movable layer, meat bird and turkey pens from yesterday’s locations to today’s fresh luxurious grass, clover and mixed forbes pastures. The birds also received fresh grain sprouts and the layers received yesterday’s melon rinds and tomato processing leavings. Then as I headed in to do my NOFA job, I stopped by the beets, carrots, parsley and collards to grab enough vegetables to make our daily quart of fresh vegetable juice. Life is slowing back down on the farm and it all seems manageable once again.

As I approach my 60th, the word “balance” pops into my head almost daily - balance in my own life between work and play/rejuvenation and self education, balance on the farm between extracted productivity and soil building and animal health, balance in NOFA/Mass between affordable education for our membership and the public and sustainable salaries for our employees.

September is a great time to take stock. We are still in the midst of the season. This is the time of year when we can observe how good we are at our staying power. It is also a good time to take notes on what we as growers want and need to do better and/or different next year. It is much too dangerous to put off that evaluation process until the winter when the amnesiac grower has glossed over all of the challenges of the height of the growing season. Here are some notes that I have taken for myself for next year.

• Only grow as many “mulchable” vegetables as I can reasonably keep mulched (either in black plastic or organic mulch). For the others where mulch is a nightmare like lettuces, or quickies like radishes, I plan to use areas of the farm that were under mulch last year or cover crops where there is an abundance of organic matter to help stabilize the soil against oxidation when it is bare.

• Gather all fall and winter an array of mulching resources of paper, cardboard, leaves, wood chips and other organic materials to augment our own hay supplies.

• Rotate out at least 1/3 of the vegetable land completely from cultivation and put it into a pasture that can be fertilized by our poultry and cows. I have been errant on this point, using the excuse that I just don’t have enough land to do that. My misdemeanors are showing up in areas of reduced productivity.

• Build a farm scenario that is sustainable in June and July along with the rest of the year – no more interminable days of excess stress.

Having made all those resolutions, it is heartening that we are not under water like we were last September. The bounty that normally is with us at this time of year is stupendous. I love September. It is a time when you start getting the report card on how well you have attended to fertility, weed management, crop succession management and marketing. By the way, don’t forget to get a fall soil test in September – the best time to find out the baseline soil fertility on your farm or garden.

**A Good Read** – *Building Soils Naturally: Innovative Methods for Organic Gardeners* by Phil Nauta; published by Acres, USA 2012; 202 pages; $19.95

I am always up for another good book on soil fertility. This book, though I have just started it, seems to be a really good resource for the home gardener that will be of use for the farmer too. Phil is young and has a breezy style that looks at life through the eyes of the soil and all of its inhabitants. A champion of the soil food web, he reminds me of Stuart Hill, the entertaining scientist from Australia that old timers will remember as a yearly presenter at the NOFA Summer Conferences back in the 80s and early 90s. This book does not come across in a deep scientific style, but aims to be a practical manual for those who want to know enough about how soil fertility works to grow the best crops.

Section 1, The Soil and Its Inhabitants gives a quick overview of plants, soil dwellers, soil, soil and plant testing and soil nutrient testing.

Section 2, The Six Steps to Creating Healthy Soil, covers water, organic matter, compost, making compost, indoor composting, cover crops, microbial inoculation, compost tea, effective microorganisms, supplementing nutrients of calcium, phosphorus, other majors, synthetics, biostimulants and micronutrients and energy.

Section 3, Garden Action Strategies, discusses plant predators and weeds, weeds: a primer, amending soil, and a garden health management plan.

Phil draws from information gained from writings of Charles Walters and other in the Acres network. I like that he handles a heavy subject very practically in a light way that is very approachable for even the beginner.
Our summer interns and volunteers have been busy representing you at many events around the state. Thank you Joan Fitzgerald, Drew Love, Mary DeBlois, Laura Held, Alex Cecchinelli, Timmy Sheble-Hall, Roberta Panagakos and Pru Smith. We talked with a multitude of people at the Boston GreenFest, the Redfire Farm Tomato Festival, Heath Fair and the Greenfield Harvest Dinner.

Come visit us at:
Tattersall Farm Days Sept 16 in Haverhill
Wilbraham Community Health Market Sept 9/ Oct 14
N. Quabbin Fall Festival Sept 15
N. Quabbin Garlic & Arts Festival Sept 29&30.
W. Boylston Fall Festival September 29
Worcester State Univ. Sustainability Fair October 4

I would also like to extend a huge thank you to our three summer interns. Timmy Sheble-Hall, Alex Cecchinelli and Katherine Burnham. They all gave much of themselves over the summer attending events, doing research, organizing data, and helping with a huge mailing. But most of all their energy and enthusiasm for organic growing, sustainability and NOFA was evident in their contact with the public helping us in our quest to educate more people. Thanks again and good fortunes in your upcoming year.
A WET AND WILD 2012 NOFA Summer Conference

By Mindy Harris, Public Relations Coordinator, NOFA/Mass
Reprinted with permission, The Natural Farmer – Fall 2012

After what was a very hot and dry summer, the rain gods came to the rescue of farmers across the region with some torrential downpours, in what was one of the soggiest NOFA Summer Conferences since its inception almost 40 years ago. The organization has now held the conference on the campus of UMass Amherst for 3 years, due to the growth of the conference. Throughout that time, UMass has been an outstanding host, providing dormitory housing, conference classrooms and meeting spaces, camping space, and fabulous all-organic meals in its dining hall. Over 1200 people descended upon the Pioneer Valley from across the Northeast. Despite muddy grass, a dripping tent, and many makeshift solutions to protect product and displays, the NOFA 2012 Exhibitors demonstrated enormous amount of good will, waiting out the storms through the conference. Campers scurried for cover as small valleys in the campus lawn became small lakes in a matter of minutes. Once the sun emerged for the afternoon on Saturday, August 11th, customers bustled through a crowded marketplace of artisan offerings, food producers, book stores, seed companies, non-profits, and educational institutions. Next to marketplace shoppers, slightly moist children partook of annual fair activities such as scarecrow stuffing, tomato-bobbing, and various races and games.

