



Organic

New OSU Book Helps Farmers Make Switch to Organic

By Kurt Knebusch

A Transition Guide to Certified Organic Crop Management, published by the Organic Food and Farming Education and Research (OFFER) Program, part of the university's Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC), details in its 74 pages the rules and realities of organic farming--specifically, of grains, fruits and vegetables.

"It's the only manual of its kind in Ohio," says OFFER Coordinator Deb Stinner, "and there are very few like it anywhere else in the United States. It helps make the federal guidelines for organic production understandable and is filled with both practical and scientific information about things farmers can do to meet these guidelines."

The author, Margaret Huelsman, prepared the guide with the help of experts from OFFER, Ohio State's Agroecosystems Management Program, and OEFFA.

According to OEFFA's Organic Education Coordinator, Mike Anderson, "It's a really great book. It's readable, it's well researched, and it's well organized."

"Acknowledging the realities of organic farming from the start will better prepare you to make the transition," Huelsman writes in the introduction. "Arming yourself with knowledge and foresight only increases your chances of success from the beginning of the process."

USDA, through its National Organic Program, requires organic farmers and food handlers to meet a uniform standard. The program makes certification mandatory for operations with organic sales over \$5,000.

continued on page 2

Upcoming OEFFA Tours

Specialty Greenhouse

Mulberry Creek Herb Farm
3312 Bogart Rd., Huron, OH
Saturday, June 7; 2:00-4:00

Berry Production/Solar Technology

Bramble Creek Farm
257 Old River Rd., Little Hocking, OH
Sunday, June 29; 1:00-3:00

Diversified Farm

Snake Hill Farm
18174 Geauga Lake Rd.
Chagrin Falls, OH
Sunday, July 6; 2:00-4:00

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Gravel Knolls Farm
9257 Cincinnati-Dayton Rd.
West Chester, OH
Sunday, August 10; 1:00-3:00

Organic Grain

Paul Bell & Sons
5363 Road 206, Bellefontaine, OH
Saturday, August 23; 1:00-4:00

Upcoming CSP Tours

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Van Wert County

Clarence Oberlitner
14856 St. Rt. 81, Venedocia, OH
Monday, June 23; 7:00-8:30pm

Miami County

Dan & Tawni Batdorf
9291 N. St. Rt. 48, Covington, OH
Tuesday, June 24; 7:00-8:30pm

See page 3 for OEFFA workshops.

For more information about these and other tours, visit the web at www.oeffa.org or call 614/421-2022.

INSIDE

Membership Drive
pg. 2

Chapters/Workshops
pg. 3

NAIS:
Being Challenged
pg. 4

Member Profile:
Mott Family Farm
pg. 5

The Urban Organic
Gardener
pg. 6

Breaking Ground:
Saving Extra Seeds
pg. 7

Farm to Table:
Early Summer Salads
pg. 9

Making Sense:
Post-Harvest
Produce Handling
pg. 10

Good Reads
pg. 14

Resources/Events
pg. 15

TOUR BOOKLET CORRECTION:

The IFO tour about Small Fruit at Ann & Dan Trudel's will NOT be in July, but will be held on Friday, June 13 from 9:15-12noon

Switch to Organic...

continued from front page

Organic crops typically sell at higher prices than conventional crops do. The New Farm Organic Price Report lists many current prices and can be found on the internet. "The economics of organic agriculture," Huelsman notes, "makes it more likely that a farmer can be profitable on smaller amounts of land and run a viable family farm operation."

OFFER, established in 1998 on OARDC's Wooster campus, provides educational and scientific support for organic agriculture to people of Ohio. OARDC is the research arm of Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

To find out more, call (330) 202-3528. To get a copy (\$15; checks made payable to OSU/OFFER) write to OFFER Program, 201 Thorne Hall, OSU/OARDC, 1680 Madison Ave., Wooster, OH 44691 or visit <http://estore.osu-extension.org>

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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, 2008		

Letter

From the President

As I have gotten older, I have learned a few things. One thing that I learned very well this spring is that I need to wear a hat when working in the field to protect my increasing bald spot. But I have also come to realize something much more important, and that is that when a memory hits you, it's important to take time to stop and live that moment again.

This spring, I was involved in one of my favorite jobs on the farm: riding on the tractor--tilling the fields--getting the beds ready to plant. To me this is a special time of renewal that lifts my spirit with hope of the coming year. While I was driving along turning the earth, smelling the wonderful scent of the freshly turned soil--full of organic matter--I was struck by a childhood memory. I stopped the tractor, remembering a spring when my Grandpa Volkman (who lived with us) decided it was time to plow the garden. I remember walking in the furrow of the one bottom plow behind our old Farmall tractor, feeling the warm sun and smelling the freshly turned soil, but more importantly, carrying one of Grandpa's empty tobacco cans and collecting the biggest night crawlers I could find, because after a morning of plowing, and with a can of worms in hand, it was not too hard to convince Gramps to go fishing.

As OEFFA heads toward its 30th birthday, take some time to remember the earlier days and share them. After all, family is what OEFFA is all about.

-Mike Laughlin

30th Anniversary Membership Drive

OEFFA Farmers: Help Spread the Word

If you direct market your farm products, you can help with OEFFA's 30th Anniversary membership drive. The OEFFA Office can send you an 8" x 11" pop up holder that says "Please support the organization that supports me," along with a bundle of OEFFA membership brochures. This display can be put on your table at the farmers' markets or at a CSA distribution point. You may also want to offer copies of OEFFA's *Good Earth Guide*. It's a great inexpensive resource for consumers.

Don't be bashful. Tell people what OEFFA does and encourage them to join during the membership drive! Let us know when you bring in five new members and we will send you an OEFFA hat, or bring in ten new members and your 2009 conference registration is free.



