

Plow Sharing

November-December 2005

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North Carolina Cooperative Extension
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A bi-monthly newsletter promoting awareness, understanding, and practice of sustainable agriculture



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I hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative. If you have ideas or suggestions for future issues, call or stop by the office. I always welcome your feedback!

Debbie Roos

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I Need Ten Minutes of Your Time!

This is the time of the year when I need your help. Ten minutes of your time each year, that's all I'm asking. The end of the year is approaching, and our thoughts here in Extension-land have turned to annual performance evaluations. We have a lot of accountability built into our programming efforts, which is a good thing. We are required to document the impacts of our programs, which is where you guys come in. I would like to get your feedback on two parts of my program: the Plow Sharing newsletter and the Growing Small Farms website. I want to make sure that the time I spend on these outreach strategies is worthwhile and actually benefiting clientele. This is your chance to let me know what you like and don't like about the newsletter and website, and what you would like to see in the future. I will use this information to plan for 2006. Even if you have completed this evaluation in the past, I need it again. ***Every year I need to hear from clients.***

For the Plow Sharing evaluation, you can either complete the form on-line (see below) or fill out the enclosed form. The form is a self-mailer. When you have filled out the evaluation, just fold the top 1/3 down and the bottom 1/3 up (same as folding a letter). Tape it closed with one piece of tape and place a stamp on it. I encourage anyone with Internet access to complete the evaluation on-line to ensure that I receive your feedback in a timely manner.

To provide on-line feedback on the Growing Small Farms website, go to www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/index.html and click on the green bar that says "Contact Us". The form is totally anonymous - I will not even see your email address. You will also find the on-line evaluation form for Plow Sharing at this site. Thanks for taking the time and I look forward to hearing from you. ***Please complete all evaluations before December 31!***

New Planting & Harvesting Guide for Piedmont Vegetable Crops

In October, I collaborated with Doug Jones, the Land Lab manager at CCCC, to conduct a season extension workshop and field day for farmers (see photos below). I wanted to do this workshop because I see lots of opportunities in our area for farmers to expand the season for their produce. And with Chatham Marketplace opening up in early 2006, we need local growers who produce throughout the year!



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I asked Doug to collaborate because he has lots of experience with season extension techniques, including row covers, high tunnels, shade cloth, micro-sprinklers, etc. We saw all of these techniques in use at the Land Lab.

Doug had developed on paper a planting and harvesting guide for his favorite vegetable crops. I recognized his guide as a valuable tool and spent many hours working with Doug to flesh it out. I then adapted and formatted the guide for the web

to make it available to the public. It includes planting and harvest dates for about 35 crops. It also includes notes about favorite varieties.

You can find this guide on the Growing Small Farms website at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/index.html. Click on the What's New button for the link. If you do not use the Internet, you can call my office at 919-542-8202 and request a print copy. I would appreciate your feedback on the format of the guide so let me know if you find it helpful or have suggestions for improvement. You can contact me at 919-542-8202 or debbie_roos@ncsu.edu.

New Listserv Discussion Groups

I created my first farmer listserv over three years ago, back in 2002. Since its creation, the Chatham County Cooperative Extension growing small farms listserv has provided a forum for discussion, technical advice, networking, cooperative purchases, and much more. I have since created several new listservs, each with a unique focus:

- **Small farms**
- **Pastured poultry**
- **Beekeeping**
- **Sustag**— my general announcement



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list, the one I use to send one-way communications about grants, educational programs, sustainable agriculture current events

- I have a couple of other listservs that are targeted to specific groups and not the general public



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If you would like to subscribe to any of these listservs, email me at debbie_roos@ncsu.edu.

Farm Photos on the Web!

I have posted lots of new farm photos on the web since the last newsletter (see samples below!), including crazy-looking mammoth caterpillars, pastured turkeys, field corn, rooster peppers, value-added production, planting strawberries, delivering farm produce to restaurants, making goat cheese, marketing at Carrboro Farmers' Market. You can find these photos on the Growing Small Farms website at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/farmphoto.html.



Farmer Bill Dow delivers produce to Chef Bret Jennings of Elaine's in Chapel Hill (above)

A cecropia moth caterpillar, one of the largest in North Carolina (above left).