The conference provided over 200 workshops and featured a handful of thematic tracks including: Permaculture, Winter Growing, Nutrient Density, CSAs, Beginning Farmers, Organic Land Care and Draft Animal Power. Conference attendees also demonstrated their hardiness and loyalty as they sloshed through puddles and sheets of rain as they traversed the campus to attend courses. One such attendee sent her thanks via a NOFA sponsor, Boston Organics: “We heard so many wonderful, cutting edge speakers! Like David Jacke- of Edible Forest Gardens- Funny how the old ways have become ‘new’ again! The weekend was packed full of information and inspiration. May God continue to bless the work of all your hands as you continue to be good stewards of His bounty. Many thanks to you all!” As is often the case with NOFA, there is a sense of common purpose amongst conference attendees, sponsors and presenters, and there is often overlap amongst those constituencies.

Carolyn Llewellyn, from Glynwood Farm in NY, has been attending the NOFA Summer Conference since 2001. This year, as every year, Carolyn brought along her daughter EJ (6), who was enjoying the Country Fair on Saturday afternoon. Carolyn appreciates the children’s program, which allows her to attend the adult conference workshops without worry. She knows that they are going to receive the same level of thoughtful educational and hands-on learning that she will receive. She also sees the scope of workshops, which target various levels of interest and ability. “Since I started coming to the NOFA Summer Conference, I went from being a farm intern, to a farm manager, to a farm educator and mother. There is still something here at the conference that interests me.”

Brian Turnbaugh, a member of the farm staff at Lindentree Farm in Lincoln, MA, recently went through a career change and decided to go into farming. Working in environmental policy down in DC, Brian decided that he could have a stronger impact on the various environmental causes that he believes in by going into farming. In February, he packed up his bags and his family, and moved to Arlington, MA, and got a job on a farm, and this is his first season farming. This was also his first season attending the NOFA Summer Conference. Every NOFA workshop is a new and exciting learning opportunity for him. “I came to the NOFA Summer Conference to learn about sustainable farming. I am thinking about starting a farm in the Boston area,” he shared. Bryan has already investigated land opportunities, and is just starting out, but is very serious about his commitment to this mission. ‘Beginning Farmers’ is one of the constituencies that NOFA serves with its Beginning Farmer track at the conference. Designed for folks farming for 10 years or less, beginning farmers not only get the specific technical assistance they need to be successful on the farm, but they also develop colleagues and a cohort at the conference. Perhaps the relationships built at the conference are at the core of what makes NOFA special. Very often farmers and farm staff are in far-flung places, out in the field working outrageous hours through the farming season, and never have the opportunity to receive the kind of informational and emotional support they need to keep going. NOFA provides a platform for these folks to learn
Sarah Zettelmeier was a representative from High Mowing Seeds, stationed in the Exhibitor tent throughout the conference. It was her first time joining us at NOFA. “It’s very helpful for us as exhibitors to have direct communication with our customers. We really enjoy and benefit from immediate feedback from farmers and growers on what is going on with our seeds this season. People let us know what is working and what is not. This is a really great source of product development feedback for us that we can take back to our company in Vermont.”

Jeffrey Smith arrived in Amherst on Thursday, August 9th, to offer a pre-conference seminar on organizing against GMOs. Dozens of attendees received hands-on strategies to be able to speak in public, and become effective advocates in their communities. Smith was impressed with the enthusiasm and energy around the GMO issue within NOFA. “It is clear that the issue has expanded, and that the time is ripe for accomplishing great things,” Smith observed. On Saturday evening, August 10th, Smith painted a picture of how activism around genetically modified seeds has evolved since their introduction onto the market, almost 2 decades ago. For Smith, educating others fuels his work. “Education is a big deal,” he remarked in his keynote speech, “I heard about GMOs in 1996, and heard a scientist, who is a genetic engineer, describe the details of what can go wrong, and why Monsanto’s venture of putting these not-ready-for prime-time seeds into the environment has an unprecedented trajectory of harm. Nowhere before in history have we seen the products of an infinite science affect everyone that eats.” In addition to his keynote address and pre-conference training, Smith also presented a film screening of his new film Genetic Roulette: the Gamble of our Lives, which played the day before the conference began, on Thursday, August 9th. At the core of Smith’s film, and his latest book of a similar title, is the health risk message. Motivated by political and media strategy, the GMO leader’s message has narrowed from an all-encompassing warning about environmental damage and agricultural damage, to a singular message: GMOs pose a major health risk to anyone and everyone. Much of Smith’s rhetoric is aimed at demystifying the science for an average audience. He explains about the process of creating a GMO plant in his film: “The process of insertion plus cloning creates massive collateral damage.” The health message has galvanized the medical community, parents fearing for their kids, consumers, and farmers alike. Smith’s language hits home with a wide variety of listeners, and he was well received at the conference. The GMO concern is perhaps the greatest food policy issue NOFA has tackled in its history, and will continue to drive political activities within the organization, including its ongoing appeal within the OSGATA v. Monsanto federal lawsuit.