OEFFA Chapters • Contact Information

Athens Chapter - Athens and the Surrounding Area

Ed Perkins, President, 740/664-3370

Heart of Ohio Chapter - Knox, Licking & Delaware Counties

Joan Richmond, President, 419/886-4365

MOON Chapter - Butler and Surrounding Counties

Harv Roehling, President, 513/756-9272

Southwest Ohio Chapter - Southwest Ohio

Melinda O'Briant, President, 513/891-1757

Real FOOD Chapter - Northeast Ohio

David Benchoff, President, 419/282-0164

OK River Valley Chapter - Brown & Adams Counties (Ohio) and Mason & Robinson Counties (Kentucky)

Julie Kline, President, 937/392-1543

Capital Chapter - Franklin County

Suzie Watkins-Martinez, President, 614/267-5648

The Lake Effect Chapter - Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, & Lake Counties

Brett Joseph, President, 440/599-2109

Chapter membership is not restricted by county lines and is open to all OEFFA members.

OEFFA Workshops

Food Production on the Homestead

(* almost sold out--please call first)

Saturday, July 12 • 1:00-5:00

Washington Court House, OH

Recently featured in *Mother Earth News*, Tom and Mary Lou Shaw will share the "secrets" of how they have been able to provide most of their own food without going to the grocery store. The Shaw's 13-acre farm is home to two Dutch Belted "family cows" and a small flock of Dorking chickens that together provide the eggs, meat, and milk products the Shaws need, as well as compost for their garden and orchard. Their garden and orchard provide a large variety of chemical-free vegetables and fruits, many of which they enjoy all year, along with fresh herbs and flowers. Homesteading is a relatively new career for both the Shaws. With their delightful warmth and enthusiasm, they will share what they are learning, and share what they have planned for the future. \$25 OEFFA members/\$35 non-members.

To register, call 614/421-2022 for space availability. Checks may then be sent, along with your name, address, phone number, and email to: OEFFA Workshops, 41 Croswell Road, Columbus OH 43214. Questions can be directed to laura@oeffa.org or 614/421-2022. Workshop details will be sent to registrants. Please visit the OEFFA website, www.oeffa.org, for more workshops throughout the year.

Athens Chapter Meeting



"The Athens Chapter held its first meeting of the year at my farm on May 4. It was a beautiful day, and we had a good turn out with some 25 people attending. I gave a tour of my spring gardens. I over-winter greens, so have a garden full by early May.

"To top off the day, Mike Anderson, OEFFA's staff person for organic education, came down from Columbus and spoke to us about OEFFA's state-wide programs.

"We will attempt to start a webpage through the OEFFA web site and will list future chapter events there. All are welcome to come down to beautiful Southeast Ohio and join us!"

-Ed Perkins, Athens Chapter president

Organic Lawn Care Workshop

Saturday August 9, 10am-Noon at the Civic Garden Center
2715 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45206

(Held in collaboration with the

Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati)

For directions or more information, please go to www.civicgardencenter.org, or call 513/221-0981.

Instructor: Wes Duren, Landscape Manager, Marvin's Organic Gardens

Organic lawn care is a great option for those who want a vibrant lawn that they can be proud of, without using chemical applications that can be detrimental to the health of pets, people, and local wildlife. For those who have yet to seed their lawn, or have an existing lawn and want to rejuvenate it, Wes Duren will share the natural, more holistic approach to lawn care established by Marvin's Organic Gardens. For every lawn problem, there are many organic, chemical-free solutions. These methods are tried and true, and will equip participants with techniques to eliminate dependence on harsh chemical fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides and herbicides. Please register by calling 513/221-0981 x 18; class fee is \$10.

NAIS

Challenged by Legal Defense Fund

By Gary Cox

The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund issued on May 15, 2008, a Notice of Intent to Sue letter to the USDA and the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) over the agencies' illegal implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The 25-page letter describes the history behind the development of NAIS, and the reasons why NAIS violates several provisions of federal and Michigan law, and cites the specific provisions of law that have been violated. The letter requests that all funding, implementation and further development of NAIS immediately halt or appropriate action will be taken.

NAIS' alleged purposes are threefold: to (1) identify every animal on every farm in the country, (2) identify every farm or "premises" where such animals are located, and (3) track the movement of all such animals from all such farms. These provisions of NAIS have been described in various USDA business plans, guidance documents, strategic plans and user guides and have been regularly issued since at least 2002. However, none of these USDA documents have been subjected to regulatory review under applicable rulemaking procedures that allow for the public to participate and provide comments. In essence, the public has been shut out of the process.

Although USDA claims that NAIS is "voluntary" at the federal level, it has been coordinating with various states and industry groups to make implementation of NAIS mandatory. For example, Michigan's bovine tuberculosis eradication program is being conducted under the auspices of the USDA, pursuant to a series of "Memorandum of Understanding" communications between USDA and MDA. These MOUs include the implementation of at least the first two stages of NAIS. Moreover, USDA has been coordinating with various industry associations, particularly cattle, to make membership in such industry organizations contingent on complying with NAIS requirements. In essence, states and livestock producers are being coerced into complying with NAIS in order to receive federal funds or the benefits of industry organizations.

Taaron Meikle, President of the Legal Defense Fund and a consumer advocate from Virginia, said that "while touted as a disease control program, NAIS will drive many small farmers out of business and burden every person who owns even one horse, chicken, cow, goat, sheep, pig, llama, alpaca, or other livestock animal with expensive and intrusive government

regulations." Meikle also stated that NAIS will do nothing to protect the health of livestock and poultry, arguing, "At a time when food safety and costs are in the forefront of Americans' concerns, the USDA has spent over \$118 million to promote a program that will only burden everyone from pleasure horse owners to traditional ranchers and small farmers to individuals who raise a few chickens or steers on their own land for their own use."

Joe Golimbieski, a farmer from Standish, Michigan, and a producer member of the Fund, explains: "The cost of the tags is just the start. We're at the mercy of whatever price the stockyards charge to do the tagging. And our farm doesn't have extra employees just to deal with paperwork. Between the expense and the paperwork burdens NAIS is likely to put us out of business." The Notice of Intent Letter issued by the Fund also included declarations from other farmers claiming that NAIS represents the "mark of the beast" and therefore offends their religious freedoms, as well as declarations from veterinarians who claim that NAIS will do nothing to halt the spread of disease. These vets have also declared that the eradication of animal disease has been very successful to date, all without using any of NAIS' provisions.

