



Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

FALL 2010

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Farm Profile: **Two Ton Farm**

by Anna MacDonald
Dobbs, CFSA Intern

In densely populated North East Central Durham, front yards blend into one another creating the illusion of a vast monoculture of lawn. It is a typical inner city neighborhood and, not surprisingly, a food desert. Trying to find a grocery store in this neighborhood is like playing 'Where's Waldo.'

Only the quick glimpse of a wood chip pile hints that one house in the neighborhood is different. This backyard isn't a lawn or food desert, but an urban-farm polyculture of plants, produce, and pollinators. It's called Two Ton Farm and the community-run enterprise hopes to grow two tons of produce in one growing season on less than a tenth of an acre. If stakeholders have their way, Two Ton Farm is just the start of an urban farm revival in the Bull City.

So, how did this all get started? Partner organizations Bountiful Backyards and Good Work crafted the original vision for Two Ton Farm. Bountiful Backyards is a community-based enterprise that installs urban, edible gardens, and Good Work is a community development organization



*Kifu Faruq of Green Space Initiative
weeding the collard bed.
photo by Anna MacDonald Dobbs*

committed to entrepreneurship and sustainable development. After initial funding fell through, Keith Shaljian, co-founder of Bountiful Backyards, began sharing their vision in local food meetings. In April, a non-profit called JRuth offered Shaljian the backyard of JRuth Manor, a transitional community house that it manages. Less than a month later, staff of Bountiful Backyards and Green Space Ini-

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The Tool Shed: **Buy Quality Compost**

by Brian Rosa, NC DENR Compost
Specialist

Boost your yields with a little help from nature's black gold - just make sure you're getting the good stuff

Farmers need good, well produced and consistent compost to incorporate into their soil nutrient plan. Organic or non-conventional farmers especially need to use a soil amendment that is high in organic/carbon matter and rich in plant-available nutrients and micronutrients, has good moisture-holding capacity and a diverse microbiological community.

As with everything else, you get what you pay for. Good quality compost is made from good quality inputs or ingredients. Farmers purchasing compost should ask several questions before considering buying any compost. The first question you should ask is, do you have a waste analysis for your product? A NCDA analysis will tell you a lot about the product: C:N ratio (is it cured), NPK, pH. Some will give you heavy metal contents. The next question: What are your feedstocks? (manures, municipal yard debris, food residuals, bio-solids, industrial sludges, paper pulp, egg process residuals, ice cream....)? Ask if they have any analysis on these materials, too! Some of these materials may have components in them that you might not want on or in your fields, such as pharmaceuticals from municipal bio-solids, heavy metals from chicken

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CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION (CFSA)

CFSA is a membership-based organization of more than 1,300 farmers, processors, gardeners, businesses and individuals in North and South Carolina who are committed to helping people in the Carolinas grow and eat local, organic food. CFSA's Mission is to promote local and organic agriculture in the Carolinas by inspiring, educating and organizing farmers and consumers.

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Newsletter Information

Stewardship News, CFSA's quarterly newsletter, would like to hear from you! Send letters, articles, announcements, queries, cartoons, recipes, corrections etc, to Amy at amy@carolinafarmstewards.org. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily shared by the editor or the CFSA Board. We welcome the diverse views of our membership and invite your letters to the editor, articles, etc. CFSA does not endorse any product or service advertised.

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From the Director

Flexing Our Muscles

The two-year story of a proposed dramatic overhaul of America's food safety regime is winding to a close, perhaps with a whimper instead of a bang. The local, organic food movement has emerged as one of the main characters in this story, and our influence is growing.

Last month, Congress adjourned for the November elections without passing "food safety" legislation that would increase the authority of the Food and Drug Administration over 70% of our food supply. That legislative proposal was once a slam-dunk—the House version of the bill, HR.2749, passed by an overwhelming vote of Democrats and Republicans more than a year ago. But in the Senate, action on the Food Safety Modernization Act, S.510, has ground to a halt.

I am proud to say that, like never before, the sustainable food movement has had a major, positive impact during the deliberations over S.510. The Senate staff who heard from you, who studied the issues, who sought input from sustainable agriculture organizations like Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, have worked to meet our concerns. Those of us, in the Carolinas and across the nation, who believe in a healthy, local, organic food culture showed we are numerous, articulate, credible, and a force to be reckoned with.

CFSA's Campaign for Truly Safe food has involved:

- more than 20 farmers' market action days
- publishing an exclusive report on the economic impact of the bills on the local food economy
- grassroots call-in drives
- farmer visits to Washington
- an extensive media outreach campaign, and
- providing regular input directly to Senate bill-writers.



Roland McReynolds, Executive Director

Our work, all of us playing a role together, made both NC Senators Richard Burr and Kay Hagan into strong advocates on this bill for small farms, food entrepreneurs, farmers markets and organic ag. This was vital to the national effort because both serve on the committee in charge of the bill. Hagan has backed the proposal of Montana Senator and organic farmer Jon Tester to exclude farms and food businesses with less than \$500,000 in annual sales that serve local markets from any new FDA food regulation powers. Burr, an original co-sponsor of S.510, has insisted that the Senate leadership agree to Tester's proposal.

Every issue we've fought for—small business protections, organic farming protections, educational programs, animal and environmental concerns—has been addressed in the final compromise bill.

Dozens of groups of people like you from across the country made this



Happy hogs make healthy food.
photo by Anna MacDonald Dobbs

happen. Stopping the imposition of industrial-scale "safety" regulation on local food systems will be an accomplishment for us all to take pride in. But, as of this moment, nothing is certain about what Congress will do this year. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid filed for cloture on the bill before Congress adjourned. That means that he thinks there's at least 60 votes in favor of the bill, and that he might force a vote in this Congress' lame duck session after the election. Look for action alerts very soon if we do have to make one final grass-roots push to defend local and organic food in this bill. If S.510 doesn't pass before the 2011 Congress convenes, the House bill goes away and it's up to next year's House and Senate leadership to decide if they want to make a run at this issue again.