You can see these photos and lots more at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/farmphoto.html.

December 12-14, 2005

20th Annual Southeast Vegetable & Fruit Expo

Myrtle Beach, SC

The North Carolina Vegetable Growers' Association's annual conference will be at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center. Topics include tomatoes, peppers, sweetpotatoes, cole crops, cucumbers, squash, small fruits, melons, sweet corn, snap beans, organic production, greenhouse production, marketing, 2007 Farm Bill, agritourism, and more.

For more information, visit the NCVGA website at www.ncvga.com. Contact Cathy Price at cdprice@bellsouth.net or 919-334-0099 for more information.



Joann Gallagher of Castlemaine Farm with her beautiful display of fall vegetables at the Carrboro Farmers' Market (above) and cheesemaker Whitney May makes fresh chèvre logs at Celebrity Dairy (below).





Spring 2006 Classes at CCCC

The following continuing education courses are being offered for the Spring 2006 semester through the Sustainable Farming Program at the Pittsboro campus of Central Carolina Community College. Registration begins December 5, 2005. To register call 919-542-6495 ext. 223.

MONDAY

Biofuels*

The science and technology of converting diesel engines to using alternative fuels, and the politics and history of why this is not already common knowledge. This class will have a hands-on portion and will specifically address the use of alternative energy as part of sustainable agriculture operations. Mondays, 6:00-8:50 pm, 1/9/06 to 5/8/06. Instructors: Rachel Burton and Leif Forer. *Being taught as curriculum course AGR 293.

Sustainable Poultry Production

An introduction to all types of poultry (chickens, turkeys, geese, etc.) from hatching to humane processing. Specific topics will include herbal and holistic health care, flock management, rotation on pasture, folk wisdom and the marketing of eggs, meat and manure. Saturday field trip TBA. Mondays, 6:00-9:00 pm, 1/9/06 to 3/20/06. Instructor Steven Moize is the farmer at Shady Grove Farm in Hurdle Mills.



Comparative Study of Sustainable Farming Systems

Visits to local farms will form the basis for this course. Students will have the opportunity to participate in planned group activities on different farms. Individual farmers will share the particulars of their farming operation with the visiting students. The students will work with the lead instructor to synthesize a comparison of local farming systems. Recommended for interns, those ready to begin their own farm business and anyone interested in the details of local farming operations. Emphasis will be on vegetable production, but tours will also include fruits, cut flowers, herbs and livestock. Mondays, 1:00-5:00 pm, 3/6/06 to 5/8/06. Instructor: Doug Jones.



TUESDAY

Carpentry, Electrical and Plumbing

Students will learn the fundamentals for basic house construction or remodeling work from experienced builder, teacher and farmer Kevin Meehan. Topics covered include framing, cabinetry and trim, stairs,

wiring, drain lines, the NC building code, and hot/cold supply lines. Excellent course for those new to the construction trades; this course has received rave reviews for its practical and informative nature in the past. Tuesdays 7:00-9:00 pm, 1/24/06 to 4/11/06. Field trip TBA. Instructor: Kevin Meehan.

Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants - Field Study



The focus of this field study will be locating, identifying, approaching, collecting and marketing edible and medicinal

plants. Frequent field trips to local areas for identification and sustainable harvest of native plants are planned as part of the learning experience. Learn how to explore herb habitats and communities, and discover ways to open up to this healing, nurturing, and renewing force. Most of the class will take place outdoors, so come dressed accordingly. Students should bring a notebook suitable for use outdoors. Tuesdays, 3:00-6:00 pm, 1/17/06 to 3/7/06. Instructor: Will Endres.

Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants

Herbalist and Wild Crafter Will Endres shares his more than thirty years of experience in the gathering and preparation of wild herbs for personal use and sale. Learn how to wisely integrate plants into your daily life. This is an interactive course where you will be given the opportunity to ask all of your herbal questions. The preparation of herbs for use by drying, and by making fluid extracts will be covered. This course complements the Field Study class, but neither is a pre-requisite. Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 pm, 1/17/06 to 3/7/06. Instructor: Will Endres.