The letter asks for a response from USDA within 60 days or appropriate action will be taken.

The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit corporation with its headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia. It has over 1,000 consumer and farmer members nationwide and is involved in legal actions in New York, California and Pennsylvania. The Fund's mission is to defend the freedoms and to broaden the rights of sustainable farmers and their consumers to produce and consume local, nutrient-dense foods. For more information about the fund, visit www.farmtoconsumer.org or contact the Fund at 703/208-FARM. The Fund's sister organization, the Farm-to-Consumer Foundation works to support farmers engaged in sustainable farm stewardship and to promote consumer access to local, nutrient-dense food (www.farmtoconsumerfoundation.org). The Notice of Intent to Sue letter is available on the internet at www.farmtoconsumer.org.

Gary Cox is a former environmental prosecutor for the State of Ohio, a former organic vegetable farmer, a lifetime member of OEFFA, and is now an Associate 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 or OEFFA.

OEFFA Member Profile Jeff and Shelley Mott

By Anne Bulford
(based on a tour in early May, 2008)



Driven by a deep desire to feed their growing family well, and to live a more “real and simple” life, Jeff and Shelley Mott returned to Jeff’s roots in Ohio to embark on an agricultural journey in the heartland. Living in an off-the-grid house in a predominantly Amish community, they have sculpted a growing family farm business that caters to CSA members and restaurants.

Atop a crest in the beautiful rolling hills of southeastern Ohio, the Motts have 111 acres of land, 4-5 acres of which is in seasonal vegetable production. The farm also currently has a 6-8 year old orchard, a variety of berry bushes, a homemade greenhouse, three Belgian draft horses, a milk cow (named Gentle), a pig, chickens, and a number of goats; and is powered by 8 solar panels, a bank of batteries, a soon-to-be-mounted wind generator, a propane tank, a prolific spring, and a dream.

New to farming, and hoping to learn from neighboring Amish farmers, they have found that most of their learning has come from their own experimentation. There are experiments everywhere on the Mott’s farm. Lettuce grows in long narrow rows in the field, in raised beds outside the orchard, and inside a channel created by a short maze of straw bales (designed to keep out flea beetles that can’t make it over the bales.) All seem to have their advantages.



In the fields, Jeff is concentrating on slowly building the soil biology. Biodiversity and working with the land, not against it, is critical. Through compost, cover crops, thoughtful mulching, and other holistic soil management techniques, Jeff is able to build the soil without relying on what he calls contemporary quick fixes. “I am banking on getting the balance back,” Jeff says. “Then the plants can take what they need.” Even in the orchard, though there are foot paths carefully cut through the swaying grass, Jeff points out that he is leaving a good deal of the wild flowers, hoping to encourage pollinators, a technique that seems to be working well. “God’s creation has lots of different things running together. It’s all an experiment.”

The Motts have chosen to skip the farmers’ market, but they do deliver their farm goods in Cambridge, Marietta, Zanesville, and Columbus to CSA drop off points and restaurants. “It’s the perfect market,” commented Jeff. “We never have to over-pick like we would if we were selling at the farmers’ market.” The Motts hope to build what seems already like a very responsive client base among members of Columbus’ chef/grower network. The Farm participates in the Certified Naturally Grown program.

“I love Wendell Berry’s writing,” confessed Jeff. “He just lays it out so well.” Berry writes about the importance of living an agrarian lifestyle, and the need to be a producer instead of a consumer. (The word *agrarian* dates back to the 1600s, and according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, means “of or relating to fields or lands or their tenure.”) The agrarian lifestyle has been Jeff’s vision in the field and the family’s vision on the whole: producing their own electricity, collecting rain water, returning what they can to the soil, raising their kids in the sun—away from the heavy pressures of media.

Shelley, while she does not spend that much time in the fields, is not to be underestimated. With a degree in theater, a love of travel, and a passion for finding cultural connections in local food, she now helps pack the home grown produce, homeschools the kids, attends to the baby, and provides CSA members with a delightfully warm and well-written newsletter full of information about the Motts, the farm, and the

“The most radical thing you can do is to plant a garden and remove yourself one step from dependency upon a destructive system.”

- Wendell Berry

continued on page 13

The Urban Organic Gardener: Parsley, Celery, and Leeks

By Ruth A. Evan

Organic growers know that to add amendments to the soil is to tend to the building blocks of health for plants and for those who eat the plants.

Growers test soil and add organic fertilizers, trace minerals, and compost to build soil health. Parsley, celery and leeks are three plants easily grown in an urban setting that can contribute to human health especially when grown in organic soils so they are able to draw on the health of the soils in which they are grown.

Parsley contains calcium, folate, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, and vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B5, C, and E. In addition, parsley contains many phytochemicals including lutein and quercetin. Parsley supports the digestive system, thyroid function, bladder, liver, kidney and lung.

To grow parsley, start in full sun or filtered shade. Starting parsley from seed requires patience. Consult the seed package! Parsley makes a beautiful border in either the vegetable or flower garden. Companion gardeners feel it adds to the health of tomatoes and roses when planted nearby. Parsley has no enemies. In my Northern Ohio garden, parsley lives until about mid-January and sometimes makes it through the winter to bloom and go to seed, starting the next crop. Parsley can be chopped and stored in the freezer for year-around use.

Celery has amino acids, boron, calcium, choline, essential fatty acids, folate, inositol, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, and vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, C, E, and K. Celery is good for the appetite, helps support a healthy response to arthritis and gout. It supports kidney health. Celery contains antioxidants that support reducing blood pressure. I always notice more vitality when celery is in my diet.

Unless planted in an area with a long season, celery seeds are planted indoors about two months before the last expected frost. Plant starts in cool weather in sun or light shade keeping the soil moist. Stalks can be harvested one at a time. Celery does well near leeks, tomatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, and bush beans. I cook chopped celery in a broth to freeze and use all year.