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree served as the keynote speaker on Friday evening, August 10th. An articulate and visionary leader, Pingree inspired many listeners to tears, as they applauded a strong ally in the federal government. An organic farmer herself, Pingree speaks with authority when she advocates for food policy at the national level. Pingree was elected in 2008 to represent the first district of Maine, and many think her political career in the Democratic Party is only just beginning. Born in Minnesota, the now national organic food advocate has farming in her roots. In 1971, Chellie moved to Maine as part of the back-to-the-land movement. She eventually was a farm intern, then studied under Eliot Coleman and attended the College of the Atlantic. She bought a farm on the island of North Haven, in Maine, starting with 2 acres of vegetables. Over 30 years later, after establishing herself as a successful farmer and businesswoman (she started her own knitting business, inn and restaurant), she is combining her passion for a healthy food system with keen political abilities.

Pingree currently serves on the House Agriculture Committee and has been intimately engaged with the development of the current Farm Bill, which is due to be renewed this fall. As a farmer, Pingree evokes a strong sentiment of authenticity to those who listen to her. In her keynote, she indicated that as a farmer in Maine, she is delighted with her farm consumers’ level of interest -an interest in their farm work - which, according to Pingree, is unprecedented. Pingree is one of the authors of the Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act in the Farm bill, which addresses issues such as farm credit, farm crop insurance for diversified crops, hoop houses, season extension, organics, SNAP benefits at farm stands, promotions for farm stands and markets, and support for schools that want to source locally. To date, the Senate has passed its version of the Farm Bill, which contains many of the provisions articulated by Pingree’s bill, but the House of Representatives’ version veers away from the goals of the Senate Bill. Pingree indicated that the bill may go to conference, where the two legislative entities work out their bill versions. However, she believes that the Farm Bill may not come together until the lame duck session, after the election in November.

Pingree left the audience with great sense of hope that Congress and the American public is going in the right direction. “We see the convergence of a trend. Markets and consumers are saying ‘I want to start eating healthier food. I want to look the farmer in the eye and say ‘what’s in this stuff I’m about to eat?’” Indeed, the NOFA Summer Conference success each year is in large part due to people’s thirst for knowledge. Food is no longer a trivial part of people’s lives. Farmers are no longer alone in their concerns for the food system. They are now supported by a strong network of consumers and activists who respect them, advocate for them, and collaborate in building healthy communities.
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NOFA/Mass Reaching Out on GMOs

By Jack Kittredge

Using the “bounce” generated by Jeffrey Smith’s August pre-conference training session on transgenic crops and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in Amherst, we are actively organizing to spread the word about these dangerous and unnatural products. The interest generated by California’s Proposition 37 -- an initiative to require labeling of GMO foods -- that will be voted upon this November is proving helpful as well!

Venues Sought

Specifically, we are soliciting opportunities to speak about this issue throughout the state. Church groups, Grange Halls, libraries, garden clubs, food coops and many other venues are being contacted and asked to sponsor a talk on genetic engineering this fall. If you are a member of such a group, or any group for which such a talk might be interesting, we would be glad to hear from you. Call Jack Kittredge at 978-355-2853 or Email me at Jack@nofamass.org to let me know about a possible speaking opportunity.

We are also seeking opportunities to meet with small groups of consumers wishing to get help in replacing GMO products in their households. We will meet with them, provide information necessary to identify and find alternatives for transgenic products, and go through a volunteer’s pantry, garage or barn to actually locate and discuss such products in a real life situation.

Besides educating for better consumer awareness and shopping, we will also encourage such groups to contact retailers and manufacturers with their concerns in an effort to highlight this issue and urge them to source ingredients and products, which have been identified as organic or non-GMO Verified, to offer in the future.

Organizers Sought

We are also using the list of attendees at the training as well as other sources to create a network of people willing to speak publically on the issue and to meet with consumers to help them identify, find alternatives for, and replace common GMO products. If you want to volunteer as a speaker on this topic, to help consumers eliminate GMOs in their own households, or to spread awareness back up the product chain to retailers and manufacturers, let me know as well. I will vet volunteers and place you in situations where you can be effective.

Video Available

The DVD that many NOFA/Mass members saw at the NOFA/Mass fundraiser the evening of Thursday, August 9, is now available to us for this work. Entitled “Genetic Roulette: The Gamble of our Lives”, this 90 minute film by best-selling author Jeffrey Smith details how genetically engineered foods harm you and your family. It is a compelling and important source of information and evidence. Also available with the video are several other presentations, including is a 28 minute DVD entitled “Seeds of Freedom” about how our collective heritage of seed has, at the hands of multinational companies, become a story of loss, control, dependence and debt. To schedule a viewing of these videos at a meeting or house party, contact Jack as above.
26th Annual
Winter Conference
Worcester State University
January 12, 2013

• Keynote speaker Karen Washington: farmer, activist and community organizer
• All day seminar on school gardens 101, Feeducation: bringing agriculture back in the classroom
• More than 70 workshops on organic farming, gardening, landscaping and homesteading
• Trade show with more than 75 vendors

Registration opens October 12th
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For more information, wc@nofamass.org or (978) 355-2853
JOIN US JANUARY 12, 2013 FOR AN EXCITING DAY

with keynoter and seminar leader, Karen Washington. Karen will address the conference as a whole in her keynote speech, “Hands across the Fields: Bridging the rural/urban connections. What role do we each play in working towards a sustainable food system?”

Karen will also offer an all-day seminar on School Gardens 101, Feeducation: Bringing Agriculture Back in the Classroom. Sessions will run concurrently with other workshops; attendees must participate in all 3 sessions,

• Session 1: What is it about?
• Session 2: Internal and external challenges/benefits - Who is involved?
• Session 3: Problems/issues - creating an action plan and sustainable agricultural system through rural/urban collaboration.

