Growing a New Crop of Ecological Farmers

OEFFA has partnered with Kenyon College to pilot an innovative new program in Ecological Farming for college students. This program, which is made possible with support from the McGregor Fund of Detroit, Michigan, will provide students with a structure for pursuing their interests through formal course work, on-farm summer internships, and other educational opportunities. The aim is to help students develop their knowledge base and gain practical experience in ecological farming. While the emphasis is on providing a high quality educational experience for college students, this program simultaneously brings benefits to OEFFA’s ecological farmers, by expanding their labor capacity. The ultimate goal of the program is to facilitate the development of ecological farmers in Ohio.

As part of this program, students may earn a Certificate in Ecological Agriculture, by, minimally, completing three relevant courses and undertaking a 10-week summer internship on an ecologically-managed farm. These two core elements will be enhanced by additional program components, including participation in workshops and conferences, and the creation of a Campus OEFFA Fellow position to enable select students to undertake work related to the food system on campus while fostering their development as leaders.

While the program is still in its infancy, OEFFA’s Director, Carol Goland, looks forward to a time when the program will be expanded to Ohio’s other liberal arts colleges.

Red-Hot and Green: Study Shows Flame-Weeding Works in Veggies

WOOSTER, Ohio - Killing weeds with a propane flamer, a practice that works in organic row crops, can help in certain vegetables, too.

In a study of cabbages and tomatoes, Ohio State University scientists report that flaming takes far less work than hand-weeding, results in about the same crop yields and quality, and even leads to less blossom end rot, a costly tomato disorder.

The study determined two keys to success: flaming in the morning, not the afternoon, and reaching, for a split second, temperatures between 140-160 F.
Letter from the President

Hello OEFFA,

I hope things are going well for you. Here in central Ohio we could use a little rain, but with irrigation everything is growing extremely well.

Things are growing well in OEFFA too. Some of our members have been meeting with US Senators and Representatives working on ag issues. We have also been meeting with officials in the Ohio Department of Ag. A wonderful series of farm tours has been put together by Mick Luber and Laura Weis, OEFFA has received a grant to do additional education work (pg. 3), and as soon as I am done with this letter I am going to Columbus to help move both OEFFA Education and OEFFA Certification into our new office space so we will all be together under one roof (below).

OEFFA and some of our members have been getting a lot of press lately. It seems like every time I pick up a paper or magazine there is a quote from Carol, or a spotlight on one of our members. Organic and sustainable agriculture, as well as OEFFA, are becoming hot topics around Ohio, and it is the result of the hard work of our staff and membership. Thank you for all your hard work, and have a wonderful summer!

- Mike Laughlin

Tabouleh Salad is my favorite thing to take to summer potlucks. It can be made the night before, but if so, it’s best to add tomatoes the next morning.

To make it, Pour 4 cups of boiling water over 1 1/4 cups raw bulgur wheat (available in health food stores) Let stand 2 hours till fluffy. Press in a strainer till dry. Combine bulgar with 1 2 cups minced fresh parsley, 3/4 cups fresh chopped mint, 3/4 cup chopped onion (red or green preferred), 3 med. tomatoes chopped or 1 pt. cherry toms, halved; 1/2 to one whole chopped cucumber, and 1 can garbanzo beans, drained (opt.). Pour over all a dressing made of: 1/2 cup lemon juice, 1/4 cup olive oil, 1-2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. garlic powder, 1/2 tsp. pepper. Mix well and chill 2-3 hours before serving. Can be garnished with halved boiled eggs. Cilantro can be used in place of some of the parsley for a more exotic flavor.

Find more great summer recipes from Trish on page 8.

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• OEFFA is recognized as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and donations to OEFFA are deductible as a charitable contribution to the fullest extent of the law.
OEFFA shall be a democratic association of chartered grassroots chapters, existing within state bylaws, working together to create a promote a healthful, ecological, accountable and sustainable system of agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere.

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Next deadline July 15, 2007
Member of COSMO (Community Shares of Mid-Ohio)
Growing Organics

New OEFFA Program Coming Soon

OEFFA is starting a new program called Growing Organics this fall that will provide farmers with a new resource for up-to-date information and research about organic growing techniques.

The North Central Region SARE program has informed OEFFA that its proposal (“Growing Organics: Integrating Science, Farmer Indigenous Knowledge, and Experience in Expanding Organic Production in Ohio”) has been funded. The money will allow OEFFA to hire an organic education outreach specialist, and will further support current outreach activities.

Key to the project is strengthening the ties between OEFFA, the Organic Food and Farm Education and Research Program (OFFER) (the premiere scientific knowledge base for organic farming in Ohio), and OSU Extension; and to deliver the best and most timely information about geographically appropriate organic production techniques to Ohio farmers.

Through the Growing Organics program, OEFFA staff members hope to reach three different kinds of farmers: existing farmers who are contemplating transitioning or who are already in the process of transitioning to organic production, established organic farmers who hope to increase capacity of their operations (through season extension, growing new varieties, etc.), and beginning farmers who wish to use organic production methods from the start.

More information will be available this fall.

New Local Producer Loan Program

John Mackey has announced that Whole Foods Market will make $10 million available annually for low-interest loans to small, local agricultural producers. Whole Foods Market has recently begun the design and initial implementation of the loan program. Applications are now being accepted.

If you are considering applying for a loan, please remember that loan recipients must:

• Meet Whole Foods Market’s Quality Standards
• Use funds for expansion (e.g., buy more animals or new equipment/infrastructure, expand crops), not operating expenses
• Meet Whole Foods Market’s Animal Compassion Standards (if meat or dairy producers)
• Have a viable business plan and adequate cash flow to service debt

For more details go to www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/locallygrown/lplp/index.html. General questions can be directed to lplp@wholefoods.com.