Leeks contain potassium, sulfur, some calcium and phosphorus, and a small amount of iron. Plant seeds inside two-to-three months before the last expected frost. Leeks like full sun, but I have grown them successfully in partial sun. Leeks grow well near celery, onions, and carrots. They can be tucked in nearly anywhere in the garden, except near legumes, which some gardeners believe don't do well near leeks.

Leeks can be harvested for many months, although some wait until after a frost. Some growers cover plants with six-to-eight inches of leaves in late October and harvest through the winter. Sometimes I harvest a leek by cutting the stem about inch above the soil. The next year a ring of four-to-six baby leeks usually sprouts around the stem ready for transplanting into the garden. I wish I knew where I learned this valuable tip!

Now it's time to use the harvest!

Ros Lint's Turkey Meatloaf

1 pkg of lean ground turkey, maybe 1 lb
About 1 cup of vegetables finely diced or processed including whatever you have in the garden--celery, leeks, any color pepper, potatoes, onions, asparagus or broccoli stems, chard leaves or stems, spinach leaves, carrots
Parsley, chopped, about a tablespoon or more.
Parsley makes this dish tasty!
Horseradish 1 tsp
Mustard 1 tsp
An egg or 2. Maybe a little water
Grain, 1 cup. Toasted rolled oats are fine
Cup of barbecue sauce, low-sodium juice, or chili sauce

Mix by hand or heavy-duty mixer, pat into loaf pan (glass works best), decorate with barbecue sauce, cover and bake at 350 degrees for about an hour; uncover the last 10 minutes. Use a meat thermometer to check for doneness. Turkey stays a light color when cooked!

Experiment! Enjoy! Add something! Leave something out! And complete the circle by composting or digging into the garden any leftover vegetable parings to start the process for the next year's healthy harvest.

References:

Prescription for Nutritional Healing by Phyllis A. Balch, CNC. Third edition. 2000. Provided information on parsley and celery. This book contains 24 pages of information on specific herbs in chart format.

Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used revised by Jean A. T. Pennington, Ph.D., R.D. and Helen Nichols Church, B.S. 14th edition. 1985. Contains the nutrient content of leeks.

Rodale's Successful Organic Gardening Companion Planting by Susan McClure and Sally Roth. 1994. Provided cultural and companion information.

Ros Lint of Columbia Station created the recipe. She is a professional cook, an organic gardener, and a dear animal loving friend.

Breaking Ground

A Column for New Farmers

By Joan Richmond, Meadow Rise Farm

Saving Extra Seeds

As I write, it's closing in on the end of May, and a lot has been planted in the garden. The tomatoes and peppers are thriving in the greenhouse and will go in the ground Memorial Day weekend. We did plant an early crop of tomatoes as an experiment this year. We tried out that red plastic mulch. I had a package that had been sitting on the shelf for about four years, so I decided to finally give it a shot. We covered the young plants with row cover to avoid frost damage. We planted them on May 14. If it had been earlier, I would have covered them with plastic hoops, and maybe should have anyway, but they'll live.

My main problem now is what to do with all these extra seeds. If you're like me, you're more afraid of having too few than too many. And then sometimes you don't need to use the whole pack of something.

Sometimes I have extra for fall crops, so in that case I just close up the package and wait until time for those plantings.

But for the things I don't need until next spring, two books are helpful in knowing what to do: *Seed to Seed: Seed Saving and Growing Techniques for Vegetable Gardeners* by Suzanne Ashworth and *Seed Sowing and Saving: Step-by-Step Techniques for Collecting and Growing More Than 100 Vegetables, Flowers, and Herbs* by Carole B. Turner.

Now, I won't pretend to be able to offer you all the details about seed saving in this column. These two books are among the best, and I recommend that you check them out. But I can give you a few suggestions from them about how to store those "boughten" seeds (a word Grandma used and that I find indispensable!).

Ashworth says that the basic rule for best seed viability is to store them in a place where the combination of temperature and humidity combined does not exceed 100. Humidity, she says, is actually more important, since high levels can lead to the growth of microorganisms that will ruin your seed.

An airtight container is also important. Baby food jars or jars with new canning lids work well if screwed on really tight. Glass and metal containers will keep out moisture the best. You can also use plastic bags, but



these don't keep moisture out effectively over time. But you can use them, marking them with the contents and date, then put into glass jars. Ashworth says you can even use those old gallon jars you get olives or pickles in; just cut old bicycle tire innertubes for gaskets.

Store your jars in a cool, dark place, where temperatures don't fluctuate a lot. Floors are better than near ceilings on high shelves, since the temperature fluctuates less.

Ashworth also describes a process to dry seeds to less than 8 percent moisture content using silica gel so that you can freeze them. This is a longer process, though, than I can describe here, so consult her text if you're interested in freezing.

Ashworth offers a list and description of seed-saving organizations, including Seed Savers Exchange, Heritage Farm, The Flower and Herb Exchange, Native Seeds/SEARCH, and Seeds of Diversity Canada. Google these for more information.

As far as how long stored seed will last, a Storey's guide says:

1 year: onion, parsley, parsnips, sweet corn

2-3 years: asparagus, peas, beans, carrots, peppers

4-5 years: beets, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, eggplant, lettuce, muskmelon, pumpkin, spinach, squash, turnip, tomato, watermelon

I'm sure that your experience will modify that list. For example, I have kept sweet corn up to three years and still had good germination. Onion seeds did NOT keep well.

I suppose I may be somewhat of a worry-wart, but there may be other reasons to keep seeds besides a healthy sense of frugality.

According to the Maine newspaper, *The Morning Sentinel*, seed companies like Fedco and Johnny's Selected Seeds are seeing the biggest rush in seed-buying since the Y2K scare, when people feared food supplies might be threatened by potential disruptions caused by a computer glitch.

continued on page 13

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Marinated Cucumber Salad

(Part of Farm to Table Article)

- 3 medium cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1 medium sweet onion, sliced and separated into rings
- 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1/2 cup sliced celery
- 2 to 4 tab. chopped red bell pepper
- 1 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. celery seed
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- leaf lettuce

Combine cucumbers, onion, carrots, celery, and red bell pepper in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix remaining ingredients except lettuce. Pour over vegetables and toss lightly. Cover and chill 8 to 10 hours. Drain and serve in a lettuce-lined bowl. Serves 6.