Whatever the outcome on S.510, this bill is just one battle in a struggle that has been boiling since the 2006 E.coli spinach scare, and that will continue to be hot for the years, even decades to come.

We must keep organizing and build on our success. This is still a defensive battle to prevent new bad things from happening. The next horizon is to actually overcome existing bad things and make positive change, in terms of food safety and across all of agriculture. To get there, we need you to stay engaged and encourage others to join CFSA and this community. The larger our membership, the louder our voice.

Sincerely,



P.S. Join us in Winston-Salem at the Sustainable Ag. Conference, Dec. 3-5! Not only do we need greater strength in numbers, we need to come together as a movement to get educated, strategize, plan, and be inspired!

P.S.S. Thank you for your support this past year. Your membership and donations make the work we do at CFSA possible. I hope that you'll think of CFSA again this year when you're considering your end of the year charitable giving.

CFSA Launches Beginning Farmer Apprenticeship, Scholarship Programs

Thanks to grants from the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, new farmers in the Carolinas will have incredible opportunities to learn the business of sustainable agriculture.

CFSA has partnered on two beginning farmer grant projects, one each in North and South Carolina. In SC, we are working with the Building Entrepreneurial, Business Management, and Land Stewardship program. This program is led by the Clemson Institute for Community and Economic Development. It provides in-depth mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for beginning farmers in the state. Our part of the three-year program involves creating a pilot apprenticeship program that connects serious new farmers with experienced sustainable growers. The goal is to pass CFSA member farmers' land stewardship ethic and farm management skills to a new generation. The grant provides stipends for apprentices to help them make the commitment to the learning and work necessary for a successful farm operation. It funds consulting fees for the host farmers, in recognition of the value of the infor-



Max Jones of MAE Farm showing off his family's farm during the the 2010 Eastern Triangle Farm Tour.

photo by Anna MacDonald Dobbs

mation and experience they bring to the table.

For the Bringing New Farmers to the Table program in NC, we are collaborating with the National Center for

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Save the Dates!

25th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference

December 3-5, 2010 in Winston-Salem, NC

Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference

Jan. 20-21, 2011 in Oxford, NC



Field Notes

In the field with insect pests and beneficials

by Daniel Parson, Parson Produce

At the end of September, a group of growers, extension agents, and educators got together at Parson Produce and Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, to investigate pests and their natural enemies on vegetable crops. Sponsored by USDA-SARE, this was the second in a series of workshops put on by Dr. Geoff Zehnder of Clemson University to educate agricultural professionals in organic pest management. It highlighted a beneficial insect study that I am undertaking after receiving a 2-year SARE producer grant this spring. I led the farm tour and Dr. Powell Smith, Lexington County extension agent, led the collection and identification portion.

The day started at the PC campus garden. In its second year of production, the garden's purpose is to educate students about food issues and the importance of organic farming, while providing a way for them to participate in the production of their own food.

Next, the group took vans to Parson Produce. The farm, consisting of two acres of production supporting a 48-member CSA and restaurant sales, is managed using organic methods but is not certified. The fields are divided into quarter-acre blocks that allow the intensive rotation of cover crops with cash crops. Cover crops are relied upon to provide the bulk of fertility and pest control. The farm is in the middle of a two-year study to investigate beneficial insects attracted by flowering Buckwheat and their effect on pest populations in adjacent tomato and squash crops. Preliminary results show that more beneficial insects live in flowering buckwheat than surrounding grassy areas. Minute Pirate Bugs and Big-Eyed Bugs top the list of beneficials. As egg-feeders, they may even have an effect on the plant-eating true bug populations.

After a short discussion of collection methods by Dr. Smith, participants were off to explore the fields and collect whatever insects they could find. One of the most fascinating finds

was the 'banker' plants in the broccoli field, plants that are heavily infested with pests (in this case, aphids). Having just a few of these plants can be an advantage because they allow the numbers of beneficial insects to explode along with the pest population. Once the food source on the 'banker' plant is depleted, the natural enemies will disperse to the rest of the crop. On these heavily infested broccoli plants, the group saw all life stages of the Lady Bird Beetle, Hover Fly larvae, and parasitoid wasps pupating on the caterpillar carcass they ate as larvae.

After a delicious lunch featuring farm produce at the Farmhouse Bed and Breakfast, the group headed back to the PC campus for a short lecture by Dr. Smith on the basics of insect identification. Finally, participants used dissecting microscopes and hand lenses in a lab to identify the pests and natural enemies they collected at least to family. A great number of both groups were found, but because

pest damage at the farm remains at an acceptable level, there is an indication that the natural enemies are winning. Stay tuned; more pest workshops are being planned, and next year there will be more information from the buckwheat study. 🐞

> Learn more about beneficial insect habitats from Dr. David Orr (NCSU) at the Sustainable Ag. Conference!



Banker plant (broccoli leaf) with natural enemies feeding on the aphid.
photo by Dr. Guido Schnabel

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Field Notes

Eno River Farmers' Market's Hillsborough Harvest Dinner Sparkles

by Leila Wolfrum, Eno River Farmers' Market Manager

On September 11, the Eno River Farmers' Market in downtown Hillsborough brought local, seasonal eating back to its source. The market hosted "The Hillsborough Harvest Dinner, An Evening at the Eno River Farmers' Market," which featured all locally raised products, cooked by market chefs.

Sixty people including customers, farmers, and local officials sat down together around one big banquet table to share the experience.

Chefs Chris McKinley and Austin Genke of Box Carr Farms and Dave Ramirez of Geodesic Gardens used pork, beef, vegetables, fruit, cheese, and baked goods from Eno River Farmers' Market vendors to prepare the elegant, farm-to-fork dinner. Favorite dishes included Herb-Crusted Roast Pork Loin and Winter Squash Spetzle with Brown Butter Sauce.

