



Dear Farm Friends,

We bring you lots of news and information this month including what's happening with the farm stand, spring and summer classes, and the new farm administrator. In addition you can learn about starting plants from seed in the article below.

Happy spring!

Susan Tornheim
Newsletter Editor
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From the Farmers



Both of our greenhouses are full to bursting with seedlings, and we just planted the last seeds for the seedling sale. We have a lot sown in the field as well: peas and turnips, carrots and spinach. The unusually warm dry spring has afforded us the liberty to cultivate even the coldest and wettest corners of the farm, and to date we have nearly half of our acre prepped and ready for planting. This week, the first week of May, we'll be putting in beans, turnips, radishes, arugula, beets, spinach, and leeks. It's interesting to reflect for a

moment as we put leeks in the ground, as they'll be one of the very last things that we harvest this fall. Speaking of alliums, we've noticed a touch of die-off in our storage onions and suspect onion root maggot. We plan on trying a defense that some of our neighboring farmers have used for years, applying nematodes, beneficial soil life that will help fight the insects that threaten our crops. In addition to combating root maggot the nematodes will work to control leaf miner and cucumber beetle, two of our most pernicious pests.

A friend of ours, and future apprentice, sampled our soil as part of a research project at U Mass this spring. Yearly applications of compost and cover crops have given us a high

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percentage of organic matter (7.6%), important for soil structure and the slow diffusing of nutrients to roots. The pH is balanced as well, and our nutrients both micro and macro are on the high side. Our thanks go out to the Angino family for scrupulously stewarding the farm and its soil for nearly a hundred years.

Our new farm stand is well and truly under way. See the article below for more on the reconstruction. Thanks to everyone involved in donating and otherwise helping us rebuild after the fire. We hope to have the farm stand up and open to the public in June. Until then we'll be providing some of our spring bounty to Sweet Basil in Needham and En Locale, locavore catering. You can support the farm and local food by patronizing these businesses.



Megan Talley & Joshua Faller

New Farm Stand



Construction has begun on the new Winchester Street farm stand to replace the one that burned down in February. The new one will have more space to display produce, a front porch to protect produce from direct sunlight, and more room inside to accommodate more than one customer at a time. We are carefully making the new stand completely wheelchair accessible.

Since the \$5,000 goal for the rebuilding has not quite been reached, the farm is still accepting donations. You can donate online [here](#), in person at the Seedling Sale on May 19 and 20, or by sending a [check](#). Stay tuned for the grand opening in early June, date to be announced. Until the new one is completed we will sell from a temporary stand nearby.

Our huge thanks go to Mike Hand for creating the design; to Mark W. Quigley General Contracting, www.markwquigley.com, for volunteering his company's labor and his personal project management; to National Lumber for providing the building materials at a substantial discount; to the City of Newton's Department of Public Works for providing the concrete pad for the cost of the materials; and to all the people who sent contributions (over 30 at last count) who are making it financially possible to rebuild the farm stand.

Peter Barrer, NCF President

Farm Stand Opens June 2

Buy delicious, fresh, locally grown produce at our temporary farm stand on Winchester Street (at the farm) starting Saturday, June 2. Hours: Tues.–Fri., 2–7 p.m.; Sat., 10–2 p.m. Or visit our produce stand at Newton's Farmers' Market, American Legion Post 440, 295 California St., on Fridays from July 6 to October 5. Hours: noon–5 p.m.

Gardeners' Delight! NCF's 2012 Seedling Sale on May 19 and 20



Please join us this coming weekend for our popular annual Seedling Sale. Friends of the Farm are welcome to shop early from noon to 1:00 p.m. The general public is welcome to shop from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. There will be 20,000 vegetable and herb seedlings for sale, a wide variety of each. Come select plants for your backyard and talk with expert gardeners who will be on hand to answer your questions. The cost is \$5 for a four- or six-pack of seedlings. Cash or check only. Bring your own boxes for carrying.

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to the seedling sale! For more information, go to [Newton Community Farm's Web site](#).

