

The Newton Farmer

an e-newsletter from
Newton Community Farm



June 2009

Dear Farm Friends,

Hooray for veggies! If you have been trying to eat locally, or at least seasonally, you'll be delighted that some of your food suddenly became very, very local. I look forward each year to my first trip to the farm. At this time of year when unexpected produce is available on a regular basis, it transforms my thinking process. Instead of carefully planning for dinners and then shopping for ingredients, my cooking becomes much more spontaneous, adventurous, and experimental. If that's your experience, may your experiments be delicious and successful.

Remember to check the farm Web site for details about classes, programs, recipes, and more at newtoncommunityfarm.org (or click on our logo).

Your editor,
Susan Tornheim
sftornheim@yahoo.com

Notes from Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager

I love June. Warm summery days, but cool nights. Rain showers and the sounds of crickets chirping in the evenings. Lengthening days leading up to the summer solstice. I find it all invigorating and enlivening. Good thing, because June is also one of the busiest times at the farm. Planting season is at its peak, but we've still got work to do in the greenhouse starting seedlings for succession plantings and the fall crops. The warm summery days and rain showers that I find so invigorating also invigorate the weeds so there's hoeing to be done. And June finds the harvest season beginning in earnest. Seems like even with the lengthening days, there just aren't enough hours to get all the work done.

Thus far 2009 has been a good year for getting projects done on the farm. Despite all the planting, weeding, and harvesting that need to get done (or that we perhaps sometimes procrastinate about doing) we're finding a little time to tackle some of the items on the very long list of projects I keep in my head. It feels good to knock off a job or two that seem like they've been on my mind for a year or two (or three or four). We're slowly but surely cleaning up and beautifying more and more of the property and making improvements that will make the farm a more pleasant and efficient workplace.

One of those projects that we're working on right now is cleaning up the space between the barn and the grass stage. For years, before Newton Community Farm took over operations of the farm, this area was used as a repository for all sorts of odds and ends — metal poles used for trellising tomatoes; old sewage pipe; tractor implements; grinding stones; corrugated metal sheets; and an eclectic assortment of granite, marble, and other stone. A lot of this was kept just in case some use could be found for it. Much of it never saw its potential realized. The area isn't good for growing crops, which is why it was used for storing things. It's shaded by big white oaks, and much of the ground is covered with the remnants of an asphalt drive leading up to what used to be a pit for working on tractors and trucks.



It doesn't sound like most wonderful part of the farm, but we have a vision for how to make this a more attractive and useful part of our daily operation. Those of you who have spent a morning working on the farm during the summer know that we often have groups of a dozen or more people—CSA members, volunteers, high school interns, and workers from various schools and organizations—all helping to make the farm run. Many of them stay for lunch, and we'd like to encourage this as a way of strengthening our community. So this year we're cleaning up that ramshackle corner of the farm and turning it into a picnic area where anyone who wants can join us for a community lunch. As part of our pilot Farmer in Training

program, local middle school students will be participating in this lunch and learning how to use fresh vegetables by preparing a dish to share each day. We're looking forward to this new aspect of the farm. Not only will it clean up what for a long time has been something of an eyesore but it will turn a formerly overlooked area into a vibrant part of the daily life of the farm.

So next time you're at the farm, either visiting or working, consider bringing a lunch and staying to enjoy a meal with us. It's a great way to get to know others who are interested in the farm, sustainability, healthy eating, and having a good time in the dirt.

Summer Program for Middle School Students

Middle school students will have a chance to work, learn, and have fun down on the farm this summer. A weekly program for students going into grades 6 through 9 will take place at the farm and at Nahanton Community Gardens. In the Farmer in Training program students will learn to plant, maintain, and harvest a farm garden. They will discover how food is produced and enjoy camaraderie with their fellow gardeners, farm staff, and volunteers. Each session will include gardening, community lunches (bring your own and share a dish made from fresh farm produce), and a different theme related to social justice and/or sustainable agriculture.

Students may sign up for one or more weekly sessions.

Mon. through Fri., 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Weekly Fee: \$125 Members, \$140 Nonmembers

Max. number of students per week: 6

Instructor: Yannick Perette

July 13-17 Aug 3-7

July 20-24 Aug 10-14

July 27-31 Aug 17-21

For more information see the link below. To register, go to education@newtoncommunityfarm.org.

[Click here for more information.](#)

June and July Classes

Here are classes for all ages from preschooler to adult. For course descriptions, click on the link below. To register for courses please e-mail us at education@newtoncommunityfarm.org.

June 16 Jam and Jelly Making

June 25 From Plant to Plate (Pt. 1)

June 30 Ready, Set, Grow! (Pt. 1)

July 7 Farm Sprouts

July 11 Build an Adobe Bread Oven

July 11 Weeds on the Menu!

July 16 From Plant to Plate (Pt. 2)

July 18 Build a Bluebird House

July 22 Lunch and Learn From the Garden

Farmer in Training: from July 13 to Aug 21

Sign up for one or more weekly sessions!

