21st ANNUAL
Organic Growers School
SPRING CONFERENCE
MARCH 8-9, 2014
with pre-conference workshops
Friday, March 7, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

21st ANNUAL ORGANIC GROWERS SCHOOL FOR GARDENERS AND FARMERS TAKES PLACE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MARCH 8 & 9, 2014 THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA at ASHEVILLE in ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

The Organic Growers School, Saturday & Sunday, March 8 & 9, 2014 at the University of North Carolina-Asheville in Asheville, NC. A weekend of workshops for beginning gardeners to advanced commercial growers plus a trade show and seed exchange, silent auction, Children's Program, and Friday March 7th on-farm session. Cost: $45 for Saturday, $40 for Sunday (Early Bird Registration by February 17th at midnight). Additional $15 for registration after February 17th and on day of school. Register online at www.organicgrowersschool.org, register by phone at (828) 342-1849, or request a mailed registration form: meredith@organicgrowersschool.org or (828) 582-5039.

A weekend of workshops for beginning gardeners to advanced commercial growers, the 21st Annual Organic Growers School takes place Saturday and Sunday, March 8 & 9, 2014 at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA) in Asheville, NC. The event, which is open to the public, provides practical, region-appropriate organic growing and permaculture workshops, homesteading and rural living classes such as cooking and stonescaping, as well as a seed exchange, silent auction, and trade show. This year's school offers 70 sessions each day with topics ranging from beginning gardening to commercial farming to urban homesteading. The schedule of workshops is designed with all levels of

growers in mind: the professional farmer, the beginning commercial grower, and the home gardener. Also offered at this years school is our 10th annual Children's Program for kids ages 7 to 12, and a hands-on, on-the-farm session on Friday March 7th.

Now in its twenty-first year, The Organic Growers School has grown from a small gathering of 100 growing enthusiasts in 1994 to a regionally recognized conference drawing over 1700 attendees, exhibitors and speakers from 18 different states and Canada. One of the largest conferences of its type in the region, The Organic Growers School has served to reinforce Western North Carolina's role as a regional leader in organic farming.

Participants may choose any four workshops from among the 70 offered in the themed tracks and hands-on, half-day workshops. The themed tracks are as follows: Digging In, Gardening, Soils, Livestock, Commercial Farmers I and Commercial Farmers II, Primitive Skills, Permaculture, Herbs, Sustainable Forestry, Homesteading, Cooking, and All About Poultry. New this year is the Pollinators track, where attendees will learn about creating pollinator-friendly environments and fostering pollinator populations.

Among the specific workshops offered are: Anyone Can Garden Anywhere, Starting Your First Vegetable Garden, Vermicomposting for Fun and Profit, Meat Rabbit Production, Micro-Hydro Electricity, Solar Hot Water Heating, Organic Control of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, Commercial Organic Lettuce Production, Wrangling the Tangle: Kudzu Cuisine, Craft, and Cultivation, Create a Pollinator Paradise, Urban Permaculture in Action: An Introduction, The Herbal Medicine Cabinet, Growing & Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal, and other Woodland Medicinals, Keeping a Family Dairy Cow, Easy Kimchi at Home, Farming for Bees and other Beneficial Insects, DIY Mozzarella, and more!

Half day hands-on workshops with smaller numbers of participants are offered in: FAMACHA Certification for Small Ruminant Producers, Sheep, Catch a Fire, The Art of Making Miso, Drop Spindle Spinning, Intro to Natural Dyes, Spoon Carving, Treatment-free Beekeeping for BEEginners!

The Organic Growers School is proud to offer its 10th annual program for kids. This year's Children's Program focuses on the importance of the environment and alternative energy sources. This supervised full-day event is open to children ages 7-12 years old, with a registration limit of 32 children. Children will explore the the environment through numerous hands-on activities involving plants, animals, insects, and food. Cost is $30 per child.