Karen Washington has lived in New York City all her life, and has been a resident of the Bronx for over 26 years. Since 1985 Karen has been a community activist, striving to make the New York City a better place to live. As a community gardener and board member of the New York Botanical Gardens, Karen has worked with Bronx neighborhoods to turn empty lots into community gardens. As an advocate, she has stood up and spoken out for garden protection and preservation. As a member of the La Familia Verde Garden Coalition, she helped launched a City Farms Market, bringing garden fresh vegetables to her neighbors. Karen is a Just Food board member and Just Food Trainer, leading workshops on food growing and food justice to community gardeners all over the city. Karen is a board member and former president of the New York City Community Garden Coalition, a group that was founded to preserve community gardens. She also Co-Founded Black Urban Growers (BUGS) an organization of volunteers committed to building networks and community support for growers in both urban and rural settings. Professionally Karen has been a Physical Therapist for over 30 years, and she continues to balance her professional life with community service.

“To grow your own food gives you power and dignity. You know exactly what you’re eating because you grew it. It’s good, it’s nourishing and you did this for yourself, your family and your community.” Karen Washington.

Request for Workshop Proposals: Deadline October 1, 2012

The conference draws about 1,000 people from Massachusetts and neighboring states. Participants include seasoned and beginning farmers, urban homesteaders, backyard gardeners, food activists, and many other engaged learners.

We are particularly interested in receiving workshop proposals for the following subjects:

• Food preservation and on the farm/garden DIY skills
• Season extension, soil fertility and seed saving
• Farm and food policy, healthy food access
• Livestock workshops – specifically small & large ruminants, poultry

We encourage you to submit a proposal on any relevant subject, regardless of if it is one of the above subject areas. All proposals will be reviewed by the Winter Conference staff with the objective of coordinating a workshop lineup that provides a variety of beginner, intermediate, and advanced workshops for all attendees. To submit a workshop proposal, please complete the online form by October 1st. You will hear back from someone by then. If you have any questions or trouble with the above link, please contact Wendy Mainardi at wendy@nofamass.org or (973) 224-4321.

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
P.O. Box 788, Philmont, NY 12565

September 2012 Newsletter
Fall Brassicas

BY MINDY HARRIS, PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR, NOFA/Mass

Brassicas are one of the veggie groups which seem to herald the onset of the Fall season, as the cool temperatures concentrate plant sugars and sweet leaves and fruit. The larger brassicas can usually tolerate frost very well, and some seed varieties are designed for fruits to do well maturing in lower temperatures. This genus of vegetable covers a wide range of crops, which, to the average consumer, might seem otherwise completely unrelated. The genus resides in the mustard family and includes standards such as broccoli and cauliflower, together with kale, collards, arugula, mustard greens, cabbages and Brussels sprouts. As with all crops, brassicas have a host of growing challenges, including pests such as cabbage looper and maggots, and flea beetles along with diseases such as anthracnose, black rot, and clubroot, among others. Part of what makes some of these veggies susceptible to disease is that they take a very long time to mature, which means they are in the field longer than most crops, and therefore subject to various obstacles. Since most varieties also don’t tolerate heat well, particularly as newly transplanted seedlings, getting brassicas in the ground and maturing at the right time can be a juggle for farmers.

I caught up with Amanda Cather, one of the Farm Managers at Waltham Fields Community Farm and former NOFA/Mass board member. As a Waltham resident, I was amazed to see how much Waltham Fields has grown in just the past few years. This summer, the farm was delighted to unveil its beautiful new Farm Stand, designed for CSA member pickup. Waltham is now maintaining 500 summer share members, and 200 winter share members, and is cultivating crops on 13 acres of land. Their fields are housed on their main property on Beaver Street, on the Lyman Estate a few blocks away, and on rented landowner property in Weston. Since they are a non-profit, food donation is part of their mission, and so any food grown at Waltham Fields either goes towards the CSA program, or is used for a Food Access market in downtown Waltham, for lower income residents, and/or it goes to food pantries. The Beaver Street location also hosts a Community Garden, educational programming, and children’s activities, along with seedling sales and on-site pop-up one-day markets for various edibles or plants at times throughout the year.

Waltham Fields is not certified organic, though their growing mechanisms all follow organic protocol. Due to consumer demand, Waltham Fields has decided to partner with organic-certified Picadilly Farm in Winchester, New Hampshire, which provides a delivery of 100 CSA-shares worth of produce each summer week.

I stopped by on a beautiful warm fall day, to take a tour of the fields and get an overview of Cather’s experience with Brassicas. The first beds we visited were her fall broccoli beds. Cather manages 3 beds, 200-feet long, with 2 rows in each bed, with each plant 18 inches apart vertically, and 20 inches from the next row, horizontally. Broccoli has been an annual challenge for Waltham – yielding only 100 pounds per bed, which amounts to about $12,000 an acre. Even though they have not been able to maximize production on these plants, but nevertheless continue to grow broccoli because CSA consumers expect it. Growing challenges, however, did force them to jettison their spring Brussels sprout crop, in favor of a later July planting. In all, Waltham Fields has 2.7 acres planted with Brassicas. In general, the farm plants an overall 30% crop buffer, with the expectation of some losses during the season.