Henney Wins FFA’s Organic Agriculture Proficiency Award

Michael Henney, son of Bruce and Dena Henney, was named the 2007 Organic Agriculture Management Proficiency Award Winner at the 79th Annual State Future Farmer’s of America (FFA) Convention in Columbus this May. Michael is a senior at Bellevue High School and for this project worked at an Organic Dairy operation with 100 head of dairy cattle. Michael’s future plans include attending college, majoring in either Dairy Science or Agribusiness.

The FFA is a national organization dedicated to preparing its young members for careers in agriculture. FFA’s mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. Local, state, and national activities and award programs provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills acquired through agriculture education. OEFFA is the sponsor of the Organic Proficiency Award.
Breaking Ground
A Column for New Farmers
By Joan Richmond,
Meadow Rise Farm, Bellville, Ohio

Tips, Tricks, Pointers, and Secrets

By the end of May and the beginning of June, those leisurely, cozy winter evenings perusing catalogues and making plans are long gone. We’re working every available minute in the garden and what we really need right now are time savers. Tips. Tricks. Pointers. Secrets. So I’ll share a few. And if you have some, please share, and I’ll include them in another column some day.

And remember, we’re new at this, so don’t laugh out loud if you read one you’ve known for years!

Right now I’m hoping it rains. I have friends who tell me that every dawn and dusk, under the light of the moon, they are doing a rain dance. Been there. But instead of spending the days hauling a hose around, this year we invested in an irrigation system. You should check around and find the best system for you, of course, but I’ll describe what we went with.

We did without a watering system for four years and spent huge amounts of time worrying about the weather and moving hoses and sprinklers. I distinctly remember standing in the middle of the garden one day, with my mouth hanging open, watching it rain – across the road – and we didn’t get more than four drops.

And sprinklers never did the job right. We tried one of those big sprinklers on a stand, but a round sprinkling pattern in a rectangular garden left dry spots where stuff died. And it never seemed to water deeply. Smaller sprinklers were okay, but you have to be vigilant about timing and moving them frequently and regularly. Inevitably you get busy and forget to reset your oven timer or watch/phone timer and then you have a soupy, muddy mess in one spot and parched plants in another. Or you just stand there with the hose like a human scarecrow for hours on end. Who has time for all this??

Determined to do it right, I went to Dan Kamburoff at Columbus Irrigation in Ashland, Ohio. He was at last year’s OEFFA conference, and I had kept his card (amazed that I could still find it). He recommended Aqua-Traxx flat drip tape, with the polyethylene “mother” tube (don’t expect me to get technical here), fittings, and filters made by API. Dan was fantastic. He spent an hour talking with me about my system, its size, and what my options were, along with explaining how to set it up.

The whole thing was much less complicated than I expected. You roll out the mother tube and fit an end cap on it. The much more complex filter and pressure end was already assembled by Dan and I just had to screw it on and clamp it down. The only tool I needed was a screwdriver for the clamps. I bought a little puncher tool to poke holes in the mother tube. The “daughter” flat tubes hook on by means of a tap that you shove into that mother tube hole you made. I bought taps with a spigot on them, so that I can turn each flat tube on or off, depending on need. As long as I have at least 1,000 feet turned on at any one time, my pressure is okay.

So, we rolled out all the tubes, placing one every 30 inches. In wide 60” rows, I just won’t turn on the extra tape. I wanted flexibility, so that next year when I rotate my crops over one section, I’ll have the lines I need. We punched the holes, hooked up the taps, and attached the water hose and BAM! Water! I had to adjust a few leaky connections where I hadn’t shoved the flat drip tape on hard enough, but that was the only adjustment I had to make.

I’ve spent a lot of time here on this tip because it’s probably going to save us more time than anything else we do all year. And if Dan can explain it to me and I can do it, you can do it, too. (Most of the credit goes to Dan, though, for making it all so clear and letting me try punching a few practice holes.)

The cost will vary depending on how much you want to do. We wanted to set up enough to cover a 60x90 and an 80x90-foot plot, and it ran us between $500-600. You can go cheaper with plain taps without spigots or other options. Save up your pennies. It’s worth the money. Not only will it save time, but it makes much healthier plants, a more even growth rate, and higher yield, helping to pay for itself, eventually.
Another quick tip – use that plastic netting people use for trellising (available at Johnny’s Seeds and other places such as Hortonova) instead of string to mark rows. I am one of those people who is constitutionally incapable of making a straight line in the garden. Even when I use string, the row ends up catty-wampus. Plus, how do you space evenly by eye-balling it? You don’t.

One day I was out there spacing this row out with a yardstick, one measurement between plants in the row and one to measure it against the row next door. It worked. It also took me an hour and a half to plant a row of broccoli. My mother, always the innovator, saw my cucumber trellis leftovers lying in a pile next to the garden. I didn’t need the whole 79 inches in height so I had cut off about two feet, or four squares worth. It was too short to use. But it was exactly the right size for marking off rows. And because it’s two feet wide, even the vision impaired like me can tell whether or not I’m laying a straight row. I just stake it where I want a row to start and stretch it out to where, at the opposite end of the row, I pull it tight and then hoe the row right along the edge. I use all four squares to plant lettuce seedlings, with a perfect 8” spacing, four plants per row. You can space between plants – one plant every 3 squares for brassicas (18”) and every four (24”) for tomatoes (my spacing, anyway). What a snap.

Another trick from Trish Mumme (Garden Patch Produce) – use old snow fencing for shade cloth. It’s that florescent orange stuff with square holes (not the actual weave thing with tomatoes using fence posts and twine. Couldn’t figure it out, and tomato cages last for years). I do think that mesh onion bags make great lettuce spinners – your arm is the spinner, but it works. However, some expenses that save valuable time, and result in more and better produce, are worth the money.