Also offered this year is continued learning through hands-on sessions on Friday March 7th. Participating in a Friday sessions is a great way for interested commercial growers to add knowledge and hands-on experience with an intensive session at a well-known area farm. The Friday sessions are:
1) Creating a Sustainable Homestead Flock of Poultry at 11 Fuller Lane Asheville, NC 28805, 9am-4:30pm $45 per person, 50 person limit. This comprehensive workshop will include details about raising your own poultry, processing and will leave you with a sample business plan.
2) NC Pollinator Conference Planning, presented in conjunction with the Xerces Society, at UNC Asheville, 9am-4pm. In this workshop, attendees will learn how to protect and manage habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects on the farm and in home and community gardens.

The trade show showcases a wide array of exhibitors and products: local farms, gardening suppliers, and cottage industries that specialize in organic products, books and resources for organic growers and Permaculture practitioners, and several non-profit organizations with information on related topics. A

full list of exhibitors is on the Organic Growers School website and is updated regularly.

A silent auction will run all weekend, giving participants the chance to bid on items donated by related businesses, such as organic home care, garden and farm tools, fertilizers, books, clothing, and more. Proceeds from the auction go directly to supporting Organic Growers School educational initiatives for farmers and consumers alike. Those interested in donating to the auction should contact meredith@organicgrowersschool.org.

A Seed and Plant Exchange booth is open throughout the weekend as part of the trade show. Seed saving and plant exchanges are key steps in the quest to preserve genetic diversity and protect regionally adapted varieties. Attendees may bring excess seeds and small plants to share, barter, or trade. Seed saving supplies and recommended readings will be provided.

The major sponsors of the 21st Annual Organic Growers School are Carolina Farm Credit, Greenlife Grocery, Biltmore, and Mountain Rose Herbs with additional sponsorship support from Fifth Season Gardening, Blue Ridge Naturally, Earth Tools, Banner Greenhouses, Blue Ridge BioFuels, Early Girl Eatery, Nature's NOG, Red Moon Herbs, Reem's Creek Nursery, and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange.

The Organic Growers School is organized annually by the Organic Growers School INC, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

The cost for the all-day conference is $45 on Saturday and $40 on Sunday for those who pre-register by February 17th by midnight. Registration for the Children's Program is $30. An additional $15 is charged for registration after February 17th or the day of the school (between 7:30 and 8:30am) totaling $60 for Saturday and $55 for Sunday. Registration for the half-day hands-on workshops and cooking classes is an additional $5 per workshop and requires pre-registration.

Interested participants may register on-line at www.organicgrowersschool.org, register by phone at (828) 342-1849, or request a mailed registration form from meredith@organicgrowersschool.org or (828) 668-2127. Registration forms are also available at area outlets such as Earth Fare, Greenlife Grocery, other sponsor's retail stores, and area Cooperative Extension offices.

The Organic Growers School is proud to offer over 100 opportunities for individuals to attend the conference by means of a work exchange program. Persons interested in applying for work exchange/volunteer status should visit the OGS website, click on "Lend A Hand" and fill out an application. Shifts are filled on a first come, first-served basis.

All other inquiries: Contact Coordinator Meredith Leigh McKissick at meredith@organicgrowersschool.org or call (828) 668-2127

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2014 ORGANIC GROWERS SCHOOL*
Saturday and Sunday, March 8 & 9, 2014

at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA)
www.organicgrowersschool.org

Schedule

07:30 – 08:30	Registration / Trade Show / Silent Auction / Seed & Plant Exchange
08:30 – 09:00	Trade Show / Silent Auction / Seed & Plant Exchange
09:00 – 10:30	Session 1
10:30 – 11:00	Break / Trade Show / Silent Auction / Seed & Plant Exchange
11:00 – 12:30	Session 2
12:30 – 02:00	Lunch / Trade Show / Silent Auction / Seed & Plant Exchange
02:00 – 03:30	Session 3
03:30 – 04:00	Break / Trade Show / Silent Auction / Seed & Plant Exchange
04:00 – 05:30	Session 4

CLASSROOM SESSIONS

TRACK A: Digging In

- Anyone Can Garden, Anywhere
- Plain and Simple: Organic Cleaning for the Home
- Genetically Engineered Foods: Myth and Truth
- Rebuilding the Foodshed: What's Cooking Across America?