The farm plants a succession crop of all their brassicas – one set of seedlings goes in July 1st and one goes in July 15th. Brassicas spend a very short time in the greenhouse, however - seeded only 3 weeks before they go into the ground. This is true for two reasons: the seedlings are seeded in a 128-cell tray, which contains cells that are relatively small for the emerging brassicas (particularly the larger ones), and so the plants need to move out of the cells quicker. The farm is also tight on greenhouse space. So the brassicas go in and out quickly. Cather does seedlings, rather than using the direct-seeded method because she finds that her seedlings can manage the weed pressure in their beds better than if the plants were direct-seeds. So she gives them a head start in the greenhouse. She also doesn’t do a spring crop of broccoli because they have found that their cabbage root maggots are more active in the spring, so they have a harder time getting the plants to mature properly. The fall season seems to work better for broccoli,
in their soil.

To help with soil fertilization, before the Brassicas are planted in July, the fields get prepped with a cover crop of barley, bell beans, and field peas which then get plowed into the soil when the Brassicas are ready to go into the ground. This cover crop preparation helps tremendously with weed suppression and disease management, and the plants are healthier in general. So rather than maximize the space and get started with early spring crops in the Brassica-beds, Amanda puts in spring cover crops, and prepares the beds for the July planting. In addition to the cover cropping, pest and disease management strategies at Waltham Fields include spacing and air-flow management (particularly since many of the brassica diseases are fungal), together with an application of composted dairy manure (20 tons per acre) and some doses of kelp meal. Of all the Brassicas in the ground, the waxy larger varieties seemed to be super healthy, and doing very well. Kale and collards seemed to have put out leaves that were over 2-feet long.

One of the challenges the farm faces is space. There are not enough beds available to do the kind of rotation ideal organic field management dictates. So the weed pressure and disease pressure may be more significant than it otherwise would be, if the farm had more beds to juggle around.

Cather sources her seeds from Fedco and Johnny’s, and with regard to Broccoli, she has chosen Gypsy and Major varieties for her July 1st planting, and Bellstar and Arcadia for the July 15th planting. The latter varieties are more well-suited to stay in the ground longer after fruiting, and after cold weather sets in. Keeping the soil moist has been an important part of managing these veggies. The young plants will keel over at the soil line, if they are transplanted in soil that is too hot. So at both July transplant dates, significant watering is provided to the beds before and as the transplants are going into the ground, so as to moderate the soil temperature. Ongoing irrigation is important too; something that they accomplish through overhead watering. Drip irrigation is not an option for the Brassica beds because they require mechanical cultivation and management throughout the growing process. But the overhead spraying also means that the Brassicas are more susceptible to disease than they would be with drip irrigation, and Waltham Fields will never utilize fungicide spraying.

As a new backyard grower, despite the fact that I was able to coax some small leaf cucumbers, Chioggia beets, mustard greens, and still-developing carrots out of my little 6x10 bed this summer (with a lot of love and daily attention, not to mention 150 pounds of manure, and leaf mulch) – Brassicas indeed seem to be the next frontier. I failed on a very spicy/bitter crop of watermelon radishes that matured during very high heat and sadly had to be pulled out and donated to my lawn rabbits. Although I would very much like to venture in that direction, Amanda Cather at Waltham Fields did little to convince me that Brassicas are easy. Furthermore, the more I understand the complex variables that go into a successful crop plan, and the challenges each veggie type poses, I am more in awe of organic farmers who somehow are able to make it all work; and ensure that food actually ends up on our tables.
I want my GMOs.

Last week, while driving to the supermarket I experienced a series of sudden and overwhelming urges to eat foods with ingredients made from genetically modified organisms (GMO). You know foods with hidden ingredients that have been fundamentally changed on a molecular level but look and even taste somewhat the same.

I know, GMO foods have not been adequately safety tested, and are not regulated. Maybe that’s why I feel so daring when I eat them. That’s okay, but what really annoys me is the fact they are not labeled. If you want to eat GMOs then labels are essential. I feel so vulnerable walking down the supermarket isles with shelf after shelf of unlabeled products. Most of the products contain nutrition, allergy or whatever information on their labels but it’s rare to find “contains GMO ingredients” prominently displayed. Forty-nine nations of the world have mandatory labeling of GMO foods. Why not the U.S.A.?

If I were a U.S. food manufacturer I would proudly let consumers know what’s in the food I create. I would be proud of the GMO ingredients I use. Some hippy-types may want freedom of choice and worry about unimportant constitutional concepts like their right to know what’s in their food. But for me, I just want to satisfy my GMO food cravings.

What this country needs is clearly labeled GMO foods and I don’t mean small font labels. I mean labels that are large enough so even baby boomers can read them. Clearly labeled products would certainly reduce the time I spend shopping. We need GMO labels.

If you want to know more about GMO food labeling go to carighttoknow.org
From Field to Fridge

Farms listed in the NOFA/Mass Organic Food Guide have the opportunity to highlight here what they currently have available for sale. Pick up some of their goods and help support your local organic and sustainable farmers today!

If you would like your farm or business listed on the Organic Food Guide website, contact Rebecca Buell at foodguide@nofamass.org or 978-724-3561.

To access a farm’s full Organic Food Guide listing, click on that farm’s name.