Okay, one more quick one – Reed has discovered that using the tiller to create furrows makes planting potatoes and onions a snap. Yeah, I know, everybody else knew that one, but we didn’t. We forgot we had this tiller attachment until we were cleaning out the shed one spring. With both blades on it’s a furrower, and with just one you can hill potatoes or even make raised beds. If you have that attachment with your tiller, for heaven’s sake use it, and if you don’t, go ahead and order one. It doesn’t cost that much and it’s another one of those expenses that is worth the money.

I don’t buy every gadget comes down the line. I’ve tried cost-cutting measures (like doing that “French pointer or secret, email me, and I’ll pass them along, here or on our web page (joan_richmond@mac.com).

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**Starting Tomatoes**

“I start the seeds first of March and transplant seedlings into 4 inch pots. By mid-April they are a foot tall or more and ready to plant. To plant I dig a trench and lay the long plant in horizontally with only the top 2 or 3 leaves exposed. The plant will send out roots along the buried stem. The exposed stem will right itself in a day or two. Of course be prepared to cover the plants if frost threatens.”

-Ed Perkins, Sassafras Farm
New Organization Formed to Help Small Farms and Consumers

By David G. Cox, OEFFA Member

A new organization is being formed to help small farmers and growers throughout the country make their products directly available to the private consumer. Called the Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund (FTCLDF), the organization will be launched on July 4th in order to “protect the constitutional right of the nation’s family farms to provide through any legal means unprocessed and processed farm foods directly to consumers; to protect the constitutional right of consumers to obtain unprocessed and processed farm foods directly from family farms; and to protect the nation’s family farms from harassment by federal, state and local government interference with food production and/or on-farm food processing.” There is a growing need for this type of organization.

For example, during the 2006 “raw milk wars” in Ohio, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) was attempting to interfere with herdshare operations whereby owners of cows were exercising their right to drink raw milk from the cow they owned. Because the transaction was purely private in nature and did not involve the “public’s health” there was no justification for the ODA to interfere with the transaction. However, that did not stop ODA from pursuing an aggressive and at times abusive program of trying to put herdshare operations out of business.

In addition, farmers in Virginia have attempted to engage in “artisanal processing,” whereby they process a small number of bovines, poultry or lamb on their property, yet are now being treated unfairly by the federal government. For example, after obtaining a license to install, construct and operate a meat processing facility the farmers were informed by USDA that they would no longer be inspecting the facility because it is not processing enough animals. Without such inspections, the facility no longer can be certified. Thus, the farmers are not only out of business, they are in debt to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars.

Cases can be cited throughout the United States where governmental regulation acts as a roadblock or impediment to the small farm’s ability to make a decent living: The apple cider producer who is told he must pasteurize his product in order to sell it at a farmer’s market; the cheese maker who is informed that website sale of unpasteurized cheese is illegal; the baker who is told that her kitchen must have a license before lacto-fermented products can be sold from the facility; the Indiana dairy farmer who had his product seized by the FDA while it was on its way to herdshare owners located in Michigan. All of these instances and more are fraught with injustice and reflect government’s attitude that industrialized food is safer and better for the public. FTCLDF has been formed to challenge these unfair and discriminatory laws and to correct this injustice.

FTCLDF was formed as an Ohio non-profit corporation on November 9, 2006, and is currently seeking tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Currently, FTCLDF consists of eleven Board members from several states, including Sally Fallon, President of the Weston A. Price Foundation; a dairy farmer from Ohio; a veterinarian from Minnesota; a mother from Virginia who home schools her four sons; an anti-NAIS advocate from Texas; attorneys from Florida and Indiana; plus other individuals committed to defending the right of consumers and farmers to directly contract with one another for wholesome, fresh and healthy food free from governmental interference.

FTCLDF will create business models that small farms and consumers can adopt to ensure that they can operate in accordance with the law free from governmental interference. For example, the Fund will draft articles of incorporation, partnership agreements, herdshare agreements, bills of sale, buyer’s club agreements, etc., and make these documents available to members only. The Fund will also have an 800 telephone hotline for questions with access to attorneys who will provide advice and counsel on legal issues. In addition, the Fund will maintain a database on the applicable laws, regulations, court decisions and opinions that deal with freedom of contract and the right to market directly to consumers. Finally, the Fund is a 501(c)(4) organization with the right to engage in political activities such as lobbying and campaigning during elections.

The Fund hopes for success to change a system where, under the guise of protecting the public health, state and federal laws hinder the ability of the small farmer to provide healthy food directly to the consumer. The Fund seeks to prevent industrial agriculture from eliminating the small farmer and to restore non-toxic, grass-based farms producing life-giving foods to the prominence they once held in American society.

Persons interested in joining the FTCLDF can view the fully functional website after July 4th at www.ftcldf.org and become a member on-line. Once it becomes operational, the Fund’s phone number will be 703/208-FARM. The Fund will be located in Falls Church, VA.

Gary Cox is a former Senior Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio, a former organic vegetable farmer, and is now an attorney with the Columbus law firm of Lane, Alton & Horst LLC. This article is intended for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended to be nor should it be construed as either the opinion of Lane, Alton & Horst LLC or as legal advice. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and not the firm.
When I first started my farming adventure in 1998, I was lucky enough to find an organization that was interested in hiring a young, enthusiastic “wannabe” farmer willing to learn in exchange for housing and a modest stipend. Over the years, as my experience grew and my skills developed, the responsibilities and position changed to reflect my evolution from an “Apprentice” to an “Assistant Farmer” and ultimately to a “Harvest Manager.” The organization provided the land, equipment, tools and administration while I supplied the labor and eventually the farming and management skills necessary to run a successful farm. I also met my husband while working there, and together we made a very effective farming team.