[Click here for course information.](#)

Meet Our New Education Coordinator

J. Yannick Perrette, 34

Growing up in New York City, I made the most of my fire escape to grow edibles in containers. As I got older, I could always be found in gardens. My first job as a child was working in a plant nursery. In college, I worked at Wave Hill in the Bronx doing native forest restoration projects. The following summer I worked at Earthworks, a permaculture institute in Cerillos, New Mexico. At Brown University as an environmental studies major, I wrote my senior thesis on community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms. My conclusions were that buying a CSA share is cheaper than buying the equivalent at a supermarket, and that CSA farms at that time were hindered by inadequate farm financing and insufficient numbers of CSA farmers.

For a year I lived in West Virginia working for the Green Space Coalition and directed a regional conference entitled "Building Coalitions to Vitalize Community Green Space." In the spring of 2000, I moved to Washington, D.C., and opened a restaurant and wine bar called Arbor, which lasted four years. It demanded even longer hours than farming. Since moving to Boston, I've worked at Blue Heron organic farm in Lincoln and was also involved in community outreach and education programs for three years with Red Tomato, a nonprofit in Canton. I also worked as office manager and coordinator of an ecology camp for local high school students for the Friends of Alewife Reservation in Cambridge. I have also volunteered at City Sprouts, Farm Aid, the Arnold Arboretum, Field of Greens/Food for Free, and the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Please feel free to let me know your thoughts, comments, and questions about any and all educational and coordinating concerns about the farm. Thank you for your ongoing shared input and ideas. I can be reached anytime by e-mail at education@newtoncommunityfarm.org.

Welcome to the Learning Garden!

As you pass through the Learning Garden (LG) at the farm, take some time to see what's going on. As you probably know, it is the farm's outdoor classroom. Classes such as Square Foot Gardening, Potato in a Box, and Plots in Pots have already taken place this season. Get Growing and Farm Sprouts are continuing series. Ready, Set, Grow! starts soon for families. Among other summer classes will be Jam and Jelly Making, Lunch and Learn: Cooking With CSA Produce, Weeds on the Menu!, From Plant to Plate, Building Bluebird Houses, Putting Up the Garden, and Building an Adobe Oven. Middle schoolers can enroll in the Farmer in Training program in July and August.

Get Growing participants have planted the west end of the LG. Peas, which they planted on April 17, should be ready to harvest in two to three weeks. Beet greens are ready now. These new gardeners will be enjoying the fruits (veggies?!) of their hard work throughout the season.

You'll see three different grains growing on the south side of the LG. These will be harvested in the fall, threshed, ground into flour, and used in bread-baking classes. Ted Chapman's Permaculture Boot Camp has resulted in a demonstration permaculture bed. A sunflower house and pole bean tepee are rising skyward, too.

The Education Committee and its new coordinator, Yannick Perrette, are very excited about our expanding educational programming. Come take a class, become an education volunteer, suggest a class to teach. The Learning Garden is a place for every member of our community.

We would like to recognize all the folks who have already signed up as education volunteers: Sheryl Boris-Schacter, Karen Kieffer, David Kieffer, Linda Brite, Alexandra Bathon, Connie King, Lisa Cohen, Alba Kotoni, Sarah Barnett, Peggy Rothschild, and Laurie Brownstein, as well as Education Committee members Trudy Lanman, Carolyn Arond, Jenny Craddock, Janet Springfield, Ted Chapman, Sam Fogel, education coordinator Yannick Perrette, farm manager Greg Maslowe, and assistant farmer Tom Libby. They assist and/or teach our classes and help maintain the Learning Garden. If you are interested in joining, please contact Janet Springfield, jjkas@aol.com.

Jenny Craddock
Janet Springfield

[Click here for more information about courses and events.](#)

Successful Seedling Sale

Our first annual Edible Seedling Sale succeeded beyond our expectations. We uncovered a large demand for NCF-grown seedlings that members of our farm community could grow in home gardens. Our apologies to folks who arrived midway through the event and found that the items they were looking for were already sold out.

Here's wishing for a successful 2009 growing season in home gardens. Next year we plan to have even more seedlings for sale, so please plan to come back next spring. And a personal thanks to our volunteers who made the event go so smoothly.

Farm Stand

The farm stand, located on Winchester Street, is now open Tuesday through Friday from 3 to 7 and Saturday from 10 to 2. In June you can expect to see lettuce, arugula, spinach, green garlic, radishes, hakurei turnips, carrots, basil, and cilantro available for sale. The farm stand, in addition to the farm's booth at both Newton Farmers' Markets, lets you buy the produce you want at a variety of times and days.

Volunteering on the Farm

Drop-in volunteer hours are Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 9 to noon. Come on any of these days wearing farm clothes and be prepared to get your hands into some lovely dirt.

Recipes

If you have a hankering for guacamole but don't have an avocado, try a pea-based version called Guacamollie, which also uses some of June's cilantro. Those tangy red radishes that we're getting in our shares this month make crisp Japanese Radish Salad. And for a delicious use of June's spinach, check out Bow Ties With Salmon, Spinach, and Black Mushrooms, an elegant dish for a special dinner. They are all on the farm's Web site; see the link below.

[Click here for recipes.](#)

Farm Wish List

- * Picnic tables, one or two, preferably wood, for our new picnic area
- * Chipper, either a half day's use or one donated to the farm
- * Artist/calligrapher to paint signs identifying vegetables for field, Learning Garden, and farm stand

If you can help us with any of these items, please contact Greg Maslowe at [617-916-9655](tel:617-916-9655) or at newtoncommunityfarm@comcast.net. We are a 501c3 organization. Your donations may be tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!