Bear Swamp Orchard
1209B Hawley Rd
Ashfield, MA
413-625-2849
apples@bearswamporchard.com
www.bearswamporchard.com
See website for hours
PYO all certified organic apples, raw sweet cider, vinegar, preserves, baked goods, farmhouse style organic hard cider in late fall

Bird of the Hand Farm
33 School St
Sterling, MA
978-422-6217
birdofthehandfarm@gmail.com
www.birdofthehand.com
Mon-Sat 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; check or cash self-serve
Apples (please call ahead as supplies are limited this year), plants, parsley, kale, basil, mint, lemon balm, and calendula flowers

Blue Heron Organic Farm
PO Box 67
Lincoln, MA
781-254-3727
farmer@blueheronfarmlincoln.com
www.blueheronfarmlincoln.com
Certified Organic Farm stand located on Rt. 117 just east of the railroad tracks, Lincoln, Open: Fri-Sun 10-5 (June-Halloween). We have pick-your-own raspberries and flowers until the frost during farm stand hours.
Lexington Farmers’ Markets: Tuesdays 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Davis Square Market, Wednesdays noon to 6 p.m.; Lincoln Farmers’ Market, Saturdays 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. We also sell to many Boston area restaurants; please see website (click on ‘Restaurants’) for seasonal availability. Please email the farmer if interested in volunteering!!

Chestnut Tree Corner Farm
1581 Pine St
Dighton, MA
obfess@yahoo.com
chestnuttreecornerfarm.net
Online sales
Seed garlic for sale, four types

Dragonfly Farms
40 Prescott St.
Pepperell, MA
978-433-3906
farmer@dragonfly-farms.com
www.dragonfly-farms.com
Farm Stand open daily 9 a.m. until dusk, Summer Markets include: Westford, Tuesdays 2:30 to 6:30 p.m., Allston, Fridays 3 to 7 p.m., Pepperell, Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Acton, Sunday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Chemical pesticide and herbicide free vegetables, Delicious eggs from pasture raised-organically fed-chickens, and organic layer pellets sold at bulk pricing.

Eastleigh Farm
1062 Edmands Road
Framingham, MA
508-877-1753
eastleighfarm@gmail.com
www.eastleighfarm.com
Farm store: Mon-Fri noon to 7 p.m., Sat and Sun 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Raw Milk (from our herd comprising mostly of jersey cows), Nobsco Artisan Cheese (made from our cow’s milk), Ice Cream, assortment of crackers, jams, honey, cookies, cheeses, chocolate milk, heavy cream, butter, apples, apple cider.

Heritage Fields
309 Gidney Road
Orange, MA
978-544-3282
rascherry@gmail.com
Open by appointment
Chevon (goat meat) USDA cut and wrapped, frozen; yearlings available for custom slaughter in October and November; “Red Ranger” free-ranged broilers.

High Meadow Farm
28 High St
Hubbardston, MA
978-928-5646
jassyhighmeadow@yahoo.com
www.highmeadowfarms.com
9 a.m. to dusk
Certified organic apples, 100% grass fed beef, woodland raised pork.

John Crow Farm
133 Old Ayer Road
Groton, MA
978-842-1JCF (1523) [customer service]; 978-448-9100 [farm stand]
johncrowfarm@gmail.com
johncrowfarm.com
Farm Stand open daily 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Beef, Pork, Lamb, Chicken, Turkey, Goat, Vegetables, and other locally made gourmet food products. Call for availability regarding Duck, Goose, Quail, Pheasant, Rabbit

Many Hands Organic Farm
411 Sheldon Road
Barre, MA
978-355-2853
farm@mhof.net
www.mhof.net
Lard at $20/quart and $10/pint. You can also order pork, chicken, turkey, and beef. All is certified organic except the beef. Sign up now for our late fall CSA that starts Wednesday, October 31.

Natick Community Organic Farm
117 Eliot St
Natick, MA
508-655-2204
ncorganic@verizon.net
www.natickfarm.org
Open daily during daylight hours for visits and purchases, at the Natick Farmers’ Market, Saturdays, starting May 12 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the Natick Common and the Framingham Farmers’ Market, Thursdays, starting June 7, noon to 5 p.m. at the Framingham Village Green
Pork, chicken, root crops and greens. Pre-order your Thanksgiving pasture-raised turkey online at http://natickfarm.org/Pages/Turkeys.html or at the farm

Old Frog Pond Farm
38 Eldridge Rd
Harvard, MA
organic@oldfrogpondfarm.com
www.oldfrogpondfarm.com
Wed-Sun 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
PYO certified organic raspberries and seasonal offerings at our farm stand

Red Fire Farm
Granby Farm Stand at 7 Carver St, Granby, MA
Montague Old Depot Gardens Farm Stand at 504 Turners

Falls Road, Montague, MA
413-467-7645
thefarmers@redfirefarm.com
www.redfirefarm.com
Farm Stands open daily 10 a.m. until dusk until Oct 31st.
Farmers Markets: Boston South Station, Tuesdays noon to 6 p.m.; Springfield Forest Park, Tuesdays 12:30 to 6 p.m. through October
Fall crops include greens (Kale, Lettuce, Chard, Salad Mix, Braising Mix) & lots of roots (Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Parsnips, Celeriac, Onions, Garlic, Potatoes, Beets and more). Last of the summer crops also are still abundant (Peppers, Tomatoes, Beans). Fall is also prime season for Cabbage, Winter Squash & Pumpkins! Bulk produce for canning and storage available at discounted prices. Sign up now for a Deep Winter Farm Share (distributions in Western MA & Somerville) and keep local organic MA grown produce on your table all winter this year!

