

The Newton Farmer

an e-newsletter from
Newton Community Farm



May 2009

Dear Farm Friends,

Every time I go by the farm I love to look over at the rows of plants that grow bigger and more colorful by the day. The farm is a hive of constant motion these days, as Greg explains; the first Edible Seedling Sale is this coming weekend; and produce sales begin this week at the farm with asparagus! There is a lot going on, as you'll read below.

Your editor,

Susan Tornheim

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Notes from Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager

Tom and I, along with a small but determined crew of volunteers, have been working nonstop getting ready for May. What happens in May that requires so much work? The first big plantings go into the field. Many of the cool-weather crops get planted in early May, and by the middle of the month we've begun putting in the first succession of many of our warm-weather crops. What are successions? While there are a few crops we only plant once, most things we plant multiple times. Sometimes we do this as a way of dealing with disease (e.g., tomatoes), and sometimes we do this because we need to harvest a crop over the entire season (e.g., carrots). So our first succession of tomatoes goes into the field by the middle of May, along with cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, and many other crops.

In addition to this major planting push in the field there's the Edible Seedling Sale. We've potted up literally thousands of plants for this first annual event. The greenhouse addition we put on in April came just in time: even with the expanded space in the greenhouse we're bursting at the seams with seedlings and have to move many of them outdoors.

We're also hard at work expanding our perennial plantings. We're putting in more blueberries and blackberries, replacing some Asian pears, and planting seedless table grapes on our new information kiosk. We're also trying to get a jump on the weeds by making sure that all our current perennials are well mulched. It's exciting to think that by the end of May we'll have three beds of blueberries growing along Winchester Street. The first bed, planted two years ago, should start producing fruit this summer!

What else is in store for the coming season? We're planning perennial herb beds flanking the main path through the field where people can pick from a variety of herbs throughout the season. Between the field and the farmhouse we'll be planting a flower garden. The flowers will not only beautify the farm but also allow us to put a piece of underutilized land into production when the garden matures and we open it for cut flowers. Along Nahanton Street we'll be putting up a trellis to support blackberries, and between the information kiosk and the farm stand we'll be constructing terraced beds.

Sadly, our bees did not survive the winter. But we have three new hives with a fourth arriving any time. Our goal,

working with Needham beekeeper Tom Tyre, is to have hives that live over the winter and eventually to be able to breed our own queens! It's great having the bees back, and as our orchards mature the bees will play an important role in ensuring good pollination.

Thanks to those who have come out already and helped us get ready for the planting season. I hope to see many more of you at the farm as we move toward summer.

May 17 – Edible Seedling Sale!

This Sunday is the farm's first Edible Seedling Sale from noon to 4pm. Come buy vegetable and herb seedlings to plant at home. You can bring your questions to our gardening experts and watch a gardening demonstration.

Farm Stand and Farmers' Markets

Produce sales will begin this week with our own asparagus! We have a very limited supply (3 to 5 pounds a day) of fresh asparagus for the next three to four weeks. The asparagus will be available starting at 10 a.m. in the lower level of the barn. We will also have spring onions for sale with the asparagus.

By the first or second week in June our Winchester Street farm stand will be open and selling seasonal produce Tuesdays through Fridays from 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 to 2. The farm stand operates on a self-serve honor system. Select your produce, weighing items on the scale if appropriate, and put your payment in the slot in the counter. It's that easy. As the summer progresses there will be more produce and greater selection, so be sure to visit us often.

Starting the week following July 4 Newton Community Farm will also have a stand at both of Newton's Farmers' Markets. On Tuesdays we are at Cold Springs Park, and on Fridays we are at the American Legion Post 440 on California Street. Both markets run from the week following the 4th of July through Halloween. The markets open at 1:30 and close at 6.

