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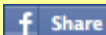


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Supporting Sustainable Agriculture
in the Southern Appalachians through
Educational Programs and Outreach



...e-news

19th Annual Spring Conference a Smash Success! THANK YOU!



Thank you Because of you, the Organic Growers School's Spring Conference was the most successful yet!

More than 1,800 growers came together to learn, teach, network, and work together to transform agriculture in our region.

Now as we all get to work in our own gardens, farms, kitchens, and communities building a sustainable food system from the grassroots up, we hope you will stay in touch with the Organic Growers School! This month's newsletter is packed with information about how to stay involved: find out how you can stay connected with the OGS community and help OGS continue our year-round work supporting growers!

Read on to learn more!

What Happens Now?



At the OGS Poultry Workshop

[Click here to find out how you can support OGS's](#)

Spring Conference Photos!

The 2012
OGS Spring
Conference
in Pictures

[Find lots and lots
of photos from
the Organic
Growers School
Spring Conference
here!](#)

work helping farmers.

Every Spring, people come together at the Organic Growers School Spring Conference to learn, teach, share, and connect.

The OGS Spring Conference has become an annual tradition among gardeners and farmers – marking the beginning of the growing season and offering inspiration, information, and ideas to thousands of growers each year. **“It’s like Christmas morning for gardeners,”** says OGS student Jordana Chalnick of Weaverville.

“Every year I look forward to it,” says Corey Pine Shane. **“The OGS is like a big family reunion and people think of it as the official beginning of the growing season.”**

The largest convergence of organic growers in the Southeast, the OGS conference brings together a diverse community of people committed to sustainable agriculture and sustainable living. Thank you for being a part of this community!

The Organic Growers School needs your support **more than just once a year**. Did you know that the Organic Growers School works year-round to support sustainable agriculture?

When the Spring Conference is over and everyone has gone home to their own farms and gardens, the Organic Growers School’s work continues: supporting growers in transforming agriculture, building a strong local food system by providing in-depth training, education, and support.

If you are getting this E-mail, you are part of the Organic Growers School community – farmers, gardeners, parents, teachers, students – people who care about local and organic food and sustainable agriculture. You care about small farms and farmers, about building strong local economies in our mountain communities, about increasing access to fresh, local, healthy food, and about helping growers gain access to the support they need to succeed.

[The Organic Growers School needs your help to keep up our good work - click here to read more about how you can help.](#)

[Or click here to make an instant online donation to the Organic Growers School!](#)



Saturday photos



[Sunday photos](#)



[Friday Poultry Workshop photos](#)

Submit your own photos: [Email Beth Trigg](#) with your favorite Spring Conference snapshots!



Did you blog about the conference or post an OGS slideshow of your own? [Share it with us via the OGS Facebook Page!](#)

Happy Growing!

Stay in Touch!



[Find us on Facebook!](#) Keep up with hot topics in organic gardening and farming by clicking "like" on the OGS Facebook page.



[Follow us on Twitter!](#) Keep up with hot topics in organic gardening and farming in the twitterverse.



Donate! Make an instant tax-deductible contribution online or mail a check to: Organic Growers School, 788 Mount Hebron Road Old Fort, NC 28762.

Or donate the old-fashioned way: mail your tax-deductible contribution to Organic Growers School, 788 Mount Hebron Road Old Fort, NC 28762. **Thank you!**

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Featured CRAFT Farmer: Megan McGowan

Megan McGowan is in her first year farming after three years participating in OGS's farmer training program, CRAFT, as a farm worker and farm intern.

She credits CRAFT, the Organic Growers School farmer training program, with helping her get started:

"CRAFT is an incredible resource for up-and-coming farmers and this program has been indispensable to me and my education as a

Thank you Volunteers!



Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped make the Spring Conference a Success!

Businesses! Reach Organic Consumers and Growers

Gain exposure to OGS's community of organic gardeners, farmers, and consumers: connect with the Organic Growers School to discuss marketing opportunities for your business.

- Want to expose your business to foodies, farmers, and conscious consumers in the southeast? Advertise in the Organic Growers School E-newsletter! [Email us for more information.](#)
- Want to partner with OGS year-round and gain year-round exposure for your business? [Learn more about the Organic Growers School Growth Partner Program.](#)



Congratulations, Megan!

farmer."