While it was nice not having to invest in land, capital improvements or equipment, and even nicer having a steady paycheck and health benefits, my husband and I often discussed how wonderful it would be to have our own farm so that we could be the ultimate decision makers. Our efforts would pay us directly, and any “extra” work or new endeavors we chose would benefit us directly, instead of going to the organization.

The biggest barrier we came across was the high cost of land. Neither of us grew up on a farm, so farming family land was not an option. Finding land with good soil and a good water source that wasn’t more than an hour from a large and interested population to which we could market our produce proved to be challenging. There was and still is some land available that fits those criteria, but competition from developers and others renders it unreasonably priced if you intend to begin a farming enterprise. Having made modest wages as farmers, there was just no way we would have been able to purchase the land and the equipment necessary to begin a farm business that would be able to generate enough income to pay off the loans. Ultimately, we gave up actively searching, but are still keeping our eyes out for anything “interesting.”

Other young farmers are struggling with the same issues. At the same time, the average age of farmers is increasing, and many are planning for retirement. If this older generation of farmers has no one in their family interested in taking over the business, what options do they have for keeping their land productive into the future? Often they are led to believe that selling to developers is the only way they can meet their retirement goals, and in some cases their growing health care needs.

This is where the FarmLink program can help. The Farmland Center, a program of the Countryside Conservancy, can help make the connections between these two groups of people in order to keep farmland in production and contribute food and fiber as well as economic benefits to the community. As this program is established, we look to many successful FarmLink programs across the country for inspiration and guidance. We see the tremendous potential for meeting the needs of a younger generation of farmers searching for land in Northeast Ohio to make their business ideas a reality, in addition to helping older farming generations find new partners who will help keep the land they have stewarded over the years fruitful. The options for crafting a farm transition arrangement between beginning farmers and seasoned farmers are nearly unlimited.

The Farmland Center can also provide resources for beginning farmers to help them succeed and for older farmers to help them achieve their retirement, estate planning or land conservation goals.

For more information or to participate in this exciting new FarmLink program contact Beth Knorr at 330/657-2538 or at beth@thefarmlandcenter.org. Visit us on the web at: www.thefarmlandcenter.org
The Herbs of Summer

One of the best things about cooking in the summertime is the availability of fresh garden herbs to liven up your meals. Cilantro, basil, dill, parsley, and mint are my staples. I just can’t imagine what I’d cook in the summer if I didn’t have them. Below are some of my favorite ways to use these basic herbs.

As you enjoy the summer’s bounty of fragrant herbs, don’t forget to preserve some for winter. All the herbs in the mint family (mint, sage, thyme, savory, marjoram, basil) dry very well and hold their flavor. Just tying them in a bunch and hanging them in the kitchen, out of direct sunlight, is enough. When the bunch is “crunchy,” crumble the leaves into a bowl, keeping the stems out. Store in an airtight jar.

Most other herbs are better frozen than dried, especially chives and those in the umbellifer family (parsley, dill, coriander). Trim stems off dill, parsley, or coriander, chop leaves, and pack lightly in a small freezer container. Label and freeze in the coldest part of the freezer (not the door). Use a fork to get out what you need for a recipe and put the container back in the freezer right away. Don’t allow them to defrost and refreeze as this deteriorates the flavor.

Cilantro is best grown from seed, as it bolts quickly. Don’t waste your money buying a pot of it. Buy a packet of seed and plant a handful of seeds several times from early spring to late summer. Save the large brown seeds for your fall crop or for next year. For continuous use, just before you start using one crop of cilantro, plant your next crop. The fall crop will last well into cold weather if covered with row cover. Use chopped fresh cilantro as a garnish or ingredient in any and all Mexican, Indian, and Thai foods.

Fresh Salsa (Salsa Cruda): Chop two medium tomatoes with 1 small onion or green onion, 1/4 green pepper, 1 de-seeded hot pepper of your choice (or to taste), and sprinkle with a little salt. Add 1 tab. or so of lemon or lime juice (or vinegar), and 1 tab. chopped fresh cilantro. Serve with tortilla chips or nachos or as a sauce for burritos, fajitas, etc.

Basil, of course, is essential for all Italian dishes. Be sure to dry some for winter use. Undoubtedly the best thing to do with fresh basil, however, is to make pesto. Be sure to freeze several batches.

Pesto: Grind in food processor till smooth: 2 cups fresh basil leaves, packed, 4 large garlic cloves, peeled and sliced, 3/4 c. walnuts, 3/4 c. olive oil, 1 c. parmesan cheese, salt and pepper to taste, dash of lemon juice, if desired. Freezes well. Makes an 8 oz. yogurt container of pesto.

Pesto Pasta: Add one half to one full recipe of pesto, above, to 12-16 oz. cooked pasta of your choice (rotini spirals are nice), and about 3-4 cups of assorted lightly steamed fresh or frozen vegetables: sliced green beans, summer squash cut in match sticks, broccoli florets, carrot slivers, peas, sliced mushrooms, red pepper, etc. Add about a cup of some julienne sliced turkey breast or a can of drained chickpeas. Adjust salt and pepper and serve, perhaps with a sprinkling of lightly toasted pine nuts and a dash of fresh lemon juice. This is a great one-dish meal to serve for company. They’ll rave about it. All you need to add are some rolls or bread, and melon slices or fresh fruit salad for dessert.

Pesto Pizza: On a prepared and partly baked pizza crust, spread fresh (or frozen and defrosted) pesto and some slivers of red onion. Add shredded Mozzarella cheese and other toppings of your choice (sliced green peppers, sliced black olives, sauteed mushrooms, artichoke hearts, etc.). Bake at 450 deg till lightly brown.