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Farm to Table: Savoring the Season

By Trish Mumme, Garden Patch Produce



Early summer salads with potatoes and cucumbers

Some of the first fruits of the summer garden are new potatoes and cucumbers, coming in just after you are beginning to get tired of lettuce. For a salad of a different type, you can feature these beauties in one of the following recipes. Any one of them might be the hit of the potluck, or simply a way to make a summer supper special for your family.

Don't forget that you can make sequential plantings of potatoes up until the first of August, to keep those new potatoes coming all summer. Keep your seed potatoes in an open box in an airy shed or barn, away from direct light but where they can get indirect light. If they get sprouty don't worry. They'll grow just fine once they hit the dirt. Bury the potatoes so that the sprout tips are just below the soil level. Hill up when the plants are about 10 inches high to keep the forming potatoes from getting exposed to light.

To keep the cukes coming, make a second planting in the garden just as the first ones are coming in. Keep them covered with row cover and hoops till they begin to bloom, to keep the cucumber beetles at bay.

Potato and Green Bean Salad

1 lb. small new potatoes
1 lb. green beans, trimmed and cut in 1 inch lengths
1 cup thinly sliced sweet onion rings
1 green bell pepper, sliced into rings
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1/4 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. salt or to taste
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
Cover potatoes with water and simmer about 14 minutes, till 2/3 done. Add the green beans and boil until both beans and potatoes are just cooked. Let cool until cool enough to handle. Cut the potatoes into 1-inch cubes, leaving their skins on; place in a large bowl with beans. Add onion rings, green pepper, celery, and parsley. In a small bowl or jar, combine the oil, vinegar, oregano, salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss gently but well. Correct seasoning if needed. Serve at room temperature

Cucumber Salad With Dill

2 large or 3 small cucumbers, thinly sliced
2-3 tab. finely chopped purple onion
1/2 cup sour cream
2 tab. vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tab. fresh chopped dill or 2 tsp. dried dill
Arrange cucumber slices in a serving bowl, sprinkling layers with salt. Place a saucer or other weight on cucumbers to weigh down. Cover and let stand for at least 2 hours. Pour off juices that accumulate. Add purple onions and toss. Combine sour cream, vinegar, pepper to taste, and chopped dill; pour over cucumbers. Serves 4 to 6.

Asparagus and Potato Salad

2 lbs. small red potatoes, cut in halves or quarters depending on size
1 lb. asparagus, cut in 2 inch lengths
One 10 oz. pkg. frozen peas, thawed
1 small red bell pepper, cut in thin strips
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup minced red onion
juice of 1 lemon
1 tab. Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 tab. minced fresh parsley
1 tsp. dried dill weed
In boiling salted water, cook potatoes 15 minutes or just until tender; drain. Place in large bowl; keep warm. In boiling water, cook asparagus, peas, and peppers 4 minutes, or until just tender; drain. Add to bowl containing potatoes and cover. In medium saucepan, combine cream, mayonnaise, onion, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, salt, and freshly ground pepper. Cook, stirring until it begins to boil. Stir in parsley and dill. Pour sauce over vegetables; toss well to coat evenly. Serve in lettuce cups or in a bowl decorated with grape tomatoes. Serves 6.



(Also see the Marinated Cucumber Salad on page 8.)

Making Sense of Organic Regulations

By Lexie Stoia, OEFFA Certification Assistant, and Mike Anderson, OEFFA Organic Education Coordinator

A new series in which OEFFA staff answer frequently asked questions about the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations, and offer suggestions for working within the regulations. We hope this column will be helpful.

- POST-HARVEST PRODUCE HANDLING - (or, What You Can't See Can Make You Sick)

"Post-Harvest Produce Handling"—a lot of words to describe the path from field to market. On the organic farm, what happens between harvest and market? The answers below should provide guidance to growers as well as inform the consumers who purchase produce from them.

1) What are the most likely sources of microbial contamination on a fruit or vegetable farm?

Produce that is sold in an unprocessed or minimally processed form can be contaminated with a pathogen at any point in the production, transportation, marketing, or preparation process. The greatest risk for contamination is through human or animal feces. Water used in growing, washing, and packing of produce can carry contaminants and potentially disperse them throughout a crop or field.

Most food-borne illnesses that are traced to consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables are due to the presence of bacteria on the produce, usually either salmonella or E. coli. Some parasites such as cryptosporidium and cyclospora have also been linked to food-borne illness.

2) How can crops become contaminated prior to harvest?

Crops can be contaminated by pathogens from animal feces from domestic animals in the field, from water that runs-off adjacent property, or from contact with improperly composted or raw animal manure. The organic standards outline very strict requirements for composting animal manure. These strict standards and the associated record keeping requirements are necessary to ensure that the risk of contamination from improperly composted animal manure is reduced.

Manure storage and compost handling sites that are near produce fields increase the possibility of contamination. Growers should consider where their compost piles are located and maintain good records regarding manure sources, treatments, temperatures, application dates and rates of application.

Growers should avoid leaving culled produce in the field. These can act as reservoirs for potential contamination.

3) What are primary sources of contamination in the harvesting process?

Contamination of produce in the harvesting process can result from transfer of pathogens from workers or from unsanitary harvest containers.

All pickers and handlers should be trained in proper personal hygiene when handling the produce, and those with illnesses that cause nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea should not be permitted to handle fresh produce.

The harvest bin and any container or tool that will come in contact with produce should be kept clean and should be sanitized prior to use. Managers should establish a protocol for cleaning and disinfecting harvest equipment.

4) What substances are allowed for cleaning and sanitizing organic produce?

The most common substance used is water with the addition of chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, sodium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide)—also known as bleach. The chlorine solution may not contain any

continued on page 11

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They Did What?

If you have a complaint about a specific grower who claims that his or her products are organic, the National Organic Program (NOP) has official complaint forms available through the OEFFA office. 614/262-2022.