Bike to Newton Community Farm - Saturday, June 6

As part of its mission to promote sustainability, Newton Community Farm is sponsoring a group ride from Newton City Hall to Newton Community Farm. Learn how easy and fun it is to get to the farm, and to the Farmers' Market, by bicycle. Small groups led by experienced cyclists will leave Newton City Hall beginning at 10 a.m. for a 9-mile loop that includes a stop at Cold Spring Park (site of the summer farmers' market) and a stop at Newton Community Farm. This is an urban route that includes some busy streets and a couple of not-too-steep hills as well as quiet residential areas wherever possible. Children, accompanied by an adult, and cyclists of varying levels are welcome. Everyone must wear a helmet, have a bike in good working order, and be able to bike at least 9 miles. So leave the car at home and discover the farm as a destination you can reach under your own power!

Start: Commonwealth Avenue carriage road at Beaumont Avenue (across Commonwealth Avenue from City Hall)

Registration: 9:30-10:00 a.m.

Ride to farm: 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Rain date: June 13, 2009

More information: AFTER MAY 31, questions may be directed to Cynthia Snow, csnow2@verizon.net or [617-731-8725](tel:617-731-8725)

Volunteering at the Farm

Looking for a way to learn more about growing food? Looking for a way to get out and have some fun in the dirt and sun? Come join the farm staff and other volunteers each Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday between 9 and noon for our public work sessions. These sessions are open to anyone who would like to join us. You must, however, be at least 14 years old to come by yourself. Younger children are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. During the sessions you'll participate in whatever needs to be done on the farm that day. In May that often means working in the greenhouse or transplanting crops into the field. As the season progresses you might find yourself weeding, harvesting, washing vegetables, sorting vegetables for markets, planting, or doing many other activities that are just too much fun to mention. Whatever you end up doing, it's most fun when you do it in groups, so encourage your friends to come with you and, if you can, bring something to eat and stay for lunch afterwards.

NewtonServes

Speaking of volunteering, the farm once again was a work site for NewtonServes. This year we took on two tasks: mulching the final section of permanent pathway in the field, and preparing land in the community garden plots in Nahanton Park for use this summer in an educational program. In years past the farm has been an extremely popular site, attracting 30 or more volunteers. This year, perhaps because NewtonServes was scheduled at the end of April vacation week, we had a small turnout. But thank you to those who did come and volunteer. There was a lot of work for a small crew, but we worked hard and did what we had planned to do.

Newton North Student Designs and Builds Farm Cold Frame

Many thanks to Sophie Duncan for the farm's new cold frame. Sophie, a senior at Newton North High School, designed and built the cold frame on the farm with the help of our farm manager, Greg, using plastic deck material and a clear polycarbonate top. She completed the structure last November and planted arugula, Swiss chard, spinach, herbs, and other hardy vegetables. The 4' x 10' plot supplied Sophie and her family with fresh salad greens which she harvested at the farm several times this past winter. It was great to be able to harvest her crop in the snow, she said. Since Sophie will be graduating this year, she hopes that the farm will continue to use the cold frame. Thank you, Sophie, and congratulations on a successful project!

Sophie received school science credit for this independent project. The materials for the frame were purchased with a grant from the Newton Conservators.

Spring Classes on the Farm

May 16: Natural Architecture for Your Garden

May 21: Potato in a Box

Jun 2: Square Foot Kitchen Gardens

Jun 5: Plots in Pots!

Jun 13: Veggies in Your Flower Garden?

Jun 16: Jam and Jelly Making

[Click here for more on our Classes](#)

Recipes

Rhubarb is lush and green in May, so here are two easy ideas for using rhubarb.

Rhubarb Sauce

Stew rhubarb in a little water with sugar to taste. Use on cut-up fresh or stewed fruit.

Rhubarb Dessert

Make Rhubarb Sauce and then add some cream for a simple, delicious dessert.

[Click here to see our Wiki Recipe Collection](#)

Wish list:

- * cedar or redwood posts for 6' fence (NOT pressure treated)
- * wire clothes hangers
- * plastic grocery bags

If you can help us with any of these items, please contact Greg Maslowe at [617/916-9655](tel:6179169655) or at newtoncommunityfarm@comcast.net. We are a 501c3 organization. Your donations may be tax-deductible. Thank you for your support!