Permaculture Fundamentals

Permaculture is the design of sustainable human habitats. This class covers the fundamentals of permaculture systems design for forests, fields, permanent gardens, water, animals, buildings,

economics and society. This is the first course required to earn a certificate in permaculture and is a prerequisite for the permaculture design practicum. Field trips TBA. Tuesdays, 5:30-9:30 pm, 1/24/06 to 3/28/06. Instructor: Harvey Harman.

WEDNESDAY

Pastured Hog Production – NEW!



Eliza MacLean with pastured pigs at Cane Creek Farm (above) and piglets (below).

With careful planning, even the smallest farm can support a number of diverse enterprises. This course will focus on pastured hog production as an additional, sustainable enterprise. Pastured pork production is the practice of raising hogs on grass, legumes, standing crops, or any other ground cover. The aspects of sustainable hog production discussed in this course will include alternative niche marketing, breed selection, alternative feeds, waste management, odor control, health concerns, and humane treatment and basic management practices. Wednesdays, 5:30-8:30 pm, 3/1/06 to 4/19/06. Instructor: Chuck Talbott.



Organic Vegetable Production

This course is designed to give the students both academic and experiential instruction in sustainable vegetable production methods. The class will begin in the classroom with instruction on designing and implementing a farm plan from seed selection to harvest. As the day length increases the class will move outdoors to the CCCC Land Lab to implement a class farm project. Wednesdays, 6:00-9:00 pm, 1/25/06 to 5/3/06. Instructors: Doug Jones and Tony Kleese.



Land Lab vegetables (above) and Land lab manager Doug Jones and student (below).



FRIDAY

Ornamental Gardening with Perennials, Shrubs and Trees - with a Special Focus on Natives

This course offers a broad overview of the vast landscape plant choices we have in this incredible gardening region of North Carolina. Native plants

will be featured. In addition, we will cover site analysis, soil preparation, organic pest management and basic design overview. The goals of this course are to help you analyze potential planting sites and make appropriate plant choices (perennials, shrubs, small trees) for that site. Students will also learn how to implement and maintain ornamental plantings. Conservation and sustainable horticultural processes will also be incorporated in our discussions. This course focuses on beginning/basic ornamental gardening information and is designed to help gardeners new to the area, or just new to gardening as well as students of the sustainable farming program. Fridays, 2/10/06 to 3/31/06, 12:00-3:00 pm. Instructor Kim Hawks is the founder and former proprietor of Niche Gardens.



* Continuing education students may audit curriculum courses of their choice. Please contact Robin Kohanowich at 542-6495 ext. 229 for more information regarding these courses or information about our 2-year AAS degree and certificate programs in Sustainable Agriculture. The FUTURE is in sustainability - don't get left behind! To register call 919-542-6495 ext 223.

December 12-14, 2005

**Direct Marketing Conference:
"From Price Taker to Price Maker,
Direct Market to Customers!"**

Myrtle Beach, SC

Many of you market directly to consumers. We have developed an educational program with you in mind. It will be conducted at the same time as the SE Vegetable and Fruit EXPO in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Our Featured Speakers:

Gary Sweet is an Ohio grower who has created an identity brand for his sweet corn. He sticks by his pricing of \$6.00 per dozen from his customers, and he gets it every time! He has gone from 3,000 to 300 production acres, but the difference is that he now makes more money!

Charlie Jackson is the director of the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), and has helped to profitably connect mountain growers to the people and businesses in their community through the Locally Grown movement. Find out from Charlie how you can do the same thing in your hometown!

Learn First-hand from Farmers:

Patie Lineberger tells how she gets kids to the farm to learn. Gail Riggs talks about success in multiple locations. Julia Bircher & Melissa Barnett will help you understand how they expand business horizons. Sam Bellamy tells how he connects with customers. Mark Lyon will share how he draws people into his farm stands.

University Specialists & Experts:

From NC A&T State University, Dr. John O'Sullivan will teach using a life-scale farm stand model, to help rev up the customer appeal of your stand! Theresa Nartea will demonstrate how to take advantage of the marketing help of the World Wide Web!

From NC State University, Gary Bullen will walk you through the economic and business considerations of going from commodity to specialty

markets. Dr. Ed Estes talks about setting your prices. Don Thompson shares how to make the money connection with customers. Dr. Doug Sanders will discuss food safety and reducing your risks.