Broiled Zucchini with Basil and Lemon: Slice zucchini into 1/4 inch slices (any direction) and brush with olive oil on lightly oiled baking pan. Sprinkle with garlic powder and/or garlic salt. Broil till some light brown spots appear, turn each slice, sprinkle with garlic powder again and broil the other side same way. When the second side is finished, remove from heat and sprinkle slices with finely slivered fresh basil leaves, a dash of hot pepper flakes (if desired) and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.
**Dill** is a close relative of cilantro, and also goes to seed quickly. Start it from seed and grow two to three crops a summer, same as cilantro. It’s not as cold hardy as cilantro, so harvest your last crop before the first frost.

**Dill Bread:** Soften 1 pkg. yeast in 1/4 cup warm water. Heat 1 cup cottage cheese to lukewarm. Add 2 tab. minced onion, 1 tab. butter, 2 tab. sugar, and 3 tab. fresh chopped dill weed and 1 tsp. dill seed, 1 1/4 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp soda. Mix in flour to form soft dough, about 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 cups, kneading hard after each addition on floured board. Let rise till doubled, about an hour. Stir down and turn into greased pan. Let rise 30 minutes in a warm place. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes or so. Brush with butter and sprinkle with salt.

**Dill sauce for fish:** Mix 1/2 cup sour cream or plain yogurt with 2 tab. mayonnaise; add about 2 tab. minced green onion or fresh chives, a tablespoon of minced fresh or frozen dill weed, 1 tab. lemon juice, 1/2 tsp. prepared mustard or 1/4 tsp. mustard power, dash of pepper and salt to taste. Use like tartar sauce.

**Dilled Potatoes:** Sprinkle fresh, dried or frozen chopped dill weed and garlic powder on boiled and buttered new potatoes. Toss gently.

**Russian Dill Beets:** Combine cooked, peeled, and sliced beets with sliced green or red onion, sour cream, lemon juice and chopped fresh dill. Add salt and pepper to taste.

**Parsley and Mint** are not just for garnish! Parsley is one of the most nutritious foods to eat, just full of vitamins and minerals. Both parsley and mint also freshen breath. Mint can be dried to make tea all winter. Try a mint version of the above dill sauce for fish, to use on lamb or in pita pocket sandwiches with cold meat, lettuce and tomato, onion, green pepper, etc.

**Tabouleh Salad** is my favorite thing to take to summer potlucks. It can be made the night before. If so, best to add tomatoes the next morning. See the front page for the recipe.

**Garden Cottage Cheese Salad:** Add quite a bit of minced parsley (curly or flat), chopped green onion, salt and pepper to taste, to cottage cheese. (Minced green pepper can also be added.) Mix in halved cherry tomatoes and serve piled on a lettuce leaf. Or, serve a scoop on tomato slices or in a whole tomato cut into wedges like a flower. Sprinkle some paprika or pepper on top for garnish if desired. A delicious light summer lunch with crisp crackers and fruit.

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**OEFFA Given a Seat at the (Round) Table**

Sherrod Brown, the first Ohioan to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee in about forty years, held a series of Round Tables the first week of April, at six Ohio locations. Senator Brown’s office invited about 20 people to join them at each stop, and requested that OEFFA make sure its members and interests were represented in each region.

“I thought Sherrod was a good listener and seemed very eager to help,” commented OEFFA member Tom Rapini. “Generally, the subject matter was steered more towards immigration, labor, expenses, and other issues more relevant to the larger farmer, but... Overall I think it was beneficial and hopefully it will have some long term benefits for all of us.”

According to Sylvia Upp, who attended the roundtable in Wayne County, Senator Brown commented that OEFFA was well represented at these meetings.
Dairy Farm Surge Protection for Electronic Equipment
(provided by Hasting Mutual Insurance)

Dairy Farms can be complex and sophisticated production facilities. Mechanical and electrical equipment controlled by computers have automated many tasks that involve feeding, scraping, handling, milking, and care of the cows, in and out of the parlor.

A reliable source of electrical power is required to keep the process and the business running smoothly. The greatest hazard to electronic equipment connected to AC power lines is from transient overvoltage, most frequently from direct lightning strikes on electric distribution systems and nearby structures.

Lightning or surge arresters are installed on overhead power lines and on transformer bushings to protect against damage to system equipment; however, despite these safeguards, sufficient surge energy can be transformed down to the 480 VAC, 240 VAC, 208 VAC, or 120 VAC level to easily damage solid-state electronic equipment. Data lines or communication signal lines are also subject to lightning induced voltage surges or direct lightning strikes.

In addition, damaging surges can be generated within the user’s own distribution system. When an inductive circuit is suddenly switched, a voltage spike is generated (i.e. starting and stopping of pumps, ventilation fans, air conditioning, refrigeration compressors, and machine tools). In some cases, the generated surges will damage interconnected electronic equipment--more often if the system is running close to maximum load.

Protection Standards

To prevent damage to equipment, surge protective devices are needed on the branch circuits at the panel board, and at the wall outlets where the electronic appliances plug in. Additional protective devices are needed on computer data lines and communications lines.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) has a published standard, ANSI/IEEE 62.41 – 1991, IEEE Recommended Practice on Surge Voltages in Low Voltage AC Power Circuits. This standard provides a guide for transient surge exposure.

Transient Voltage Surge Suppressors (TVSS)

TVSS devices are different from surge arresters in size, design, application, and in many cases, operation mode. TVSS devices are used to protect electronic equipment located indoors. Only Underwriter’s Laboratories (UL) Listed devices should be used. Transient voltage surge suppressors protect against both pulse or spike type surges and oscillatory surges.

How to Apply Transient Protection

Surge protection is a complicated and specialized subject. Systems should be evaluated and improvements made only by technicians who are trained in this field. Equipment manufacturer’s specifications and recommendations must always be followed.