Robinson Farm
42 Jackson Road
Hardwick, MA
413-477-6988
info@robinsonfarm.org
www.robinsonfarm.org
Farm Stand open daily 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Summer farmers markets: Lexington, Tuesdays 2 to 6:30 p.m., Westboro, Thursdays 1 to 6 p.m., Union SQ in Somerville, Thursdays 5 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Hardwick, Sundays 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
“Award winning” Farmstead aged cheeses (cow), grass-fed beef, raw milk, eggs, local yogurt, goat cheese, maple syrup, jams, fermented, pickles and seasonal vegetables. Visit www.robinsonfarm.org for retail locations and restaurants, or wholesale cheese order

Simple Gifts Farm
1089 North Pleasant St
Amherst, MA
413-549-1585
simplegiftsfarm@gmail.com
simplegiftsfarmcsa.com
Tuesday, Thursday 3:30 to 7 p.m. at the farm, Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the farm or Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the Amherst Common
Tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, salad greens, leeks, onions, potatoes, organic eggs, pasture-raised pork, grass-fed beef, pork shares

Sweet Autumn Farm
PO Box 736
Carlisle, MA
978-287-0025
sweetautumnfarmma@gmail.com
Farm Stand open Tuesdays 3 to 6 p.m. and Fridays 1 to 6 p.m.
Duck and chicken eggs, radishes, carrots, green beans, eggplant, peppers, asian greens, lettuce, herbs, kohlrabi, strawberry popcorn
Turner Farms Maple Syrup
11 Phillips Road
South Egremont, MA
413-528-5710
tfmsyrup@gmail.com
www.turnerfarmsmaplesyrup.com
Open daily 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Besides our wonderful maple syrup our son has invested in a cotton Candy Machine. He uses only sugar and maple in his product ingredients you can actually pronounce. He is currently attending the farmer’s market in Great Barrington. He is also available to sell for special events esp. orchards and wineries.

Warm Colors Apiary
2 South Mill River Road
South Deerfield, MA
413-665-4513
warmcolors@verizon.net
www.warmcolorsapiary.com
Wed, Fri, and Sat 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Varieties of Honey, beeswax candles, and beekeeping equipment and supplies
Please join us for the Annual Warm Colors Honey Festival, September 15th, 10AM-4PM. Free admission, beekeeping talks, honey ice cream from Cook’s Farm, mead sampling by Green River Ambrosia, Cooking with honey by Pamela Adams University of Massachusetts Bakery. A Celebration of the honeybee and beekeeping. All are welcome. No rain date.
COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

EVENTS

Volunteers Needed - 7th Annual North Amherst Harvest Festival
Sunday, September 23, 12:00 noon-5:00 p.m. Please contact Melanie DeSilva and Debbie Zeidenberg, volunteer coordinators, melanierdesilva@gmail.com; 413-588-1059

Growing Places Garden Project
2nd Annual Garden Harvest featuring Gary Hirshberg of Stonyfield Farm. Thursday, October 4th from 5:30-8:00 p.m. The Barn at Gibbet Hill, 61 Lowell Road, Groton, MA 01450. Set in a beautifully renovated and restored 100-year old barn overlooking rolling hills of conservation land, the Barn at Gibbet Hill is one of New England’s most unique venues for weddings and special events. Located at the foot of Gibbet Hill, just beyond the picturesque Main Street of Groton, the Barn offers rustic elegance with unparalleled views. Executive Chef Karen Osterberg sources produce directly from Gibbet Hill Farm, located just steps away from the Barn. Tickets are limited, $75/person and on sale now. All proceeds go directly to support garden and education programs.

National Organic Coalition
NOC pre-NOSB Meeting. Sunday, October 14, 2012, 12:30 -- 6:00 pm. Topics will include: Federal Organic Policy update, Farm Bill Updates, AC21 Updates, NOSB and NOP topics and More! Providence Biltmore, 11 Dorance Street, Providence, RI 02903. 800-294-7709. Coffee/Drinks & Snacks are included (Lunch on your own prior to meeting). Please RSVP to Liana Hoodes via email at: Liana@NationalOrganicCoalition.org

National Organics Standards Board
National Organic Standards Board Meeting Oct. 15-18 in Providence, RI: The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) makes recommendations to the USDA about policies for organic certification. During meetings, the NOSB discusses their agenda items, listens to public comments, and then votes in a public forum. The NOSB submits their final recommendations to the USDA for consideration for adoption as official policy by the USDA. The NOSB will be meeting at the Biltmore Hotel, 11 Dorrance Street, Providence, on October 15-18, 2012. The meeting agenda, proposals to be discussed, and instructions for registering to comment at the meeting or submitting written comments can be found on-line here (choose October 15-18, 2012 on the drop-down menu).

Over Half of Massachusetts Farmers Participate in Federal Crop Insurance Programs. The Other Half Use Sleep Aids. Just Sayin’...

For more information, contact your local crop insurance agent.

Administered by the USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) www.RMA.USDA.gov
RHODY NATIVE PROPAGATION SERIES
Workshop 1: Designing with Natives. Open to the Public. Thursday, October 18, 2012 6-8pm
Location: URI Kingston Campus, CBLS Auditorium. Speakers: Karen Beck, Commonwealth Engineers & Consultants, Inc.; Catherine Weaver, Tupelo Gardenworks; Vanessa Venturini, URI; Designing with natives for residential, municipal and habitat restoration projects. This workshop series is offered free of charge to nursery growers and green industry professionals by the University of Rhode Island, in cooperation with the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey through a Northeast SARE grant. Pre-registration is required as space is limited. Preference will be given to green industry professionals. Call (401) 874-2900 or email outreach@uri.edu to register.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IFOAM ORGANIC LEADERSHIP COURSE

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) will hold an Organic Leadership Course in North America in 2013. Participants will gain knowledge, skills and a comprehensive understanding of organic principles and the organic sector in North America and globally while they develop leadership skills and deepen their networks of like-minded people. With over 150 hours of comprehensive training and intensive skill-building, this course is ideal for preparing managers and staff to be leaders and spokespeople. Please spread the word about this program and encourage people with leadership potential to apply. If your business would like to reach out to these leaders or provide scholarships for deserving participants, funding opportunities are available. Contact: Katherine DiMatteo, the North American regional partner for the course.