The dinner included pasture raised pork and chicken from Fickle Creek Farm; grass-fed beef from Rogers Cattle Company; lettuce, tomatoes, and a variety of pickles from Two Chicks Farm; organic sweet potatoes, winter squash, okra, and radishes from Timberwood Organics; a variety of goat and cow milk cheeses from Hillsborough Cheese Company; and dessert prepared by the Queen of Tartes made from fresh apples and pears from Orchard Creek Farm. The dinner featured wine from Shelton Vineyards, a winery in Elkin, NC, selected by the Hillsborough Wine Company.

Several of the farmers whose food was consumed also attended the dinner, including Ben Bergmann of Fickle Creek Farm. "It was wonderful to see the community support Eno River Farmers' Market. The dinner gave me the feeling that the ERFM really came of age."

The event, which was sponsored by the market and the Orange County Visitors Bureau, was intended to celebrate local farmers and sustainably



grown foods, and to take advantage of the beautiful Public Market House, in which the farmers' market is held every Saturday morning.

"The ambiance struck a perfect balance between the elegant and an outdoor picnic. The music, lighting, and tablecloths made the event special while being in the Market House on a beautiful evening made it a bit rustic. Perfect combo," Bergmann said.

Betty Eidenier, a regular farmers market customer, applauded the opportunity to break bread with both neighbors and farmers. "People had time to talk instead of just our usual neighborly hellos on the way to other things. It was great to renew old friendships and meet new folks. It made people appreciate more that the market is really part of the community."

Market organizers hope to host another dinner in the Spring, when strawberries

and asparagus come into season. For more information about the Eno River Farmers' Market, visit enoriverfarmersmarket.com.

> Learn more creative ways to make farmers' markets more successful at the CFSA Conference! There is a whole track devoted to farmers' markets, featuring Diane Eggert of the Farmers Market Federation of NY.

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- * Rutherfordton, NC surrounding area
Earth Perks, Rich & Debra Davis 828-287-7730
- * Boone NC / surrounding area & Mountain City, TN
Tamara McNaughton - 423-727-2791
- * Augusta, GA Garden City Organics
Kate Lee & Brian Gandy - 706-364-0169
- * Asheville NC and surrounding areas. Loads are being organized to that area 3 times a year. Call Seven Springs Farm for details.

Field Notes

The Sausage Wagon

by Jennifer Curtis & Tina Prevatte, Co-Founders



Farmhand Foods opened for business at the end of October with the launch of its Sausage Wagon, which is intended to be a fun and interactive way to introduce our brand, our products and our farmers to Triangle-based food lovers.

The wagon roams Durham and the Triangle with regular weekly stops at the Farmers' Market, breweries, and other high traffic locations. The mobile eatery serves an assortment of sausage sandwiches and other items created by local chef Drew Brown, co-founder of Durham's Piedmont restaurant.

Getting Meat to Market

The sausage wagon is just the tip of the iceberg for a much larger program. Farmhand Foods is a new venture that spun out from NC Choices, a Center for Environmental Farming Systems program at NC State seeking to grow market opportunities for Tar Heel meat producers.

Farmhand Foods will work to provide a processing and distribution infrastructure to allow small-scale local farmers to have access to market - something that economies of scale make difficult, given most small farms lack the volume necessary to provide buyers with consistent supplies of fresh product.

Farmhand will pay farmers a premium price for meat raised humanely and antibiotic- and hormone-free. And they'll work to bring the meat to everyone from local area retailers to restaurants.

Area diners can find the whereabouts of the wagon and more information about the project at www.farmhand-foods.com.

OktoberFresh - A Celebration of Local Food

Nearly 200 local food lovers gathered at Patient Wait Farms in Piedmont, SC on October 3 for CFSA's first OktoberFresh fundraising event.

Pairing local farmers with some of the Upstate's best chefs, the festival welcomed guests with the aromas of High Cotton hand basting ballotines of lamb and The Broken TeaPot dishing up steaming bowls of a garlicky chicken bouillabaisse. Summa Joe's Searing Pans rolled and cut fresh pasta while Soby's gently simmered pork and American Grocery Restaurant roasted savory rabbit. CocoBon Chocolatier's peach melba truffles were a big hit, while Marvelous Pies' unique apple pie-in-a-cone were a quick sell out. McGee's Irish Pub rounded out the feast by serving complimentary local beer from Thomas Creek brewery.

Families toured Patient Wait Farms and kids had fun with crafts and activities, but perhaps the favorite moment of the event was when the bluegrass band, This House Burning, engaged the entire flock of Patient Wait's heritage turkeys in a sing and gobble-a-long, much to the amazement of the crowd.

Many thanks go out everyone who made the event such a success: hosts Gail and Mike Cooley, the many volunteers, sponsor Live Oak Farm, in-kind sponsor Whole Foods Market of Greenville and Milky Way Farms. CFSA would also like to express its deepest appreciation to the chefs and vendors who all did a brilliant job of showcasing local food, and show their support of local farmers in their daily business.



OktoberFresh featured mouth-watering dishes, like Chef Joe Fredette's Chevon Swedish Meatballs in a rich mushroom sauce over fettuccine.

photo by Diana Vossbrink

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ASK THE EXPERTS

This month, CFSA asks about garlic, root crop storage, cover crops and mobile processing units

When is the best time to plant garlic in the Carolinas?

JEANINE: In North Carolina, garlic should be fall planted from mid-September (western NC) through November (eastern NC). The cloves must be planted early enough for large root systems to develop before winter. A well-established plant will grow rapidly in the early spring as temperatures begin to rise. Spring planting of garlic is not recommended because the bulbs from spring planted garlic are usually very small and must often be allowed to grow a second season to reach marketable size.

When is the latest that I can plant a cover crop this fall? And what is best for late planting?

ALEX: While Sept. and Oct. are the best times for seeding winter cover crops. I have planted cover crops up to early Dec. with some success. Grain Rye is really the only thing that has consistently done well late for us.

KEN: Good advice from Alex. A general rule is to plant covers at least 6 weeks before the development of consistent hard freezes in your area.