Making Sense...

continued from page 10

unapproved synthetic substances—fragrance, for instance. The chlorine residue must not exceed 4 ppm (parts per million—or 4 mg/L) which was established as the maximum residual disinfectant limit under the Safe Drinking Water Act. In other words, the final produce rinse must be potable, containing no more than the maximum chlorine levels found in municipal water.

Other disinfectants permitted to come in contact with organic produce include vinegar (must be from an organic source), peracetic acid, ethyl alcohol (also from an organic source), and hydrogen peroxide. See question 10 to learn about how the use of these substances may affect the labeling status for the produce.

5) I am unsure how to use these disinfectants on produce. Can you give me more details?

Chlorine can be added to wash water at a concentration of 50 – 200 ppm total chlorine. Produce should be in contact with chlorine treated water for 1-2 minutes. The final effluent that is discharged cannot have a concentration of greater than 4 ppm. Use of chlorine as an antimicrobial chemical therefore requires a grower to greatly dilute the effluent prior to discharge. One gallon of wash water that contains 50 ppm chlorine would have to be diluted with an additional thirteen gallons of water prior to discharge. Rates of application for chlorine used in produce wash water can be found free of charge through ATTRA's post-harvest handling publication (see contact information below).

If you plan to use hydrogen peroxide, vegetables should first be washed with water to remove excess soil. They may then be sprayed with a 3% solution of hydrogen peroxide.

6) Besides using disinfectants, how else can I prevent contamination?

Growers should realize that it is preferable to prevent contamination of produce prior to harvest rather than attempting to eliminate contamination that has already occurred. In general a series of washes that do not reuse wash water is more effective than a single wash. Brush-washing produce that is not vulnerable to damage is a more effective method of removing possible contaminants. Growers should be diligent about cleaning and sterilizing brushes and all surfaces in the packing area.

The temperature of wash water is also an important factor in the washing and packing operations. Some produce--e.g. tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, apples and celery--must be washed in water that is at least 10 degrees F warmer than the produce. If these crops are washed in water that is cooler than the produce,

a pressure differential causes water in the wash tank to become internalized in the produce. Any contaminants that were in the wash water are then pulled into the produce itself and additional washing will not remove the contaminants. To avoid internalization of pathogens, growers can air-cool produce prior to washing or can heat wash water.

Sanitation and careful cleaning in the washing and packing area are critical. Domestic and wild animals (especially rodents) should not be permitted in the wash area.

Vehicles that are used for the transport of fresh produce should be cleaned and sanitized frequently. Growers should consider keeping a log as a record of their cleaning and sanitizing practices.

7) What can I use to clean harvest equipment, buckets, etc.?

The rules expand a bit as far as disinfectants go in comparison to what can be used in direct contact with food. The same substances listed under question 4 apply, as well as isopropyl alcohol, synthetic detergents, and cleaners. Even dish soap is permitted for use as a cleaner. In these cases the equipment or harvest containers must be rinsed and completely free of the substances used to clean them so that the produce does not become contaminated.

8) Can I reuse boxes from a grocery store in the transportation of my organic produce?

No. The exception to this would be if you reused boxes and lined them with new, food-grade liners. Of course you may reuse your own containers for transport if they are used exclusively for organic produce.

9) What about packaging for the customer?

If you direct market your produce, you should provide customers with clean new bags or packaging to prevent contamination. Make sure your labels have been approved by the OEFFA certification office if you plan on using them.

10) What is the difference between "Organic" and "100% Organic" produce?

If a product is labeled as "100% Organic," it may not be processed with any non-organic substances whatsoever. Chlorine is one exception, but must not exceed the amount of chlorine permitted by the Safe Drinking Water Act. For example, if chlorine is used to clean apples, the wash water at no point can contain more than 4 ppm if the grower wants to label them as "100% Organic Apples." The grower cannot use peracetic acid, hydrogen peroxide, or other synthetic substances in the disinfecting of the produce if the label will read "100% Organic." All ingredients or processing agents in a "100% Organic" product must be organic.

continued on page 12

Welcome to OEFFA's Newest Members!

Business Level

Ginger Povenmire
John Daniel Schlabach

Family Level

Mike Bella and
Elizabeth Rhodes
Julie Byrne and Neil Brown
Bob, Kelly, and
Dallas Cornett
Jeremy and Kellie Gedert
Jean LaPolla
Michael, Mary, and
Megan Steele
Christopher Picha &
Adele Vogelgesang

Family Farm Level

Doug Billman
Stuart Childers
Daniel Fisher
Chris and Sarah Gilfilen
JED Cattle, LLC
Marlene and Ron Pohl
Aaron and Terri Rook
Scott and Vinnette Stayrook

Individual Level

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Timothy Fox
Daniel Glick
Enos Graber
Kaye Grob
John Herbold
Lydia Kaufman
Phillip Kingsley
Lucy Kopcial
Lonny LeFever
Emily and Jessica Levine
Dani Morrison
Mark Nuzum
Mathew Steiner
James Stipetich
Anthony Wood
Patricia Worster

Student Level

Regan Meier
Kelly Myers
Jeremy Pifer

Making Sense...

continued from page 11

Under the NOP rules, an organic product must have at minimum 95% organic ingredients. In the case of produce, the use of approved synthetics to disinfect would move the produce into the "Organic" category.

Consumers should be aware that growers may choose to use the label "Organic" versus the lengthier "100% Organic" even if they haven't used any synthetic processing aids and their produce truly is 100% organic.

11) How can I ensure that customers who pick their own produce are minimizing their risk of food-borne illness?

Growers who are managing pick-your-own operations or CSA operations in which the customers are picking their own produce should educate those customers on the importance of proper personal hygiene practices. Managers should provide accessible and thoroughly stocked restroom facilities with signage emphasizing the importance of proper hand washing. An easily accessible first aid kit should be available to help pickers clean and treat open wounds that can lead to contamination of fresh produce.