A building’s electrical system must have a good grounding system to which energy is diverted. The electrical system must have grounding conductors run in each raceway and with each branch circuit. All duplex outlets must be of the three-prong type with ground circuit conductors in place. The grounding system should be inspected periodically. Wall outlets should be checked to ensure that the hot, neutral and ground conductors are properly connected.

Incoming data lines should be provided with TVSS designed for data line use at the point of entry into the building. If data links are with the phone company, consult with them to see if they are providing this protection. Data lines going into the computer room should have these devices installed on each line. Data line TVSS devices are available for both twisted pairs and coaxial cable.

Equipment that is hard wired into the power system such as minicomputers, programmable logic controllers, and process control computers should have hard-wired TVSS devices installed in the power connection.

For plug-in equipment several options are available:

• Normal duplex wall outlets can be used with plug-in TVSS devices
• Special duplex wall outlets have built-in TVSS devices
• Strip extender plug outlets are available with TVSS devices.

Conclusion

Lightning arresters installed on the incoming power lines are not sufficient to protect sensitive computers and other electronic equipment. Upstream surge protection will let enough surge energy in to damage electronic components. TVSS protective devices should be used wherever vulnerable electronic equipment is used.

Hastings Mutual Insurance Company works with OEFFA to offer OEFFA members discounted farm insurance. The Farmowners Insurance Policy underwritten by Hastings Mutual offers a comprehensive Farmowners Package.

For a Hastings Mutual Farm Insurance Specialist near you, contact Terry Miller at 800/442-8277 ext. 1444, email: tmiller@hastingsmutual.com or check out the web site at www.hastingsmutual.com.

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Hello again. Even after the severe late freeze we got that necessitated re-planting many vegetables, we are back on target time wise. It is amazing how big of a hit vegetables can take and bounce back. Hopefully you made out O.K. and are having a great gardening year. Here are a few seasonably appropriate titles. (Remember to login to Back40Books.com from the OEFFA homepage or tell us you are an OEFFA member when you order by phone so OEFFA gets a donation.)

Finally: A brand new, in-depth book about raising and selling meat goats and goat meat. Storey’s Guide to Raising Meat Goats is a new book by farmer-rancher Maggie Sayer. She covers every subject from breed selection, goat behavior, fencing, shelter and breeding to marketing and promotion. This 7” x 9” soft cover contains 336 pages crammed full of line drawings, charts, descriptions and useful information from one who works with these animals every day in every way. If you are already raising goats in a small way or just thinking about getting started with goats you will find this book to be full of the information you need. An excellent book at an excellent price: $18.95.

Passing on the Farm or (Truck Patch)... while this is not a particularly pleasant subject it is one most of us will have to deal with. How do you keep peace in the family, avoid staggering estate taxes, and keep the farm going as well? I have a book and a DVD that covers this topic in a complete way. The book is Legacy by Design: Succession Planning for Agribusiness Owners written by Kevin Spafford a Certified Financial Planner. It contains much food for thought, the forms and charts you need to work through the process, and many helpful hints. The book is 6 x 9, soft cover, 314 pages and sells for $29.95. To get started in a quick way we have a one-hour DVD of OSU Extension Specialist David Marrison delivering a presentation titled Passing on the Farm. The DVD is loaded with PowerPoint slides and gives a very clear overview of the points you need to consider. The DVD is $24.95 by itself or you can order the book/DVD Estate Valu-Pak for $49.50 postpaid.

Let’s Eat! Here are a pair of books just right for the season: Serving Up the Harvest is a wonderful cookbook celebrating the goodness of fresh vegetables. There are 175 tempting and tasty easy-to-prepare dishes. This is a pretty duo-tone book with fanciful illustrations. The 8 x 8 size is perfect to use in the kitchen, and there are over 500 pages of information. The soft cover is reasonably priced at $16.95. A companion book The Big Book of Preserving the Harvest, will take care of that extra bounty we all have this time of year. There are 150 recipes for freezing, canning, drying and pickling fruits and vegetables as well as root-cellaring. This book has 348 8 x 8 pages and sells for $18.95. Put ’em both together in a Harvest Valu-Pak for $31.00 post paid.

If you really want to eat well and be in touch with the seasons you might enjoy foraging. Believe it or not plants are available in every season of the year. All you need to locate them is a good field guide. Here is an excellent one: The Forager’s Harvest: A Guide to Identifying, Harvesting and Preparing Edible Wild Plants. The author, Samuel Thayer has been foraging since he was twelve. His writing style is fun and fact-filled. I have been foraging for 30 years and I say without reservation this book has the best descriptions and most accurate photography of any book I have seen. You will love this full-color, 356 page 7” x 9” book and at $22.95 it is a steal.
Doug Doohan, one of the study's authors and an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture and Crop Science, said flaming gives farmers an added way to fight weeds without using chemicals.

"For certified organic growers, this is a useful tool they can have in their tool kit," said Doohan, who holds joint appointments with OSU Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) and is a member of Ohio State's Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) program.

Flaming already is commonly used in organic corn and soybeans. The practice uses propane gas, lit and blown from a nozzle--picture a blowtorch--to kill weed seedlings by wilting them. The weeds don’t burn but burst their cells.

A typical propane flame weeder has multiple nozzles side by side and rides on the back of a tractor, mounted on a three-point hitch. The flames angle in on the sides of a row, shoot down near the base of the crop, and zap, ideally, just weeds--tiny ones, less than a half-inch high.

The two-year study used an eight-nozzle flamer on plots of cabbage and tomato plants. Comparisons were made between flat ground and raised beds and also between morning and afternoon treatments. Crop injury, soil surface temperatures, total and marketable yields, and weed communities were measured.

"This was exploratory research to see how flaming would work in veggies," Doohan said. "And I think the answer would be that it can work quite well."

Other, previous studies have shown that organic farmers rate weed control as their number-one production challenge.

