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



...e-news

## Farmer's Corner: Ask Tom



Dear Tom,

How do you manage to grow lettuce in the middle of a summer like this one?

-Hank in Edneyville

Dear Hank,

This year was challenging with three weeks of drought and temperatures in the high nineties. The lettuce was not happy but we still managed to meet the demands of our two markets for salad mix.

Our main strategy in producing summer lettuce is to pick the right field. One of our two fields has a row of trees to the west and lettuce seems to prefer cool evenings in contrast to baking in western sun when the air and soil temperatures are already high. I have not tried the idea of planting a row of corn or tomatoes to the west of lettuce

## Gardener's Corner: Ask Ruth



Dear Ruth,

I would like to fertilize my 4 pecan trees. I read up online and came across the product "Zeolite" which contains several minerals. Is this a safe organic product to use?

Thanks for your help,  
Sharon Phillips

Dear Sharon,

I had not heard of this product prior to your letter, so I checked on the OMRI website to see what I could find out. OMRI, the Organic Materials Review Institute, is a national nonprofit organization that determines which input products (things you add to the ground or put on the plants, etc.) are allowed for use in organic production and processing. Product producers must pay a fee to have their

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but it seem to me that approach will work too.

I also recommend avoiding dry soil, so we irrigate every other day when it has not rained recently. Summer lettuce is subject to foliar diseases so it is also important to time irrigation to avoid extending the period of time that the leaves are wet each day. . . .[MORE. . . Read Tom's full response and see photos of summertime lettuce here.](#)

product reviewed by OMRI, so there are products that are allowed for organic production but simply have not been reviewed by OMRI because of the cost.

If you have ever tried to unearth details about which products are OMRI-allowable, the uninitiated (me) will experienced a lybyrinth-like exercise in patience and determination. . . [MORE. . . Read Ruth's full response and see photos of ripe pecans here.](#)

gardeners, farmers, and consumers: connect with the Organic Growers School to discuss marketing opportunities for your business.

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## CRAFT Tour: Useful Plants Nursery



Once again we were greeted by great weather for the fifth CRAFT tour at Useful Plants Nursery in Earthaven Ecovillage on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

We were hosted by Debbie Leinhart and Chuck Marsh

co-owners of Useful Plants and Lily and Lewis, members of the nursery crew. The tour centered on a Nursery Plant Propagation workshop and we are so thankful to the Useful Plants gang for inviting us to the nursery and sharing their abundant nursery knowledge with all of us.

As we arrived, the crew had set up three different demo stations under the welcoming shade of the trees. At Lewis's station, the focus was on propagating groundnut, comfrey, and jaiogulan. . . [MORE. . . Read more about Useful Plants Nursery, CRAFT, and plant propagation here!](#)

**The next CRAFT tour will be Sunday August 5th at Mountain Harvest Organics led by Carl Evans and Julie Mansfield. The tour topic will be a Timber Frame Workshop and Sustainable Forestry on the Farm. Join us!!**

**CRAFT** is a year-round farmer training collaborative that offers farmers and their interns networking and learning opportunities. Membership is rolling, so join anytime! [For more information or to join, click here.](#) Or contact Cameron Farlow, OGS Farmer Programs Assistant at 828.338.9465 or [cameron@organicgrowersschool.org](mailto:cameron@organicgrowersschool.org).

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The Last Word

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## Ask Ruth. . .

Hey Ruth,

My wife is always harassing me to make everything pretty. Could you possibly talk to her. Maybe give her a couple tips so she can do it herself and stop wearing me and my tools out for no good reason?

Thanks Big Bunches,

~Pete Dixon

Dear Pete,

Thanks big bunches for writing! Unfortunately I can't think of anything Mary doesn't already know. Besides, aren't tools meant for using anyway?? How about this? Drink a great big glass of iced tea every half hour to keep cool, and that place is gonna stay looking mighty pretty.

Cheers to the Dixons and Broadwing Farm!

~Ruth

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