In the event of an outbreak of a food borne illness linked to a specific farm, health inspectors visiting the farm would likely find some type of contaminant somewhere on that farm. It is virtually impossible to eliminate every potential contaminant from the environment. Growers therefore have a responsibility to implement systems that minimize the potential for contamination of their crops. A detailed food safety assessment and thorough record keeping logs may help farmers better manage their operations and better protect their customers from food borne illness.

References and Additional Resources

ATTRA Publication: IP116 – Postharvest Handling of Fruits & Vegetables. 1-800-346-9140. www.attra.org/attra-pub/postharvest.html#postharvest

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower's Guide. 2000. Anusuya Rangarajan, Elizabeth A. Bihn, Robert B. Gravani, Donna L. Scott, and Marvin P. Pritts. Available at www.gaps.cornell.edu/educationalmaterials.html

Post Harvest Handling for Organic Crops. 2000. Trevor Suslow. Davis: University of California. ANR Publication 7254. Available at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>

Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. FDA. Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. 1998. Available by calling 888/723-3366.

Key Points of Control and Management of Microbial Food Safety for Growers, Packers, and Handlers of Fresh-Consumed Horticultural Products. Trevor V. Suslow. Davis: University of California. Available at <http://oric.ucdavis.edu>

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Breaking Ground...

continued from page 7

"This year's run on seeds stems from less dramatic, but still sobering, sources," according to the *Sentinel*. "Increasing prices for food and fuel have inspired more people with access to land to begin planting their own gardens in hopes of saving money, seed sellers say."

Fedco's sales rose from \$805,000 last year to more than \$1 million so far in 2008, the first time the company passed the \$1 million mark. It's sold out of about 100 varieties of the 900 it carries. At Johnny's, spokespeople say demand is up, though they won't give numbers. But they do insist there are no shortages. Back orders, for sure. I had about a dozen things back ordered this year, though they all came in by the end of March. So even Johnny's is feeling the effects of the growth in demand.

Most sources report that the cost of groceries has doubled in 10 years, with prices increasing more rapidly in recent weeks as oil passed the \$127 a barrel mark (May 16). Gas in my locale this week spiked from \$3.63 a gallon one morning to \$3.95 that afternoon. I don't think I'm the only one to feel that our economic situation is volatile, to say the least. Clearly, people are rattled, and gardening is a positive action to take.

For beginning farmers, this probably means both good and bad things. On the one hand, I wonder if sales at farmers markets will be down this year. Still, I suppose a lot of people don't have the time or skills or resources to garden, and high grocery store prices may well drive them to the local markets in increased numbers. Time will tell.

What this means to us, seed-wise, is that we need to be careful about our seed buying and storing. Do NOT wait too long next year to order your seeds. If demand continues to grow, those back-orders may well turn into shortages. And make good use of the seeds you have by storing them properly and getting the best germination possible.

As Ashworth says, "Constantly keep in mind that your seeds are living entities and will only grow strongly during subsequent seasons if you do everything possible to see that they are stored in truly excellent conditions. Strong seeds in the garden are partially a reflection of good seed storage techniques."

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Member Profile...

continued from page 5

products they provide (including recipes and other preparation ideas). The kids are very much a part of the farm as well. With their toes in the soil and wide brimmed hats on their heads, Joel and Jeremiah (the older kids) help enthusiastically with whatever needs to be done. "The kids have their jobs to do, but they have time to play everyday too," Shelley acknowledged beneath the zip-line in the yard.

According to Jeff, the Motts are hoping that what they are doing, which is unique where they live, will be used as a model for others. They have been on their farm only four years, having sold their house in Orange County, California, to pay for the original 90-acre farm and buildings. In that four years they have spent close to \$100,000 on start-up and improvements, including updates to the unfinished solar/propane home. "It could be done on 20 acres," Jeff believes. "Then more land could be bought as needed."

When you walk into their open, simple, and very comfortable home, a sign on the propane refrigerator door catches the eye. "Who is your Farmer?" Embracing an agrarian lifestyle, they have sculpted the start of an admirable life and are providing eastern Ohio with



Jeff Mott brings his favorite Belgian work horse, Molly, in from the field.



A peek in the green house.

a farmer: a farmer providing farm fresh products that would otherwise be unavailable in this area. They have become the farmers that they themselves desired.

*May the sun shine down on their fields,
and the rain keep their soil moist.*

*The Mott Family Farm is located at 66125 Raymond Rd.,
Salesville, Ohio 43778, and can be reached by phone
at 740/758-5488*

Good Reads

By Herman Beck-Chenoweth, Back40 Books

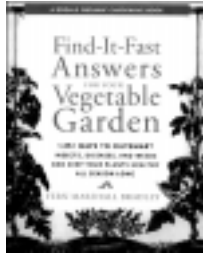


Hello again folks. It sure has been a wild and woolly Spring season so far. At the Resilience Research Farm we have our “video” gardens in and are shooting video for new releases this fall. (See resources.)

Here are a few books that we thought might prove to be helpful to you this growing season, and one that, if you remember *Columbus Citizen Journal* writer Bob Greene, we know you will enjoy.

Find Fast Answers for Your Vegetable Garden

With the latest research, breakthroughs, and troubleshooting advice, *Find It Fast Answers for Your Vegetable Garden* features hundreds of organic and natural solutions for tackling disease, pests, and weed problems. If deer devastate your plants, you’ll find ideas and advice to help keep deer out of your yard. When flea beetles emerge in hungry hordes, be ready with temporary sticky traps and garlic sprays, or plant a “trap” crop to lure the pests away from your seedlings. No matter what challenge crops up in your vegetable garden, you’ll discover all the answers you need to find solutions fast and keep your crops on track. In addition, you’ll learn to keep an eye out for trouble so you can spend less time dealing with problems and more time growing and harvesting healthy, bountiful vegetables. Hard cover, 472 pages, black & white illustrations. Reg. \$31.95; available in our Sale Barn for \$19.95 including free shipping.