GREG: A good source of info. about cover crops and when to plant is: www.ipm.ncsu.edu/Production_Guides/Burley/burley.pdf. See chapter 6. Although it was written in the Burley production guide, it's useful for most crops.

Can I leave some of my root crops in the ground for the winter and harvest them as needed?

JEANINE: I've had varying degrees of success with this method. It works best in moderate winters that are not excessively wet. Beets, carrots, rutabagas, winter radishes, Jerusalem artichokes, potatoes, and parsnips can all be left in the garden where they grew. Mulch with a thick layer of

straw or leaves to protect them from freezing. Dig when needed. Expect to lose some to rot, rodents, and cold damage.

Another way to store the same vegetables is to dig a deep, wide pit (3+ feet deep) in a dry area where water will not stand. Line it with heavy plastic. Put a thick layer of straw in the bottom, then alternate a layer of vegetables with a layer of straw. Finish with a layer of straw, forming a mound above the ground. Put a loose sheet of plastic on top, but do not seal it in around the edges. The idea is to keep water out but allow the pit to breathe. Put enough soil on top of the plastic to hold it all in place. This makes the vegetables a little harder to get at, reducing loss to rot and rodents.

I own and operate a small produce farm and am interested in growing small batches of chickens for meat. I want to process my birds myself under the on-farm exemption but don't have my own processing equipment. I keep hearing about Mobile Processing Units, but there isn't one available near me. Should I build one and rent it?

CASEY: There are currently only a small handful of inspected facilities for poultry that are open to independent growers and there are many miles between them. Many farmers have turned to using Mobile Processing Units (MPUs) to solve this problem. An MPU usually consists of a pull behind trailer equipped as a small processing facility, complete with scalding, plucker, evisceration table and cooling vessels. Units designed for inspected processing can cost up to \$70,000. However, a cooperating group of poultry growers who live close to one another can profitably design and build an MPU for exempt processing for \$5,000 or less. The group can choose to rent their unit to other growers in their area to generate revenue. I certainly recommend

contacting your state's meat regulatory department before beginning exempt processing with MPUs.

More information on building and managing an MPU can be found at ncchoices.com/content/8398.

> Learn more from Alex at his Vegetable Intensive pre-conference workshop at the Sustainable Ag. Conference!



Garlic bulbs from Mystic Farms.

OUR EXPERTS:

Jeanine Davis - Department of Horticultural Science at NCSU

Alex Hitt - Peregrine Farms in Graham, NC

Ken Fager - Center for Environmental Farming Systems in Goldsboro

Greg Hoyt - Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center

Casey McKissick - NC Choices Coordinator

Thanks also to Debbie Roos, Coop. Extension

Partners in Promotion:

Markets Working Together

by Michele McKinley, Volunteer for the Western Wake Farmers' Market

Many hands make light work, so says the famous proverb. That couldn't be more true when it comes to farmers' markets, which often have limited staff and resources. Four N.C. markets recently did just that to rally around a great cause and are now working together to promote their Thanksgiving markets.

Farmer Foodshare Challenge

In September, the Carrboro Farmers' Market, the Durham Farmers' Market, the South Estes Farmers' Market in Chapel Hill and the Western Wake Farmers' Market (WWFM) in Cary joined together in hosting the Triangle Farmer Foodshare Challenge. The goal was to collect 4,000 lbs. of local food in four hours at four markets to help feed the hungry in the area. The markets regularly collect food donations (several through Farmer Foodshare Donation Stations), but this Challenge was a first as they worked together to increase access to local foods in the surrounding area.

So how did the four markets collaborate? WWFM proposed the idea of a challenge at area markets as a great way to nourish our communities with healthy, fresh foods and support farmers during the shoulder season. Margaret Gifford, co-director of Farmer Foodshare, joined in to help facilitate the multi-market challenge. In short, the markets shared media and community outreach tasks. On the media front, the markets finalized a media alert and press release with key nutrition, government and market experts as spokespeople. Each market reached out to local media contacts and partners of the markets, such as The Abundance Foundation and the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, to help spread the word.

Engaging local food listserv members and the market communities them-



Volunteers Amy Scott, Jennifer Gibbs, Michele McKinley & Kevin Gordon
photo submitted by Michele McKinley

selves, though, played a huge role in getting folks to market to shop and donate. Each of the markets utilized their newsletters, web sites and social media to promote the Challenge and farmers also promoted the event. By communicating the message together, the four markets were able to strengthen outreach efforts. "Farmer Foodshare programs are about generating local funds for local food to meet local need. This year's Challenge was an outstanding example of the power of cross-market collaboration around an important issue!" said Margaret.

Promoting Thanksgiving Markets

After that joint effort, Sarah Blacklin, manager of the Carrboro market, reached out to those same markets and the Eno River Farmers' Market in Hillsborough, N.C., with the idea of partnering to promote Thanksgiving markets on November 23.

"The goal is to get more people thinking about our farmers and local food," Sarah said. "We want them to think, 'Where is my farmers' market?' when they are planning their weekly menu as well as when they are planning for their holidays. Partnering with our sister markets in the area is a great way to involve the community and

get more support for eating locally." As a group, the markets will issue a joint press release, develop a poster and create a web site on eating locally at Thanksgiving. Highlights will include specific events and vendor offerings, as well as recipes for a local Thanksgiving celebration.

Many Hands, One Message

Working collaboratively, farmers' markets can share the workload while communicating a message that supports local farmers. "As a market manager, I've learned that when markets band together, we can raise awareness about local food and the importance of shopping locally in our area, which, in turn, promotes all of our local markets," said Erin Kauffman, manager of the Durham Farmers' Market.

For information about how your market can start a Farmer Foodshare program, visit farmerfoodshare.org.

> Representatives from the WWFM and Sarah Blacklin of Carrboro's market are presenting at the SAC as part of the Farmers' Market Special Series.