Help at the Seedling Sale

The Seedling Sale is fast approaching, and we still have room for volunteers. CSA members, remember that the hours you volunteer for the Seedling Sale count toward your work hours. This year we are calling for key volunteers in these positions and numbers:

Saturday, May 19, and Sunday, May 20

Volunteer Coordinator: Check in and coordinate volunteers day of, 11:30–3 p.m., 1 person Saturday

Ticket Writers for Checkout Line: 11:30–3 p.m., 1 person on Sunday

Welcome Table: Welcome and orient customers, 11:30–3 p.m., 1 person on Sunday

Runners: Restock seedling sale tables from greenhouse, 11:30–3 p.m., 6 people each day

Walkers: Assist people to their cars, 11:30–3 p.m., 4 people each day

Clean-Up: 3–4 p.m., 4 people on Sunday

Sunday, May 20 (after 4 p.m.), or Monday, May 21

Lawn Sign Pick-Up: 2 or 3 people needed to pick up lawn signs around Newton.

Learning and Planting

For many people a visit to the farm provides the opportunity for exploration and discovery, and over recent weeks we have welcomed a range of visitors to the farm. Children from the Meeting House Child Care Center in Newton enjoyed becoming Farm Superheroes for a morning and planted peas in the learning garden as well as sunflower seeds for their school garden. On another occasion, despite the rain and biting wind, a group of more than 20 seventh graders from Temple Shalom visited to learn about the important work community farms do. For them the highlights were tasting freshly picked asparagus, getting dirty planting blackberries, and digging in the compost. And only last week a group of youngsters explored the fields and harvested ingredients that they later used to prepare a meal to be shared with their families.

During April vacation week we teamed up with Historic Newton, and families enjoyed an afternoon of working together to build a raised bed at the Jackson Homestead. We had children from ages 3 to 16 all helping out. It was quite a sight!

Upcoming Classes in May and June

Plots in Pots, 5/24, 5–6:30 p.m. For those of you who want to garden but feel constrained by space or growing conditions, this is the perfect class for you.

Photography on the Farm, 6/9, 8:30–10:30 a.m. Develop your photography skills as you learn the tricks and techniques of photographing nature using the farm and all it has to offer as your subject.

Jam and Jelly, 6/14, 6:30–8 p.m. Learn how to make your own jam and jelly so you can enjoy those summer flavors all year round.

The Mid Season Bounty and Thinking Ahead, 6/30, 9–noon. A gardening class that looks at some of the tasks that need to be done at this time of year as well as tips on how to harvest and store your produce.

We are very excited to welcome Christyn Schroeder of Down Under Yoga, Newtonville, to our community as we team up to offer a new summer series, **Family Yoga at the Farm, on four Fridays: 7/20, 7/27, 8/17, and 8/24, 9:30-10:30 a.m.** Designed for children ages 4 to 8 to enjoy along with a parent or caregiver, students will learn yoga poses and breathing exercises to keep their bodies strong and flexible while having lots of laughs and enjoying the natural beauty of the farm.

For more information on this and other upcoming classes, click [here](#) or follow us on Twitter or Facebook.

Summer Programming for Youth

There is still time to sign up for our summer programs. Please read on to learn more about these exciting weekly programs for youngsters of all ages.

Farm Sprouts, preschool–kindergarten Tuesdays, 10–11 a.m., 6/26–8/28, 1-day sessions

Learn about farm life through stories and hands-on activities. Explore how bees make honey and how to grow vegetables from seeds.

**This program is fully enrolled; however, contact our education coordinator at

education@newtoncommunityfarm.org to have your name placed on our waiting list.



Little Diggers, entering grades 1–2 Tuesdays, 2–3:30 p.m., 6/26–8/28, 1-day sessions

Explore the farm as we begin to learn where our food comes from. Each week we will read a story and have fun getting dirty with hands-on activities like planting seedlings or harvesting fresh produce.

Farmer in Training, entering grades 3–5 Tuesday–Friday, 9–12:30 p.m., 6/26–8/28, 1-week sessions

Spend time outdoors exploring plant and animal life. Discover how food gets to your table and how our choices can affect the health of our bodies, our community, and our environment.

SAY Farmers, entering grades 6–9 Tuesday–Friday, 9–12:30 p.m., 7/10–7/20, 2-week session

This program combines hands-on farming with an in-depth look at environmental sustainability and local food systems. Participants explore a range of important social and environmental issues through discussion, activities, and games.