[Read Megan's story and more about how she got her start farming here.](#)

Farmers and Farm Workers! Join CRAFT in 2012!

CRAFT: Training...Peer Support...Resources...Roundtables...Workshops

Consider Joining CRAFT for the 2012 Season!

CRAFT stands for Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training and is a program of the Organic Growers School.

Membership is open to beginning and experienced farmers, apprentices and farm workers, and anyone else who has a strong desire and drive to begin farming.

Training is done mainly through a series of on-farm tours held by experienced growers in the region. These tours are held once a month from April through November and are focused on a specific aspect of sustainable farming. In addition to the tours, members receive a comprehensive CRAFT handbook. This handbook is rich with regional information on all aspects of farming and much of the information is farmer generated, containing invaluable knowledge gained from many years of farming in the southeast Appalachians. CRAFT also offers a series of winter workshops, both for beginning farmers and for experienced farmer members. These workshops are held as "roundtables" and are places for members to come together to discuss such issues as production planning, record keeping, labor issues, etc. For CRAFT members just getting into farming, roundtables focus on business planning, loans, gaining access to land and capital, etc.

CRAFT membership fees are \$20 - \$30/year and give members access to a wealth of summer tours and winter workshops.

To learn more about CRAFT and to join: [CLICK HERE.](#)

Please contact [Andrea Van Gunst](#), OGS Farmer Programs Coordinator, or call Andrea at 828.338.9508 if you have any questions about CRAFT.



Gardener's Corner

Ask Ruth: Pesticide Residue in Compost and the "Dirty Dozen"

Dear Ruth,

Can I put non-organic vegetable scraps, like potato peels in my compost?
~ Jeff

Dear Jeff,



I think that is a personal choice. I put all of my vegetable scraps – whether they are conventional or organic – in my compost pile. I don't like the idea of compostable veggies heading to the landfill. However, potatoes are among the top 12 most toxic conventionally-raised fruits and vegetables – they are ninth on the Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen list of conventional produce to avoid because of pesticide residues. Compost made ONLY with organic vegetable scraps would undoubtedly be more pure.

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), in 2009 "the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's national bio-monitoring program has detected pesticides in blood and urine samples from 96 percent of more than 5,000 Americans age 6 and older." Children are more vulnerable than adults because it takes less pesticide to affect their smaller bodies. Parents and everybody may want to check out these FAQs to get a refresher on pesticide exposure concerns.

The EWG's 2011 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides divides produce into two groups:

[READ MORE: READ this month's FULL "Ask Ruth" ARTICLE HERE.](#)

Ruth Gonzalez is a former market farmer, gardener, local food advocate, and founder of the Tailgate Market Fan Club where she blogs at <http://tailgatemarketfanclub.wordpress.com>. In her job at Reems Creek Nursery, Ruth offers advice on all sorts of gardening questions and benefits daily from the wisdom of local gardeners.

Ask Ruth © 2010 Ruth Gonzalez & Organic Growers School

Gardeners: Got a question for Ruth?

[Email it to us!](#)

Farmer's Corner

Ask Tom: Greenhouse Plant Racks



Dear Tom,

*When we toured your farm last year I recall thinking that the supports you use for seed flats in your propagation house looked affordable and effective. Will you remind me how they are assembled?
- Jean in Clyde*

Dear Jean,

The basic idea is to use stock panels held up by T-posts. We add rebar wired between the T-posts to add a little more rigidity across the stock panels. Most farm supply stores have the posts and the stock panels. Ours came from Southern States. Stock panels are welded wire fencing for livestock that come in several sizes. Ours are 5 feet by 16 feet with a wire diameter of about one quarter inch.

Plan on overlapping them about a foot if you use more than one panel. They can be cut with bolt cutters metal blades in a circular saw or a hack saw.

Compare your seed flat width and length to the width of the stock panel if you have more than one size to choose from. Our panels fit 10 by 20 trays nicely.

T-posts are the steel posts that are often green with white tops that support most barbed wire fences When you decide the height of your rack. . . **[READ MORE: READ This Month's FULL "Ask Tom" ARTICLE HERE.](#)**

Commercial Farmers: Got a Question for Tom?

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