Accidentally Organic

The Lazy Beekeeper's Unintended Benefit

by Cheryl Ripperton Rettie, CFO & Members Services Director at CFSA

In my second year of keeping beehives, I've discovered that what I love most is how bees can be so low-maintenance, which is very important for someone with a busy lifestyle or for the intrinsically lazy, or – like me – someone who happens to be both at the same time!

I started out with good intentions. I meant to do all the things that my beekeeping books suggested I do, but by the second year I found that, while I love watching my bees zip happily in and out of the hive, I don't particularly relish having yet another set of tasks to perform around the house, yard and garden. So I became an organic beekeeper by default.

I didn't originally plan on being an organic beekeeper, although I do want to minimize chemical usage on general principles; it just so happens that keeping bees 'organically' is a lot easier and less expensive than I ever suspected. Why spend lots of money on chemicals when you can let your bees take care of themselves? Still, sometimes you do need to step in and give your bees a helping hand. A bane of beekeepers, and the reason most of us never think of 'going organic,' is Varroa mites.

The Bane of the Beekeeper

These now-ubiquitous pests are, to bees, what ticks or fleas are to humans: annoying and harmful blood-suckers. They attach to both adult and larval bees and can harm bees



via blood loss, malnutrition, and, in unhatched bees, malformation of the wings or body.

You should test (and potentially treat) for mites in your hive at either the beginning of the brood-rearing season (in the Southeast, early March) or at the end of the season when the bees decrease the size of the hive for winter (October or November). The least harmful and intrusive way to check for mites is to use a sticky board that will catch mites dislodged during a bee's normal grooming process. Use white posterboard and cover it in something like cooking spray or Vaseline and put it on the floor at the bottom of your hive. After 24 hours, take the board out and count the brown flecks – those are mites! – stuck to the board. If you have over 50 mites, you are on the way to having an infestation.

Now that you know you might have a problem, you can decide whether to treat it or not. Most beekeepers use a variety of chemical treatments, but for many this is a short-term and questionable solution, since overuse of chemicals, like overuse of antibiotics, only ends up breeding stronger mite populations over time. There is also the risk that chemicals introduced into your hive will end up not only in the honey you eat, but will build up over the seasons in the wax foundation of the hive itself; scenarios which prolong the chemical exposure to both bees and mites well past the intended treatment application. However, there are alternatives!

A Sweet Treatment

Some beekeepers use essential oils such as spearmint or lemongrass, mixed with vegetable oil or sugar-water, to treat for mites, fungus, and other problems. You can make your own mixture (15 drops each essential oil + 5 cups water + 2 ½ cups sugar) or buy a pre-made concentrate such as Honey-B-Healthy. This mixture can be either fed to the bees as you would regular sugar-water or, in a more concentrated



Glen Davis collecting honey from the bees at Our Tiny Farm in Henderson Co.
photo by Jeanine Davis

form, dumped over them in the hive directly ('drenching') which will cause the bees to stop work to clean themselves and, incidentally, knock off the mites, which are killed by the 'fumes' of the essential oils.

Another method uses the same theory, but the secret ingredient is confectioner's sugar. The hive is opened and thoroughly dusted with super-fine confectioner's sugar. A friend of mine used this method and said that after dumping a bag into the top of the hive, most of the bees actually came outside, so covered with powder that they looked like little Caspar-the-Friendly-Ghost bees, and busily brushed themselves (and the mites) off while perching on the sides of the hive body. A week later, she did another mite-check with a sticky board and was very happy to find that the pests were gone.

Personally, I have not had any trouble with mites, but then again, I also have a type of bee that is supposedly naturally resistant to mites, the Russian strain of honey bee. My bees are doing well because of my benign neglect. Going "accidentally" organic has been easier on my bees, my pocketbook, and my state of mind than I could have imagined! 🐝

Other Resources:

- www.bushfarms.com
 - beenatural.wordpress.com
- > Learn more about beekeeping from the expert, Gunther Hauk, at the SAC!



The Chicken Bouillabaisse was the savory, garlicky star of OktoberFresh, CFSA's on-farm picnic in Piedmont, SC. It's the perfect dish for the Fall.

Chicken Bouillabaisse

by Chef Suni McMath

In my travels as a Brat (both military and otherwise according to my parents), I often thought my love of bouillabaisse with garlic rouille stemmed from Mediterranean cuisine only to learn later that it was a dish often served by my great-grandmother from the Marseilles region of France. When I finally left home and had free license to experiment in my own kitchen (mostly to assume the cost of my disasters), I began trying to recreate the once familiar flavor.

It wasn't until I used the traditional Provençal combination of leeks, onions, tomatoes, etc, that it finally struck a chord of nostalgia. My children, however, were horrified at the requisite seafood staring back at them from the savory bowl. Having burned the image of that "proud platter" forever in their minds, I did what any clever mother would do: made it with chicken and changed the presentation.

Soon it was a regular request (being addictive in flavor and so good for you) and I could finally cherish those childhood memories from so long ago of a great-grandmother gone too soon.

Here is an adaptation of that recipe for the home cook:
In a large dutch oven, brown salted chicken pieces in olive oil a few at a time until lightly crisped.

Set aside. To pan, add leeks and onions, cover and gently sweat on low heat for about 20 minutes until tender and rendered. Add remaining ingredients including orange peel and its juice. Adjust salt and other seasonings to taste.

Add chicken, cover and simmer gently until chicken easily pulls from

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Whole chickens, cut up, washed and salted
- 2 bunches of fresh leeks, trimmed, sliced 1/2" (including the "tender" tops) and washed thoroughly
- 4 large yellow onions sliced about 1/2" thick
- 5 lbs fresh tomatoes, stemmed and chopped
- 1 large can tomato juice
- 2 Tbsp toasted fennel seeds
- 1 large orange (separate peel and juice)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cups dry vermouth
- 1 whole garlic head peeled and cloves crushed
- 1 Tbsp saffron threads

EASY ROUILLE:

- 1 large can roasted red pepper
 - 1 whole garlic, cloves peeled
 - 1 Tbsp oregano
 - 1 cup bread crumbs (for thickening)
 - 2 cups mayonnaise
 - salt
- Puree first four ingredients in blender or food processor until smooth, add bread crumbs and mayonnaise and blend thoroughly. Allow to bloom for at least 2 hours and then add salt to taste. Adjust seasonings accordingly...more mayo to soften the taste, more garlic to heat it up, etc.

bone - approximately one hour. You may want to remove the bones at this point, but it is not necessary. Adjust to taste as needed.