The Insect, Disease, and Weed I.D. Guide

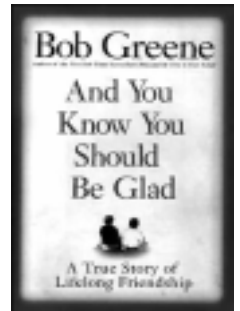
Here is another excellent Rodale book: *The Insect, Disease, and Weed I.D. Guide*. What is it? Why is it in your garden? How can you make it go away? Or should you try to keep it there? Use this book to know what’s what in your garden, lawn, and landscape. Uncover the identity of each garden mystery you meet, then learn exactly what, if anything, to do about it. From banishing



pests and diseases to wiping out weeds to creating a haven for garden good guys, you’ll find safe, sensible, all organic recommendations to help you make the best choices for your garden. 6 X 9.5. 307 pages. Hard cover. Cover price \$31.95, our price \$15.00.

And You Know You Should Be Glad

I am certain that many OEFFA members remember Bob Greene who graduated from Bexley High in 1963, was a columnist for the *Columbus Citizen Journal* and went on to be an award winning author for the *Chicago Tribune*. Bob’s last book, *And You Know You Should Be Glad*, is a highly personal true story of memory and the power of friendship. Growing up in Bexley, Bob and his four best friends—Allen, Chuck, Dan, and Jack—were inseparable. Of the four, Jack was Bob’s very best friend, a bond forged from the moment they met on the first day of kindergarten.



They grew up together, got in trouble together, learned about life together—and were ultimately separated by time and distance, as all adults are. But through the years Bob and Jack stayed close, holding on to the friendship that had formed years before. Then, the fateful call came: Jack was dying. And in this hour of need, as the closest of friends will do, Bob, Allen, Chuck, and Dan put aside the demands of their own lives, came together, and saw Jack through to the end of his journey. This book was written using the actual names of the families, sports figures and businesses that were located in Central Ohio between 1955 and 1970. This is indeed a great read, especially for anyone growing up in Central Ohio during this period. □ After speaking with Bob, I was able to purchase a quantity of first edition hard covers as well as audio books of this title. The hardcover edition, issued at \$24.95 is available at Back40 for \$12.50, the 5 CD audio book for just \$19.50.

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OEFFA now receives an 8% donation on all book orders placed through Back40Books. Click the link at www.oeffa.org, or if you order by phone (866/596-9982) be sure to mention that you are a member of OEFFA.

Back40Books also now offers a number of titles through its Sale Barn. Many are current titles being sold at great prices. www.Back40Books.com.

Resources

Market Gardening Videos - At the Resilience Research Farm we have our "video" gardens in and growing and are shooting video for this Fall's DVD releases: "Mechanized Raised Bed Market Farming," and "Year Around Gardening: The Guide to Food Self Sufficiency." Visit www.back40.com or call 866/596-9982 for more info.

Food Facts: Results from Marketing and Food Systems Research - This publication summarizes the findings of the Leopold Center's research, demonstrations, studies, and surveys in the rapidly growing area where food culture, economics, and environmental issues intersect. It is available on the Leopold Center web site at: www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/food/food.htm. To request a print copy, contact the Leopold Center at 515/294-3711, or email leocenter@iastate.edu.

"Do Not Spray" signs - Heavy duty aluminum signs that say "Do Not Spray," "OEFFA member," or "Certified Organic" are available from OEFFA for \$22 (\$25 - nonmembers) plus shipping. To order, visit the OEFFA Store at www.oeffa.org; send your order with payment to 41 Crosswell Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43214; or call 614/421-2022.

Events

The Fourth Annual Ohio Lavender Festival - June 20, 21 and 22; DayBreak Lavender Farm; Streetsboro, Ohio. www.ohiolavenderfestival.com

30th Annual OEFFA Conference - February 21-22, 2009. Keynote speakers, workshops, trade show, networking, kids conference, custom food, child care, and more. Visit www.oeffa.org or call 614/421-2022.

Family Farm Field Day - July 19, 2008; Miller Family Farm; Clark, Ohio; 8:30-4:00. This event will focus on sustainable lifestyles and farming practices: keynote speaker David Kline, a sheep dog demo, a dairy grazing panel, breakout sessions, talks about soil quality and CSAs, children's activities, vendors, and more. Contact Lloyd Miller at 330/231-1714, or Leah Miller at 740/545-6349.

POWA (Promoting Ohio Women in Agriculture) Meeting - Sunday, June 22; 3-7 PM; Clintonville, OH. Helen Hoffelt (hhoffelt@ccad.edu) will present a program on bees and beekeeping. For directions and information, please contact Charoula at: wisewomn@gmail.com.

Many more local and national events are listed at www.oeffa.org/events

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Farmer Wanted - The owner of 6.5 acres of farmland near Port Clinton, Ohio, is interested in having the land farmed organically with crops of your choice. Please contact Faythe Turner at 413/253-3962 or turner@gcc.mass.edu.

Plants for sale! - Heirloom vegetable and Herb plants available for sale, plus some hybrids, all grown in our own organic soil mix. Will be available into June. Call Sue at Eden's Edge 419/362-1530 or 419/610-4011.

McGeary Granular Organic Fertilizers - Standard & Custom Mix. Feeds & Minerals (QAI cert.). Dale Dyko 937/372-7411. NewHopeOrganics@wmconnect.com

For Sale - Approx. 14'x10'x24' clearspan enclosure. Can be seen in a FarmTek catalog. Great condition, assembled, in Washington PA off of the I 79 Lone Pine exit. Best offer over \$400. Pictures available. Also, 50' x100' blue poly tarp. New still in wrapper. \$75. Pictures available. 412/445-8788 or spurofthemoment55@gmail.com.

Help Wanted - Volunteer gardening and greenhouse assistant for small specialty grower of herbs and heirloom vegetable plants and produce. Part-time through the growing season, as needed. Perks plus cash for help with selling at farmers' markets. Located near Richland/Morrow county line; not far from Knox Co. Call Sue at Eden's Edge, 419/362-1530; 419/610-4011.

Join passionate like-minded people online at OEFFA's new Bulletin Board. Enjoy postings on a variety of topics focused around sustainable agriculture. Share your thoughts and learn from other as you discuss what interests you. www.oeffa.org/bb