To learn more about any of these exciting programs, or for registration details, please click [here](#). In addition, you can follow us on Twitter or on Facebook. You can also contact our education coordinator, Alison Wilson, at education@newtoncommunityfarm.org.

Alison Wilson
Education Coordinator

Rochelle Rosen, Administrator

The farm welcomes a new staff member, Rochelle Rosen. In her position as the administrator she will work on fundraising, communications, and programs and will also maintain the database and coordinate event planning for the Fall Festival, Seedling Sale, Evening on the Farm, and Lumière dinner.

A seasoned communications executive with a passion for food and local, sustainable agriculture, Rochelle has extensive experience with fundraising, public relations, communications, and outreach. She has served in senior management positions in higher education and nonprofits and also has experience as a newspaper reporter. When not working, Rochelle enjoys cooking and gardening. She lives in West Roxbury with her husband and two children.

Evening on the Farm on July 17



Save the date for our annual Evening on the Farm, the evening of Tuesday, July 17. It will be a beautifully prepared dinner with wine and music, with the barn and field as background, and the setting sun in the west. Come and enjoy with us.

Jerry Regosin
Board Member

Start Your Veggie Seeds Now, Enjoy Later!

So many vegetables, so little time and space. If your Newton Community Farm share can't satisfy all of your vegetable cravings, you may grow your own from seeds. This can lengthen your growing season and enable more turnover in your garden. You can also try seed varieties the farm doesn't plant. Plus, seedlings started indoors will enjoy a few weeks of protection from attacks by critters. Veteran vegetable grower and farm member Margaret Fogel shares her veggie-growing tips in this article, including her basic guidelines:

1. Start early indoors
2. Transplant at the right time
3. Protect from animals

Start Early Indoors

You can plant vegetable seeds indoors as early as March or April. Fogel suggests that you start with hardy plants that will thrive outdoors at the earliest date, such as onions, beets, and cabbage.

You'll need the right supplies to start your seeds: planting pots, soil, and light. A garden-supply store can direct you to the tiny pots typically used to start seeds. As for a planting medium, you need a balance between moisture retention and good drainage. Smaller seeds require seed-starting mix, which is soil made finer by sieving. Larger seeds, such as beans, can be planted in potting soil. Some plants, like tomatoes, benefit from a sterile mix, which delays their exposure to blight spores that can be carried by wind or may infect garden soil. Fogel used to make her own potting mix, but now she buys a sterile commercial product.

Good light is also essential. Your seedlings will grow tall and spindly without at least six hours of light daily to get them started. Fogel uses long fluorescent lights that she hangs above the pots. Once the seedlings are established, you can move them to a south-facing window. Regular watering is also very important. Check the soil every day, and water more frequently as the plants grow larger.

Your plants may outgrow their pots before the weather is warm enough for transplanting. If this happens, move them into larger pots as an interim measure.

Transplant at the Right Time

Move your seedlings outdoors once the weather is warm enough and the seedlings are six to eight inches tall with roots that bind the soil together. Cold-tolerant vegetables, such as onions, cabbage, and beets, can be planted outdoors in April, but don't set out those that require warm soil, such as tomatoes and beans, until late May. You can relocate the pots earlier if you use a cold frame, which is essentially a clear lidded enclosure that acts as a mini-greenhouse. Take note of the weather, warns Fogel. If you leave the cold frame lid closed on a sunny day, you may fry your plants.



Seedlings can be traumatized by an abrupt move from the consistent environment of your home to the ups and downs of Mother Nature. Fogel gradually acclimates her plants to the outdoors, initially putting them outside for brief periods.

Protect From Animals

Animals, which eat ripe fruit as well as seedlings, are the biggest challenge to urban vegetable gardening in Fogel's experience. This is a major reason why Fogel starts seeds indoors and then moves them to the protected environment of a cold frame. Once the seedlings grow big, most are less vulnerable to rabbits and other critters. However, she needs chicken-wire fencing and other methods to protect some veggies, such as carrots, for the entire season.

If you're hungry for more information on growing veggies from seeds, Fogel suggests reading *Mini Farming: Self-Sufficiency on 1/4 Acre* by Brett L. Markham, published by Skyhorse Publishing. The Newton Free Library has at least one copy of the book.