To Serve:

Over steamed white rice, add a dollop of rouille (see recipe in side bar) and surround with bouillabaisse (with plenty of broth), plus crispy bread and butter on the side.

Suni's Good Food Manifesto

- 1) Start out by buying your food in its most natural state, as local and as fresh as is possible. (Its also a good bit less expensive than processed food).
- 2) When fresh local vegetables are not in season, buy frozen. (If you are really into it, buy in season and freeze it yourself).
- 3) Lose your can opener. With the exception of some canned tomatoes, there isn't much in a can that is good for you.
- 4) Use your microwave to melt butter and cheese or to boil water. Anything else that can be "cooked" in there is not fit to eat unless you are simply heating something you actually prepared to begin with.
- 5) When you eat out, stay out of places where you can't actually talk to the chef to discuss how your food was prepared.
- 6) And please! Teach your children to cook and make them eat their veggies! They will be healthier and happier kids.

We can't change the world until we change ourselves. It's not that hard. Choose one option at a time. Baby steps go a long way in creating a positive impact on our economy, environment, health and future generations.

Suni, the Chef of The Broken Teapot in Woodruff, SC, opened the restaurant out of a longing for fresh, unprocessed foods and food worth eating.

> Check out the Eater Activist track at the SAC! There are sessions on permaculture, canning, cooking with local ingredients and how to take action in your community and in politics.

Buy Quality Compost...(continued from cover)

litter, herbicides in yard debris or farm residuals; contaminants may be present from other sources.

The next question is, "How do you test your end product? What kind of guarantee do you give with your product?" The US Compost Council has a testing program called STA, Seal of Testing Assurance (www.compostingcouncil.org/programs/sta/). This seal of approval assures the consumer that the product has met certain benchmarks for the way they process their materials. This is a good way to make certain that the individual composter is trying to produce a value-added end product. But, if you are concerned about what goes into your soil, you should always find out as much as you can about what is really in the compost you are about to put on your land to grow food for yourself and others.

The last question you should be asking is the price of the compost.

Look Closely for Quality

Some of the critical components that make up good compost you can see with the naked eye; the microbiology are not so easily seen!

Physically inspect any compost before you purchase. Have a sample sent to you for you to touch, feel, smell and see what you are getting.

Good quality compost should have these physical qualities:

- Consistent appearance, dark brown or black in color
- 40% moisture
- An earthy smell, no offensive odors
- Particle size of < 1/2" in size
- Stability (capable of being stored without losing its effectiveness)
- No weed seeds
- No visible contaminants
- No phytotoxins (need to have a germination test)
- A pH of 6.0 – 7.8

The invisible quality of compost is a bit harder to determine! Good mature, finished compost will be pathogen (both plant & human) free and low in soluble salt content (preferred < 5dS/m). Compost produced by thermophilic microorganisms in

a large, hot composting process can produce a product with these qualities. But, the thermophilic microbes that are utilized to break down and consume organic materials are not typically found in our soils! Thermophilic microbes are awake and active at >105 F, which is not conducive to plant and soil microbiology. So, these microbes are not of benefit to the farmer, the soil or the plants he wants to grow. The monophilic microorganisms present at ambient temperatures (32 F – 104F) are of more benefit to the soil, plants and farmers. This is not to say that these microbes are not present in compost, but they are not as plentiful as you would like.

The Magic of Microbes and Worms

One way to ensure that your compost, soil and plants are inoculated with these monophilic microbes is to introduce or add worm castings to your compost. Worm castings or vermi-castings are the excrement from worms after organic material has passed through their gut. In the vermi-composting process, those monophilic microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, nematodes) break down organic matter small enough and soft enough for the worms to suck this material into their mouth. As this material passes through the gut of the worm, other microorganisms are introduced to further break this material down. The worm takes what it needs and the material passes through the worm. In this process, a high calcium digestive juice is generated in the gut of the worm to help with digestion, plant and human pathogens are destroyed and many other beneficial microorganisms are developed and excreted. The end result, called worm castings, is humus-like material that is pathogen-free and high in calcium, beneficial plant and soil microbes, plant growth hormones and

nutrients. Studies have shown that a 10-20% addition of worm castings to your soil medium will greatly increase germination, plant growth rates and fruit, veggie, and crop production. (www.bae.ncsu.edu/topic/vermicomposting/)

When purchasing worm castings, the same quality concerns apply as they do with compost! Ask questions: What is your feedstock?; Where did it come from, how did you process your materials, what documentation is there to support their claims? After all, you are going to be using that material to improve the soil so you can grow food for your family, neighbors and customers. And, don't they deserve the best? 🌱

Brian Rosa is an Organic Recycling Specialist at the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, DEAO. You can reach him at: brian.rosa@ncdenr.gov.

> Brian will be speaking along with Paul Coleman of Early Bird Worm on vericomposting at the CFSA Conference. There will be two tracks on soils with sessions on biochar, crop rotation, & Soils 101.



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Part of the Two Ton Crew: Johnetta Alston, Chris Rumbley, Sarah Vroom, Keith Shaljian, Kate DeMayo

photo by Anna MacDonald Dobbs

tiative, a small startup, broke ground with the help of Manor residents and neighbors. Talk about a rich community partnership!

So far, Two Ton has spent less than \$600 in cash, and has instead depended on the “tools, resources, labor, skill, and experience” of interested community members and the partner agencies’ staff. The larger Durham community has invested in Two Ton with donations of soil, wood chips, and food waste for compost.

