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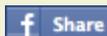


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Supporting Sustainable Agriculture  
in the Southern Appalachians through  
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...e-news

## Spring Conference 2013 celebrates 20 years



### March 8-10, 2013 marks the 20th annual OGS Spring Conference!

It's hard to believe that the gathering that started in 1993 with a handful of farmers has grown into the southeast's largest sustainable living conference! We're expecting more than 2000 people at UNCA this coming spring, and we've got loads of excellent learning in store. In addition to cutting edge classes for all levels of growers, we're hosting a load of full-day workshops in the community and reaching out to partners to tailor classes and workshops to folks who need it most. We're also offering over 200 individuals the opportunity to attend the event for free, via work exchange or scholarship programs. (Details available in January).

We'll hear about aquaculture, chinampas, herbal pet care, unusual cover crops, goat production, biochar,

cooking with fire, amateur plant breeding, and more! Don't miss this amazing event, and if you can, **DONATE to OGS to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstance, can have the opportunity to learn.** Contact [meredith@organicgrowersschool.org](mailto:meredith@organicgrowersschool.org).

## The clock is ticking on Prop 37 to label GMOs

Hopefully you've heard about Proposition 37, **California's potentially groundbreaking legislation that would require labeling of genetically modified foods.** In the past week, supporters of labeling have had a tough time racking up votes, because Monsanto and it's cronies have spent \$15 million dollars on television advertisements that paint labeling as a negative. Why? Not because it's true, but because they know they'd loose millions of dollars once buyers gained the ability to choose products that do NOT contain GMOs. Readers, this is important stuff! This legislation has the potential to pave the way for other states to pass similar laws requiring labeling on GMO-containing products, and a law like this in

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California (where the majority of US vegetables are produced) would have a profound and POSITIVE impact on our food system. It is widely recognized that **if California passes Proposition 37, the ripple effects across the nation will favor healthier food choices and small farmers growing clean food.** *What can you do?* Visit the Organic Consumers Association website: [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org) and stay informed, and if you can, consider a donation to the TV ad campaign they are building in response to Monsanto's propaganda.

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## Gardener's Corner: Ask Ruth

### Quick DIY Winter Row Covers for your Garden



Dear Ruth,  
As we head into November, I am looking for an easy way to protect my fall garden from winter weather. Do you have any simple solutions?  
Eddie  
Burnsville, NC

Dear Eddie,

In my own garden, I use a super-simple system. It's fast, it's easy, and practically anyone can construct it in just a few minutes. I will demonstrate the steps to "building" this DIY winter protection tunnel, and then talk about issues to contemplate when using this and similar systems, and finally offer a few other ideas. I have used similar shelters on a grander scale for lettuce for the wholesale market. Most of the lettuce was still in decent condition the following March - though some of the lettuce ribs were starting to get brown - but the lettuce was planted early enough that it was nearly full size by mid-October.

#### MATERIALS:

**8' Fiberglass Rods** – these work for a bed width of 4 feet  
Length of tunnel divided by 2 plus 1 = Number of rods you will need  
*For a 12' tunnel, you will need 7 rods*

#### Floating Row Cover –

Length: length of tunnel + distance to ground on both ends + 1' minimum  
Width: should be 7' (minimum) to 8' wide for 4' wide beds  
*For a 12' tunnel you will need a minimum length of 19-20' of row cover, at least 7' wide*

#### Rocks, Bricks, Soil

Enough rocks/bricks to weigh down floating row cover about every two feet  
OR use soil to weigh down **one** long side of the tunnel. The soil technique will limit harvest accessibility on that side.

To read the rest of Ask Ruth, [click here](#).

## CRAFT

### Green Toe Ground Farm



Our final CRAFT tour of the season was graciously hosted by Nicole and Gaelan of Green Toe Ground in Celso, NC on October 7<sup>th</sup>. We were greeted by cloudy skies once again, and once again our dedicated CRAFT members braved the rainy weather and chilly conditions to come and learn about the day's theme – an Introduction to Biodynamic Farming. We are grateful to Nicole and Gaelan for taking the time to share their passion for Biodynamic growing and inviting us to their farm.

As Gaelan put it, "This farm has been a lot of things in our 11 years." As farm businesses tend to do Green Toe Ground has evolved from a CSA model vegetable farm when they started

out to now focusing primarily on their direct markets selling at three Asheville Tailgate markets, and raising animals.

While they have always grown with organic methods about nine years ago Nicole and Gaelan ventured into the realm of biodynamic growing.

To read the rest of this article, [visit our blog](#).

## Farmers Corner: Ask Tom

### Annual Farm Gizmos Column



This month's column departs from our traditional approach and offers a series of ideas and links to inspire farm efficiency improvements as we enter fall and winter – when we may actually have some time to do research and follow-up. Please comment freely if you have tried any of these devices or if you have invented "gizmos" that may be useful to others in our on-line community.

**Gizmo Definition** - a mechanical gadget, especially one whose name the author does not know or cannot recall.

**Solar water pump** – Here is an interesting design by the Full Belly Project in Wilmington NC. It is a hand cart with a solar photovoltaic (electric) panel which powers a portable pump...

To read the rest of Ask Tom, [visit our blog](#).

## OGS Growth Partners

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