TRACK B: Gardening

- Starting Your First Vegetable Garden
- Growing Fruits and Nuts in Your Home Garden
- Shifting Gears to Year-Round Gardening
- Perennial Plants for Health

TRACK C: Soils

- Soils 101
- Grow Healthy Soils with Cover Crops
- Vermicomposting for Fun and Profit
- The Charisma of Cardboard

TRACK D: Livestock

- Dairy Goats for the Homestead and Beyond
- Pastured Swine Production Techniques
- Meat Rabbit Production
- Grazing Management for Forage-Livestock Systems

TRACK E: Alternative Energy

- Micro-Hydro Electricity (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Ram Pump Technology (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Greenhouse Heating (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Farm-Scale Energy Production (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Solar Electricity (Photovoltaics) (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Solar Hot Water Heating (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Greening your Home (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Blue Ridge Biofuels Canola Project (SUNDAY ONLY)

TRACK F: Commercial Farmers I

- Organic Control of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug
- Tools and Tips for Maximizing Soil Organic Matter
- Organic Baby Ginger Production
- On-Farm Composting

TRACK G: Commercial Farmers II

- Growing Great Garlic and Perennial Onions
- Applying Biodynamics On Your Farm
- Commercial Organic Lettuce Production
- Broccoli

TRACK H: Primitive Skills

- Wrangling the Tangle: Kudzu Cuisine, Craft, and Cultivation
- Intro to Bird Language
- Foraging
- Paleo Nutrition

TRACK I: Pollinators

- Create a Pollinator Paradise (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -How to Stay Away from Chemicals in the Garden (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Farming for Bees and other Beneficial Insects
- Meet the Bees (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Treatment-free Beekeeping for BEEginners, Part 1 (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Your Role in the Pollinator Crisis
  - -Treatment-free Beekeeping for BEEginners, Part 2 (SUNDAY ONLY)

TRACK J: Permaculture

- Innovative Horticultural Strategies for a New Permaculture Century
- Permaculture: A Toolkit for Designing Our Gardens, Homes, and Lives (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Real Life Forest Gardening & Farming (SUNDAY ONLY)
- Urban Permaculture in Action: An Introduction (SATURDAY ONLY)
- Home Orchards: Creating a Garden of Eden

-Medicinal Polycultures in the Permaculture System (SUNDAY ONLY)

TRACK K: Herbs

- Backyard Weeds
- The Herbal Medicine Cabinet
- Using Appalachian Herbs in Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Herbal Elixirs, Wines, and Vinegars

TRACK L: Sustainable Forestry

- A Landowner's Experience in Sustainable Forestry
- Growing & Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal, and other Woodland Medicinals
- Keeping Your Forest Healthy

TRACK M: Homesteading

- Doing What you Can with What you Got (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Homesteading: Our Story (SUNDAY ONLY)

- Woodland Growing: Wasabi and 'Wild Mountain Vegetables'
- Simple Home & Farm Mycoremediation of Waste (SATURDAY ONLY)
- Exotic Invasives…Harvest for Use as One Means of Control
- Keeping a Family Dairy Cow (SUNDAY ONLY)

TRACK N: Cooking

- Easy Kimchi at Home
- Wonderful Winter Salads (SATURDAY ONLY)
  - -Easy, Delicious Appetizers (SUNDAY ONLY)
- DIY Mozzarella
- It's a Wrap!

HALF-DAY HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS

- **FAMACHA Certification for Small Ruminant Producers**
- **Raising & Shearing Sheep for Fiber Production**
- **Catch a Fire**
- **The Art of Making Miso**
- **Drop Spindle Spinning**
- **Intro to Natural Dyes**
- **Spoon Carving**
- **Primitive Pottery Technique**
- **Basket Making**
- **Do-It-Yourself Drystone Masonry**
- **Soap Making**

10th ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

A full day of learning for kids from 7-12, focusing on the importance of sustainability and the environment. Children will explore the world of renewal energy through numerous hands-on activities involving plants, animals, insects, and food.

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* Sessions as of January 2, 2014. Schedule subject to change.