Just five months later, the tiny farm looks impressive. A weed-suppressing, wood chip path meanders through beds of vibrant eggplant, peppers, radishes, salad greens, sweet potatoes, and more. The herb garden sits at the highest point of the yard, which is flanked by compost on one side and a wall of okra on the other. A fence at the yard’s low point deters neighborhood dogs, “the scourge of the urban farmer,” joked farmer Kate DeMayo. To date, Two Ton has gifted or sold 275 pounds of fresh vegetables to neighbors, restaurants, and a non-profit grocery store near the neighborhood.

Building the garden’s infrastructure required the most time and labor-intensive work. Two Ton features fifteen French intensive double dug raised beds. Shaljian estimated that the construction of each required about fifteen hours of labor. In addition, workers spent several hours in

“If the grocery store ever can’t supply us with our needs, we can at least do something for ourselves.” *Ishmael Dennis*

each bed raking the soil and sifting out weeds like wiregrass. Two Ton hosted community workdays to get the farm up and running quickly and have benefited from the work of two interns through the Durham Mayor’s Summer Youth Work program.

Two Ton Farm is committed to enhancing soil health to ensure an expected yield of 2-3 pounds of food per square foot. While building the infrastructure, Two Ton farmers added amendments like gypsum, lime, and bone meal to immediately boost soil

structure. They’ve also incorporated cover crops like buckwheat and cowpeas into their growing rotation. According to Shaljian, ideally 20 to 30% of their beds will be planted in cover crops. In addition, Two Ton has a large compost pile on site, which a local coffee shop helps to maintain by regularly donating coffee grinds and other food waste.

To combat weeds, workers lined the sides of the beds with newspaper and the path with cardboard. The path through the garden was then covered with 45 yards of donated wood chips, which also contribute to soil health. The combination of lining paths and beds, initially raking the soil for weeds, and laying wood chips has proven extremely effective. Two Ton farmers and neighbors have only spent about 10 hours weeding the beds since May.

So what about the market? Two Ton’s farmers have had to learn about planting to meet market demands, as this is the first foray into market gardening for most. Sarah Vroom of Bountiful Backyards noted that they have had to be realistic about balancing market demands and the time demands of different produce with their own schedules. “Tomatoes require a huge amount of labor. You have to be realistic about what takes input to maintain,” she said.

Everyone who works at Two Ton Farm has another job (with the exception of several neighborhood kids who have taken to gardening). Two Ton worked around this challenge by planting low-maintenance vegetables like squash, okra, sweet potatoes, and eggplant that still offer a good yield.

As newly minted urban farmers, the group has learned several helpful lessons. When the squash didn’t pollinate at the beginning of the growing season, Shaljian and partners realized that in addition to being a food desert, Two Ton Farm had been an “ecological desert.” Birds and insects had to be enticed back into the space. Though Two Ton had planted sun-

Two Ton Farm

flowers and other wildflowers to attract pollinators, DeMayo suggested that they should have planted them earlier to give the pollinators time to find and frequent the garden.

Johnetta Alston of JRuth and Kifu Faruq of Green Space Initiative emphasized the need to learn how to cook or find people in the community who know how to use fresh produce in the kitchen. "I was not prepared for the abundance, and I had never eaten eggplant," Alston said. After tasting some of Shaljian's fried eggplant, though, she has become a Black Beauty eggplant enthusiast.

According to Shaljian, Two Ton Farm's ultimate goal is to become "an accessible and replicable model of sustainable entrepreneurship." They want to encourage others to grow their own food, grow food for others, and increase food security on the most local level - in their neighborhood. Two Ton is working with Alston and Good Work to develop the entrepreneurial aspects of the model.

Ishmael Dennis, alum of the Mayor's Youth Work Program and farm apprentice, embodies the entrepreneurial spirit that Two Ton Farm hopes to inspire in the larger Durham community. In the last year that he has spent learning to garden and landscape, he's also discovered a passion. "I want to feed people," he said. "If the grocery store ever can't supply us with our needs, we can at least do something for ourselves."

Two Ton Farm plans to be in the neighborhood for a long time. They are currently negotiating a five to 10-year lease on JRuth Manor's backyard so that they can continue to grow healthy food and contribute to North East Central Durham's food security. Stakeholders also plan to play a roll in preserving land in the city for agricultural

use with the help of Cornucopia, Durham's urban agriculture land trust. Shaljian said that he hopes that other properties like Two Ton will ultimately be community owned, so that people can have greater local control over the availability of healthy and affordable food.

"There is always something you can do," added Dennis. "A small garden for one or two people with okra, cabbage, and collards is enough." 🌱

Anna MacDonald Dobbs, a Durham native, is CFSA's intern. She is dually enrolled at the UNC School of Social Work and Duke Divinity School, and works at the CFSA office three days per week.

> Bountiful Backyards staff will teach a workshop on backyard fruit trees at CFSA's 2010 Sustainable Agriculture Conference.



*A beautiful beet from Two Ton Farm.
photo by Anna MacDonald Dobbs*

SAC Updates

Saturday Morning Plenary: How we creatively scale up the local-organic movement while staying true to our values

Check out this line-up of heavy-hitters:

- Ruffin Slater, founder of the successful coop grocery Weaver Street Market
- Sandi Kronick, President of Eastern Carolina Organics
- Uli Bennewitz, founder of Weeping Radish Brewery (who will be bringing a keg of his beer for the reception on Saturday!)
- Rick Larson of the Natural Capital Investment Fund and
- Matt Boulanger of Enterprise Produce in Massachusetts.

Scott Marlow of RAFI will be moderating as well as talking about the role of mid-sized farms.

New This Year

We are putting the finishing touches on our special first-time activities like the Social Media Hub, short film showcase and speed networking.

Silent Auction and Food Donations

We're still looking for donations to the silent auction and for local food donations for the always-spectacular conference meals. If you're interested, email fred@carolinafarmstewards.org.

RideShare and Host Program

Light up the listservs with requests or offers for rides or free rooms!