For more information about this conference, contact Cathy Price at 919-334-0099 or cdprice@bellsouth.net.

January 19-22, 2006

**15th Annual Southern SAWG Conference
Practical Tools and Solutions
for Sustaining Family Farms**

Louisville, Kentucky



Editor's note: I haven't missed a Southern SAWG conference in about 10 years and *highly* recommend it...

Due to the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina on the New Orleans area, Southern SAWG's Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference has been moved to Louisville, Kentucky! The event will be held January 19-22, 2006, as originally scheduled, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Louisville.



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The conference offers a great bounty of innovative strategies for those who are committed to sustainable agriculture. And our new venue, which is situated in the heart of the Louisville action, offers conference participants a very exciting array of extracurricular activities.

The 2005 Conference was a huge success, with over 700 people participating! We are expecting the 2006 Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference to be a big hit too.

This event attracts many of the most innovative farmers and others working for sustainable food systems in the South.

If you haven't been before, you'll want to come this January to learn why so many of the South's most successful sustainable farmers and ranchers, as well as researchers, information providers and community organizers, come to this event year after year.



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Our 15th annual conference will offer:

- More sessions than ever (over 50!) on direct marketing strategies, community food systems and sustainable livestock, vegetable and flower production

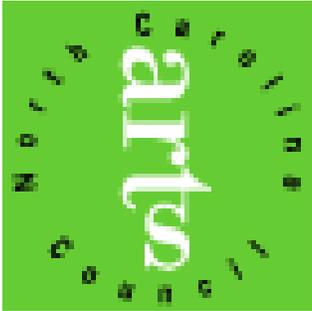


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- Four Intensive Short Courses (Cut Flowers, Organic Vegetable Production, Pastured Turkeys, and Management Intensive Grazing of Beef)
- Five exciting Field trips (Pastured Poultry, Meat Goats, Diversified Sustainable Farm, Sustainable Ag Research, and Louisville Community Food Systems)
- A reading by Wendell Berry, Kentucky farmer and national literary figure
- Dinner featuring Kentucky produced foods
- Trade show with tools, supplies and information
- Plenty of informal opportunities to visit with folks of common interests
- The famous 4th Street Live! Entertainment district just steps away

To view the complete agenda and to download a registration form, visit the Southern SAWG website at www.ssawg.org. Contact Jean Mills at 205-333-8504 or jeanmills@aol.com.

Get Your Farm Listed on New Art and Ag Tourism Trail



Raleigh, NC – Farms. Chefs. Attractions. Roadside produce stands. Writers. Festivals. Restaurants. Museums. Galleries. Art studios. Nightclubs. Musicians. Photographers. Historic sites.

Poets. Grocery stores. Banks. City halls. Community colleges. Visitors centers. Artists.

What do they all have in common? They may qualify to participate in a project created by the North Carolina Arts Council, the first statewide effort to create thematic driving trails featuring art and agritourism. To see a sampling of what has already been developed in the eastern part of the state, click on the site and check out the trails: www.homegrownhandmade.com.

The project is free to all participants and is paid for by grants from the Golden L.E.A.F. Foundation, focusing upon counties that have traditionally had some form of agricultural based economy. The goal is to create a new "cash crop," blending tourism, arts and agriculture together.

The trail in this area will include Chatham, Orange, Lee, Randolph, Guilford and Alamance counties.

Greta Lint, local project coordinator for the North Carolina Arts Council, says, "This is the most in-depth, cutting edge tourism effort ever created in our state. Each trail runs through 3 or 5 counties, offering the traveler an opportunity to hear local music, eat locally grown food, pick locally grown produce, see locally made crafts and spend more money. By digging deeper into what communities offer, it allows businesses and artisans opportunity to capitalize upon the tourism dollar. In 2003, tourism generated nearly \$18 million in direct and indirect spending in North Carolina."

To submit your listing to the website, follow these directions:

Log onto <http://www.homegrownhandmade.com/piedmont>. The ID is homegrown and the password is marco - all lower case. Click on 'Add New Site' to submit your information.

For more information, call Greta Lint at 336-626-0527 or Rebecca Moore at 919-733-2119.