Common organic weed-control methods include cultivating, hand-pulling and mulching, either with plastic sheeting or with plant materials such as straw.

Flaming, though, doesn’t disturb the soil, a feature that cuts the risk of erosion, fits under no-tillage systems and keeps from exposing more weed seeds to sprout.

Unlike plastic mulch, flaming doesn’t leave behind a pile of old plastic to dispose of.

And flaming gives growers an option when a field is too wet to cultivate. "It might just be a day or so sooner," Doohan said. "But that day or so might be critical. A flamer can give you the control you need now."

Also of note, the study saw flaming slash the incidence of blossom end rot, a physiological disorder caused by too little calcium in the tomato fruit.

"We found that very interesting," Doohan said. "It seems like the flaming is changing the plant’s physiology ever so slightly. It would suggest that the tomato plant is experiencing that heat and is somehow altering its physiology because of it."

Flaming has drawbacks, too, however. It won’t work with mulch. The flames can melt or ignite it.

Year-in, year-out weed control is less consistent than that of chemical herbicides. Environmental conditions--rainy weather, wet or dry soil, and so on--affect how well and how long flaming works.

For example, the study found flaming in the morning worked much better than in the afternoon. Reason: More moisture on the soil and the weeds. Moisture helps transfer the heat from the flames.

On the other hand, too much moisture all season long, as happened in the study’s second year, can spur more weeds, faster growth and species that tolerate flaming. Additional flaming and additional methods--cultivation and hand-weeding, among them--may then be required to get good control.

The results "indicate a need for the availability of multiple weed control methods, with flaming among them," Doohan and colleagues said in the study. "The need for alternative methods... will vary from year to year but should be anticipated."

And then there’s the risk of roasting more than just the targeted weeds. The study found tomato plants stood largely unfazed by the heat, while cabbage plants saw their growth set back about two weeks then recover. (Worst hit were cabbages in raised beds.) Both crops ended up giving good yields. Flaming, it seems, takes a balancing act.

"We need lethal temperatures at ground level - 60-70 degrees Celsius (about 140-160 degrees F) - but for just a very short period of time," Doohan explained. "Three to five miles per hour is where we able to achieve that."

"Farmers using flame weeding for the first time will need to try several short test runs to determine the correct tractor speed to kill weeds but not damage the crop," he said. "Try starting with relatively fast tractor speeds, say, 6-7 miles per hour, then go to progressively slower speeds."

Then test for weed kill by squeezing--not too hard--a weed leaf between the thumb and index finger. A distinct, dark-colored thumbprint means you’ve reached the right speed.
“Because conditions change rapidly in spring and early summer in response to plant growth and weather conditions, it may be necessary to repeat this test every time you flame in order to achieve ‘just-right’ temperatures at ground level,” Doohan said.

He also suggests that the first flaming wait until about three weeks after planting. The time helps the crop plants develop their roots. Sometimes weeding can’t wait, though, he said.

Co-researchers on the study were Annette Wszelaki, formerly of Ohio State and OFFER, now of the University of Tennessee, and Athanasios Alexandrou, formerly of Ohio State’s Agricultural Technical Institute, now of Fresno State University.

The study appeared in a recent issue of the journal Crop Protection.

Funding came in part from a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems.

Organic and conventionally grown cabbage and tomatoes have a combined production value in Ohio of nearly $20 million, according to the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

OARDC and OSU Extension are the research and outreach arms, respectively, of Ohio State’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.
Certification Report
By Janie Marr Werum, OEFFA Certification

Cert World is a changing! Columbus is now the proud home of the new combined Certification and Education offices. Not quite moved in, but we’re close! Steve and Sylvia are working on their piece of the certification pie in West Salem while I am sorting and organizing after the move of the files. Inspectors are out and about inspecting and writing reports.

The USDA audited us in April and May. We passed, with a few technicalities to address. This means we’re good to go for another five years before our next audit.

The 80/20 dairy conversion is over also, so now we are back to humming along, getting our applicants inspected and certified. We have a good number of apprentice inspectors to get on their road and some excellent mentor inspectors to shepherd them through to their full stripes.

In the next newsletter, I will share our plans for the future, including details about the expanding certification staff. They will be able to cover more product and label reviews, and it will be good to have them on hand to answer the many questions you all have.

Antibiotic Resistance for Livestock

Antibiotic resistance develops when bacteria, including those that cause infections, are exposed to an antibiotic in doses that kill off all but the aberrant bacteria with defenses against the antibiotic. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria survive and multiply. Constant, low-level exposure of bacteria to antibiotics, as occurs in animal feeding operations, provides the perfect setting for antibiotic-resistant bacteria to grow. Life-threatening infections that resist antibiotic treatment mean prolonged patient suffering, longer hospital stays, and skyrocketing medical bills. After exhausting options with standard antibiotics, doctors must hope for a cure among so-called “drugs of last resort,” which frequently carry distressing side effects. This is an increasingly common scenario as doctors must turn to several different drugs before finding a treatment that works.

Given the connection between continuous antibiotic use and resistance, it is shocking that an estimated 70% of all antibiotics and related drugs in the United States are given unnecessarily and in constant low doses to poultry and livestock that are not sick. They are given to promote faster growth and to ward off diseases brought on by crowded and unsanitary living conditions. Many of the drugs found in animal feed are the same as those used in human medicine, and they are doled out without so much as a veterinarian’s prescription.

The Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (co-sponsored in the Senate by Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown ) would end the use of medically important antibiotics for animals that are not sick. The bill will also establish data collection regarding where and how these drugs are being used in animals, so public health officials can track the relationship between antibiotic use and the emergence of resistance.

Please call or write Senator George V. Voinovich and your representatives in the U.S. House today and ask them to co-sponsor the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. Thank Senator Brown for his leadership in this vital public health legislation.