Registration Deadline

The regular registration deadline is Nov. 10th! Late and on-site registration costs more so register today!

For the most complete info. on the conference, including workshop descriptions and bios, see carolinafarmstewards.org, check out our Facebook page, or follow us on Twitter @carolinafarm #cfsasac.

More Association News ... (continued from page 3)

Appropriate Technology and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems to enhance new farmer support systems at Cooperative Extension. This three year program includes scholarships for 40 beginning farmers to attend the Sustainable Ag. Conference (SAC) each year, re-establishing CFSA's Intern Referral Service, and funding for Extension offices' local foods coordinators to attend SAC as well. SAC will feature a dedicated track for new farmers, focusing on business and financial management. Look for more details on these initiatives on our website, www.carolinafarmstewards.org.

Making Food Safety Safe for Local, Organic Farming

Regardless of state or federal laws, food safety requirements are coming to more and more local food markets. Local retailers and farmers markets across the Carolinas report that they will start requiring farmers to have some sort of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification. GAP is already required for farm-to-school programs. With this in mind, CFSA is launching the Local Produce Safety Initiative: the goal of this program is to develop a whole farm GAP certification program that works for small and organic farms, building on the things small farmers already do to protect their customers.

Most guidance and audit regimes for on-farm produce safety are designed for the needs of large-scale produce operations that market through regional and national wholesale channels. These are often in conflict with the on-the-ground realities of small, diversified, low-input produce operations in our region. The Local Produce Safety Initiative will work with farmers, researchers at NC State University and the state's Fresh Produce Safety Task Force to document how local, organic farming reduces pathogen contamination. This Task Force will then develop from that information a model GAP program that buyers will accept as an alternative to industrial-scale regimes. This two-year project

is made possible by a grant from the NC Specialty Crops Block Grant program, administered by the NC Department of Agriculture.

Organic Farming Conservation Outreach Project in SC

South Carolina farmers are leaving money for organic transition on the table to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. CFSA's Organic Farming Conservation Outreach Project aims to fix that situation.

One of the successes in the last Farm bill for sustainable ag. was the creation of an Organic Initiative in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which is one of the federal government's main soil and water conservation programs. The premise of the Organic Initiative is that organic farming practices are effective soil and water conservation strategies, and that organic farmers ought to have the same opportunities for conservation cost-shares as other farmers. The initiative has been well funded, but in South Carolina, half of the funds earmarked for organic farming in the state are going unclaimed.

CFSA's project, funded by a Specialty Crops Block Grant awarded through the South Carolina Dept. of Agriculture, will educate soil and water conservation personnel about organic farming and increase outreach to farmers on how to use organic practices to qualify for EQIP cost shares. We will also use the opportunity to encourage modifications to the EQIP conservation standards in the state so that they do a better job supporting organic farmers. Look for more information on the project in early 2011 on our website.

Sustainable Food NC Update

On October 1, the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council (SLFAC) submitted its annual report to the General Assembly and the Governor. The report listed recommendations on municipal annexation of farm and forest land; land conservation near



Sarah Sinning, CFSA's newest intern

military bases; the future of the Farm Transition Network; continuation of funding and staffing for the SLFAC; a SLFAC liaison to the NC Ag. Task Force; all-farm GAPs pilot program; Farm-to-School; SNAP-ED; EBT and WIC. For the full report, visit: www.ncagr.gov/localfood/documents/2010NCSLFACAnnualReport.pdf.

Let the council know what you think of its work! Submit your comments on the recommendations online here: www.ncagr.gov/localfood/contactus-form.htm.

Introducing Our New Intern

Sarah Sinning comes to CFSA as an intern from the New England Culinary Institute in Montpelier, VT. She is no stranger to North Carolina, however. She grew up in New Bern and got her BA at UNC-Chapel Hill. After completing her master's degree in English from the University of Kansas, Sarah decided to pursue her love for sustainable foods and cooking by continuing her studies at New England Culinary Institute, a culinary school that prides itself on supporting local Vermont farms and teaching responsible environmental stewardship. She is excited to have this opportunity to help the CFSA make a sustainable food system a real possibility for the Carolinas and beyond.

More Association News ...

USDA Crop Insurance for Organics

On August 30, the USDA Risk Management Agency announced that they would provide crop insurance policies with an organic price election for four crops: corn, cotton, soy and processing tomatoes, for the 2011 production year. See www.rma.usda.gov/news/ for more information.

This is the first time that crop-specific crop insurance policies have provided benefits that reflect the higher price for organic crops, and we applaud USDA for making this change.

RAFI-USA is interested in hearing the experience of farmers who apply for this coverage. For more information, contact Scott Marlow of RAFI-USA at smarlow@rafiusa.org, or 919 542-1396, ext. 210.

NC Bread Flour Project Update

The motors have arrived for the mill! The 48" diameter stoneburr gristmill was initially built for Alan Scott, world-renowned oven-builder and baker of naturally leavened breads. The mill was built in Austria, to be sent to Tasmania, though it was sent to Tanzania

by mistake. Once it finally landed in Tasmania, Alan was already hospitalized with congestive heart failure. After Alan's passing, we were gifted the use of his mill.

The mill is beautiful—wooden-hulled, an incredible act of craftsmanship, and it embodies the promise that we can revive the link between the grower and baker in the Carolinas. The motors were European and so needed to be replaced. Two very successful fundraisers we had back in July—a bake sale and Asheville Slow Food's Beer and BBQ Fundraiser—raised the cash for these motors. We hired an electrician, Jesse, who has done tons of research to ensure that the mill's motor not only provides the power to rotate the stones, but will also preserve the slow rotation of this mill. We have 500#s of Arapaho wheat grown by Fred Miller of Hilltop Farms in Wake County, waiting to be ground into flour. Ben and Kenny Haines of Looking Back Farms in Tyner will also be bringing us some soft wheat. Money raised at the fundraisers went toward the motors, grain, and seed. Visit ncobfp.blogspot.com for updates. 

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