Cooperating Organizations:

- Homegrown Handmade
www.homegrownhandmade.com
- North Carolina Arts Council
www.ncarts.org
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension
www.ces.ncsu.edu



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Organic Seed Sourcing Service
Free Again in 2006

by Cricket Rakita

The Save Our Seed Project is addressing one of the most daunting problems among organic producers with our new seed sourcing service. According to the USDA's organic legislation, organic producers must use available organic seeds for all organic production as well as for the three years prior to certification on all fields to be certified. While working with organic growers (certified, transitional, and considering certification), I have found that among their largest stresses is the lack of a knowledgebase about which seeds are and are not available organically. As well, I have talked to a number of farmers that have chosen not to become certified for this reason. I even spoke to one organic grower who told me that her certifier required her to send a list of all of the seeds that she could not find organically so that he could do a search, which he did not do in a timely manner.

The Save Our Seed project has used the connections we have made with growers and seed dealers to address this problem. We have started an Organic Seed Sourcing Service that accepts organic "wish lists" from growers and replies to them with a list of dealers that sell them. Conversely, if no organic seeds are available for an item on the list, we then provide documentation of this that would be suitable to show to certification agents. Along with this documentation, we provide the contact information for all of the organic seed dealers we have searched. We are currently listing information from 66 organic seed dealers.

This service is currently available for free and it will continue to be so throughout 2006. To use the service, growers seeking organic seed can send a list of the organic seeds they are seeking to Cricket Rakita at sourcing@savingourseed.org, or by going directly to our website at www.savingourseed.org and clicking on the "sourcing" button. Requests can also be faxed or mailed to the contact below.

Appropriate information to include when requesting a search is variety, type, quantity sought, and/or maximum days to harvest.

CONTACT:

The Save Our Seed Project
 Cricket Rakita
 286 Dixie Hollow
 Louisa, VA 23093
 Phone 540-894-8865
 Fax 540-894-8060
cricket@savingourseed.org
www.savingourseed.org



2005-2006 Calendar of Events

updated weekly on the web:
www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/calendar.html

December 12-14, 2005: North Carolina Vegetable Growers' Association's **Southeast Vegetable & Fruit Expo** in Myrtle Beach, SC. For more information, visit the NCVGA website at www.ncvga.com or contact Cathy Price at cdprice@bellsouth.net or 919-334-0099.

December 12-14, 2005: Direct Marketing Conference entitled "From Price Taker to Price Maker, Direct Market to Customers!" in Myrtle Beach, SC. This conference will be conducted at the same time as the SE Vegetable and Fruit EXPO in Myrtle Beach, SC. For more information, contact Cathy Price at cdprice@bellsouth.net or 919-334-0099.

January 19-22, 2006: Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) **Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference** in Louisville, KY. Visit the conference website at www.ssawg.org for the complete agenda and registration information. For more information, contact SSAWG at info@ssawg.org.

March 3, 2006: The **Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School** in Roxboro, NC. Sponsored by North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Topics include direct marketing, seedless table grapes, blueberry production, and season extension. For a pre-registration form, which includes a map and a list of local motels in the area, please contact Carl Cantaluppi at 919-603-1350.

March 11, 2006: 13th Annual **Organic Growers' School** at Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, NC. For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.organicgrowersschool.org> or email info@organicgrowersschool.org.

March 14, 2006: Homestead Milk Production Shortcourse sponsored by NC Cooperative Extension in Burlington, NC. Topics include Overview of Milk Production, Cow vs. Goat Milk, Animal Nutrition, Animal Health, Milking, Milking Equipment and Sanitation. Classes will be on March 14, March 21, March 28, with a field practicum on April 1 at Nu Horizons Farm in Pittsboro. All classes are from 7:00-9:00 pm except for the field day which will be from 9:00-11:30 am. For more information, contact Marti Day at 336-375-5876.

**Visit the Growing Small Farms Website
at www.ces.ncsu.edu/chatham/ag/SustAg/index.html**

5 Years of Plow Sharing Newsletters are on the Web!

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Plow Sharing

*A bi-monthly newsletter promoting
awareness, understanding,
and practice of sustainable agriculture*