Stand up for public health and fight the growing crisis of antibiotic resistance by supporting the preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2007 (S. 549/HR 962).

For more information about this campaign, contact Ellen Mee at the Ohio Environmental Council 614/487-7506 or ellen@theoeg.org.

Water Conservation
Take a water or pop bottle (8 oz. is fine but 2 litre is best for high water users like tomatoes, watermelons and cucs) and cut the bottom off of the bottle. Then when you are planting seedlings just bury the neck of the uncapped bottle in with the roots leaving the rest of the bottle sticking up in the garden. I like to fill the bottle with llama poo to add a little zip to the plant. Llama poo makes great plant tea because it has loads of potassium and phosphorus so when the plant is under a little stress from lack of water it gets the boost it needs. Whenever the plant needs watering (always water during the heat of the day to avoid fungus, etc.) you can water through the plastic bottle and the moisture goes directly to the roots—not to the weeds or to be evaporated and wasted.

- Annie Warmke
Natural Gardening Blue Rock Station Style
Events

City Fresh Fresh Hop! - Forum, Film, Tour, and Potluck! Cleveland, Ohio. Friday, June 22 starting at 3pm. Engaging dialogue, visioning, fun, food, and celebration around the emerging local food economy of Northeast Ohio. Discuss the adaptive re-use of the old Carnegie Library, perhaps the only 10 sided brick building in the country (rooftop agriculture, food processing and canning, urban and rural mixing, culinary arts, youth programs, arts, and entrepreneurship in the local food economy). For more information, contact Brad Masi at bradmasi@earthlink.net.

Permaculture Design Course 2007 in the Ohio Valley - July 6-14, Section I (Permaculture Fundamentals), Athens, Ohio; August 24 - September 1, Section II (Design Practicum) Loveland, Ohio. Join us as we map the terrain of a low-energy, high-satisfaction future in the historic and ecologically diverse Ohio Valley. Empower yourself with the skills of ecological design as we search for the roots of permanent culture. Contact Peter Bane, 812/335-0383, pcactivist@mindspring.com

CSA Farmer for a Day Workshop - Cincinnati, Ohio, July 19 or August 2, 2007. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms are subscription based farms where subscribers receive a weekly share of the harvest. Come to Turner Farm and be a part of their operation from production and harvest to pick up. Pre-registration required. Call 614/421-2022 for more information or visit www.oeffa.org.

The Ohio Democracy School - Columbus, Ohio, August 17 - 19, 2007. Ben Price, Kat Walter, and Eme Lybarger will teach this week long seminar as people from across the political spectrum explore this country’s hidden histories, dissect the nation’s environmental, labor, and other regulatory laws, and confront the failure of much activist work. Join us! For more information, contact Eme Lybarger 614/499-2815 (eme@democracyohio.org) or Kat Walter 937/475-9207 (kat@democracyohio.org). Visit our website: www.celdf.org.

Resources

HowToGoOrganic.com - This site, launched by The Organic Trade Association, was designed as a clearinghouse of North American resources for farmers and businesses interested in becoming organic or in creating new organic enterprises. Includes regional directories and profiles, and is searchable by topic and subtopic, type of resource, or state.


Organic Farming Grants - The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) requests proposals concerning any agricultural production, social, economic, or policy-related topic of concern to organic farmers and/or ranchers. OFRF supports research that is relevant to and takes place in certified organic systems. Collaborations are encouraged. In the past, grants have averaged approximately $10,000. Applications must be submitted by July 16, 2007. For more information, visit this website: http://ofrf.org/grants/apply_reserch.html.


Calling Garlic Growers and Garlic Lovers! Love to grow and/or eat garlic? Come celebrate the herb at the second annual Capital Garlic Festival, Sunday, August 19, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the North Market in Columbus.

Come for a day of great food accented with garlic, farmers and vendors, music, education, and kids’ activities. Check the OEFFA website closer to the date for schedule of events and directions.

Garlic growers and other produce, food and related vendors are invited to be part of the fun. Contact Kevin Eigel, 614/805-5776, for fee and information.

OEFFA’s Capital Chapter is organizing this event to promote garlic, and local and organic farming. More than 4,000 people attended last year’s festival.

A large number of summer farm tours and workshops sponsored by OEFFA and its partners can be found at www.oeffa.org. To request a print copy, please call the OEFFA office at 614/421-2022.

“Learning at its best!”
Time to Renew Your Membership? Check the date on your Mailing Label.
Student $10 • Single $35 • Family $50 • Farm Family $50 • Nonprofit $50 • Business $100 • Individual Lifetime $1000
Mail payment to OEFFA, PO Box 82234, Columbus, Ohio 43202 or call 614/421-2022 or renew online.

Westerville Farmers’ Market - Visit us this and every Wednesday from 3-6pm until Oct. 24 on the corner of State and Home in uptown Westerville. See you there!


For Sale - 105 unspoiled acres with 2 streams. 70% wooded, the rest in hay and open ground. Small garage - no house. Not to be developed! Located on the Licking/Knox county boarder. Make an offer. Call 740/502-6844, or email jfholzberry@yahoo.com.

For Rent - Modern 4-bedroom house available to rent or to use by an organic gardening family. There is also a modern 2-bedroom house available. For more information please call Robert K. Harris at 513/523-0079.

For Rent - Secluded historic 2-bedroom house on organic farm. Beautiful wooded setting and great view. Seven miles from Springfield and 45 minutes to one hour from Columbus. Garden area and possibility for chicken production. Tenants must love animals and be able to accept much wildlife. Ideal setting for antiques. $550/$550. No hunting, smoking or ATVs. Ready this summer. sunset@iapdatacom.net.

IT'S SIMPLE...
Farms = Food