The Importance of the Plant’s Root Ball

Frequently a bedding plant is transplanted into field soil conditions that are less than perfect. Within the root block or ball, the plant, and the plant’s partner microbes should have established a system and structures capable of extending their organization out into the field soil. The green leaves provide the energy to power the outreach and the potting soil serves as the cultural base. Investing in sufficient media for ample root balls pays back in improved crop yields.

802-223-6049 | fax 802-223-9028
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John Mitchell
Tom Montagna
Rachel Moriarty
Jennifer Munoz
Mary Murphy
Michael Murray
Sarah Murray

Jono Neiger & Kemper Carlsen
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Marian Parker
David Parnas
Elizabeth Perkins
Mac Mead
Craig Phelton
Diana Phillips
Ann Pilch
Signe Porteshawver
Kyle Pratt
Luke P Pryjma
Cyd Reiman
Sean Riley
Lincoln Riordan
Iris Robertson
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Thomas Sullivan
Tamara Sullivan
Annie Sullivan-Chin
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Nyanna Susan Tobin
Shannon Torgerson
Jillian Traugott
Haynes and Nancy Turkle
Brian Turnbaugh
Peggy Ueda
Sally Velez-Guzman
LeeAnn Warner
Joan Weed
Nicole White
Michelle Wiggins
Mike Witt and Jim Messineo
Emily Wyner
NOFA/Mass Workshops

Self-Reliance

A Food Preservation Party
Saturday, September 22nd, 9am-3pm, ** pot-luck lunch at 12 noon
Many Hands Organic Farm, 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA
Instructors: Julie Rawson and Jack Kittredge
Cost: $45; Participant Limit: 25

Using what is available on our farm on September 22 we will ask you to help us can, freeze, lacto-ferment, wine, dry, leather, jam, juice and pickle. We will also make lard. Additionally we will tour our root cellar and any aspects of our farm that interest you - 3 acres of certified organic veggies, 1 acre fruit, chickens, pigs, turkeys and steers.

Cheesemaking

Hard Cheeses
Saturday, October 13, 8:00 a.m.-5:00p.m
Uppingill Farm, 411 Main Road, Gill, MA
Instructor: Cliff Hatch
Cost: $80
Cheeses include: Cheddar, Monterrey Jack.

Participants will learn to select the right quality milk, discern what kinds of milk are appropriate for each type of cheese, and choose what kind of bacteria to use as a starter. Cliff invites participants wanting to learn more about working with the milk of their own animals to bring 2 gallons of milk to make into cheese.

Semi-Firm Farmstead Cheese
Saturday, October 20, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Cricket Creek Farm, 1255 Oblong Road, Williamstown, MA
Instructor: Suzy Konecky
Cost: $70
Cheeses include: A Farmstead Semi-Firm Basket Tomme

The workshop will take participants through the entire cheese making process. Participants will begin with pumping the milk into the cheese room, heating the milk, adding cultures, adding rennet, cutting the curds, hooping, and flipping the cheeses. Everyone will take home a 1lb wheel of cheese with instructions for home-aging and will have a chance to taste the different cheeses made at and tour the farm.

NOFA/Mass-SEMAP Twilight Grower Education Series in Southeastern Mass

Cover Crops, Season Extension
Monday, October 1st, 5:30p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Instructor: Christy Raymond
White Barn Farm, 458 South Street, Wrentham, MA
Cost: $15 NOFA Members, $20 Non-Members

Winter cover crops are the main topic for this session as a staple organic growing practice. Farmers Christy and Chris will discuss their farm’s process and purpose for using such methods. We will also sneak a peek at season extension techniques used on the farm.

Advanced Growers Fall Seminar
Profitable Year-Round Farming and Marketing with Paul and Sandy Arnold
Monday, November 5, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Stonehill College, The Martin Institute, 320 Washington Street, Easton, MA
Cost: $60 NOFA members, $65 Non-members

Paul and Sandy Arnold own Pleasant Valley Farm in upstate New York and have been farming for 24 years; they have two teenage children who are home-schooled and help run the family farm. Over 40 varieties of diverse fruit and vegetable crops are grown with organic methods on about 8 of their 180 acres of land, and they grow a diverse range of crops in two high tunnels. The Arnolds make their living selling their produce year-round at 2 to 3 area farmers’ markets each week; they specialize in season-extension and profitability, and enjoy utilizing renewable resources such as solar for hot water and electric. Although neither came from a farming background, they have enjoyed farming as their sole source of income for the past 20 years and have also enjoyed the great lifestyle it offers. Topics that will be covered at the seminar include: Good Business and Record-Keeping, Labor Efficiencies to Maximize Profits, Production from Greenhouse to Field, Mulching: Soil Management and Weed Control, Post-Harvest Handling of Crops and Storage, Season Extension with Fieldhouses and High Tunnel Production.

This event is part of an educational collaboration between SEMAP and NOFA/Mass, supported in part by the USDA Specialty Crops Program through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

For info on NOFA/Mass Education Events, contact Ben Grosscup, 413-658-5374. By email, ben.grosscup@nofamass.org
Know Your Food

Stonyfield began as an organic farming school. So we have a long history of helping people know their food.

Get to know your food, and make choices that are good for you, your family, farmers, animals and the planet.

Visit iWillKnowMyFood.com