It's time to start planting!

Susan Weiner

State of the Orchard: Spring 2012

The orchard (28 dwarf apples, 2 pie cherries) survived a warm winter, free from attack by hungry rabbits and deer. However, we had a major attack from winter moths. They were particularly destructive of blossoms on Honeycrisp apple trees, and much less so on Liberty apple trees. To prevent this from happening next year, we plan to use sticky or greasy tape, such as Vaseline-coated masking tape, which will be applied in mid-October around all trees and tree stakes. We will also spray with horticultural oil and with a microbial pesticide such as Spinosad.

We added seven new "disease-resistant" dwarf apple trees, including two Goldrush varieties (a late October, very crispy, long-storage apple), a Galerina, a Crimson Crisp, a Florina Querina, and two Crimson Topazes. Details about how each variety is cultured can be found at www.cumminsnursery.com or www.acnursery.com.

The demonstration apple orchard was planted in 2007 on the Nahanton Street side of Newton Community Farm (east of the driveway) to evaluate methods of growing apples in Newton. The orchard consisted of 20 dwarf apple trees, 11 of which were chosen for their resistance to fungal and bacterial infections, and 9 of which were highly rated for taste, but lacked resistance to powdery mildew and to apple scab.

Both biological and chemical methods for control of fungi and insects are being evaluated. Two years ago plastic red apples coated with pheromone attractants were used to control flies that lay eggs under the apple skin. This approach seemed to be successful, as there was little surface damage to the apples. Last year we used chickens to control apple pest insect larvae and pupae that develop in the soil under the leaf mulch. The chickens scratched the litter aside and ate the grubs. However, they also flew into the trees to roost and pecked at the flavorful Honeycrisp apples. From this we have concluded that chickens should be used as insect eaters only selectively, before apple development and after harvest.



Sam Fogel
Board Member

Controlling Winter Moths

Winter moths are a serious threat to many species of trees, and this problem is becoming worse every year. The June farm newsletter will have a helpful article on winter moths by Sam Fogel that gives complete instructions on how to protect your trees. This month, however, you can take one step to help protect trees during the caterpillar stage:

- **Spray the bark with Bt**, the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (variety *kurstaki*), to kill young larvae. (One commercial Bt brand is "Thuricide" by Bonide.)
- Use **pyrethrum** after buds have opened.

Newton Farm Commission Seeking New Member

The Newton Farm Commission, which oversees our activities at the Angino Farm on behalf of the City of Newton, is seeking a new member. If you are passionate about locally grown produce, preserving the last remaining farm in Newton, and educating the public on issues such as sound agricultural practices, consider applying. The commission meets once a month at City Hall on a Thursday evening, usually from 7 to 8:30 p.m. If you are interested, send a letter of interest and a résumé to Alexandra Ananth, aananth@newtonma.gov, staff for the Farm Commission. For more information, call her at 617-796-1121.

New Blog Entry

As promised, here's the new blog from the farm.

<http://handpickednation.com/read/farming-101-chop-wood-carry-water/>

Leona Palmer

Recipes

This month spinach is being harvested, and it's a good time to make Bow Ties With Salmon, Spinach, and Black Mushrooms for a special occasion. It's on the farm's [recipe collection](#), which you should explore if you are not familiar with this great resource. For the Bow Ties recipe, click [here](#).

Susan Tornheim

Wish List

- a 4-wheel-drive tractor with a front-end loader, or a Bobcat
- a mig, or wire welder
- a new hanging scale to replace the one that burned in the farm-stand fire
- 6-ft. folding tables
- Mexican bean beetle parasites, <http://www.arbico-organics.com/product/Mexican-Bean-Beetle-Parasites-Pediobius/pest-solver-guide-beetles>
- ladybugs
- wheel hoe
- any old tools not being used

Please contact us if you have any questions about this newsletter or ideas for future issues, or if you want to be added to our mailing list. Just e-mail Susan Tornheim at sftornheim@yahoo.com. For more information about the farm, e-mail our farm managers, Megan and Joshua, at newtoncommunityfarm@gmail.com or check out our Web page at newtoncommunityfarm.org.



updates on class listings, events, NCF news and more!