



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



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June 2009 Growers Notebook: Tips, Advice, and News on Things Organic

Meet CRAFT: Forest Creek Farm & Nursery

The Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) is a group of farmers from across Western North Carolina who have come together with their farmworkers to learn from each other. Thirteen farms and close to twenty farm interns will take part in the 2009 CRAFT initiative, which seeks to give established farmers a voice in the training of future growers, and present prospective farmers with the realistic and myriad challenges and opportunities that farmers face.

Our first stop on the CRAFT schedule of farm visits from April to November was Forest Creek Farm and Nursery, a fairly new farm near Saluda, NC. Owners/Operators Mollie and Anthony LeBude grow vegetables, nursery plants, mushrooms, and fruit for markets in Flat Rock and Hendersonville. The CRAFT group gathered on the LeBude's front porch, overlooking the young heirloom apple orchard and vegetable field, to hear Mollie talk about everything from buying her first piece of equipment to keeping a notebook by the bedside to write down daily tasks and techniques on the farm. "It really helps to have that record to go back to in future years, so you can continue things that worked, and also learn from your mistakes." Mollie is transitioning from working full time off the farm to being a full time farmer. "It was really hard at first, when I was working a five day week, and then coming home to work some more on the farm. I had a hard time keeping up" she said. After two seasons, Mollie is able to spend more time working the land, and hopes to some day add more



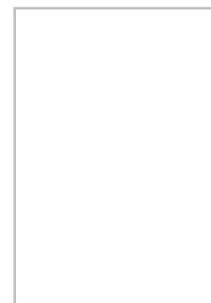
Mollie LeBude (right) with her intern, Mary, talked about starting a farm from scratch

In This Issue

[Meet CRAFT: Forest Creek Farm & Nursery](#)

[Meet CRAFT: Thatchmore Farm](#)

3rd Annual



The Organic Growers School is proud to announce the 3rd Annual True Nature Country Fair, a celebration of life lived in connection with the Earth. The Fair welcomes farmers, gardeners, homebuilders, craftspeople, social & political activists, conscious consumers and alternative healthcare practitioners to the Big Ivy Community Center September 26 & 27, 2009 to gather and enjoy live music, local and organic food, a

acreage to vegetable production, and hopefully get goats. Another goal at Forest Creek Farm and Nursery is to eventually become Certified Organic. "A lot of people don't want to be certified, and it's just a matter of personal preference," Mollie told us, "We are interested in having that credibility, and possibly being able to enter wholesale markets someday where having the organic label will be helpful."

You can find Forest Creek Farm and Nursery on the web at fcfn.blogspot.com or visit them at the tailgate market. They sell Monday afternoons from June - September at the Hendersonville Food Co-op, and also on Thursday afternoons from May - October in Flat Rock, behind Rainbow Row. If you would like to contact Mollie directly, [click here](#).

Meet CRAFT: Thatchmore Farm

Our CRAFT farm our for May took place at Thatchmore Farm in Leicester, NC. Over 30 farmers and interns came out to the farm to learn about season extension. Tom and his wife Karen have been farming organically since the 80's, and started selling "when Earth Fare, then called 'Dinner for the Earth' had a produce section only half this size," Elmore said as he gestured to his small front porch. Since then, as awareness of organic and local food has risen, Thatchmore farm relies on retail sales for 90+% of its revenue. Tom led the group around the farm, discussing his famous greenhouse operation, greenhouse construction methods, and even a new technique he is borrowing from the chinese to cut down on propane costs in his greenhouse and reduce his farm's carbon footprint. The technique involves 16 panels he and his workers constructed out of old landscape fabric and insulation, which they pull over the greenhouse in the late afternoon to trap the day's heat inside for the night. Not only does this keep a more constant temperature inside the house, but also "reduces condensation that forms on the ceiling and then drips down onto the plants, leading to one of the most troublesome diseases on our farm--tomato leaf mold".



kids program, trade show, raffle, and much more! The Fair is a wonderful event for the whole family, and we are proud of our new location, just 20 minutes north of Asheville, NC, in the wonderful rural community of Barnardsville. For more information, [visit our website](#). If you would like to sponsor, exhibit, or volunteer, please contact Fair Program Manager Karen Vizzina at earthstarnc@earthlink.net or call 828.342.1849

[True Nature logo](#)

What to Look for at Tailgate Market



You may not have seen **Bordeaux Spinach** before, with its arrow-shaped leaves and bright red stems, but the flavor will not be new to your palette. "This tastes like good, old-time garden spinach" one customer said at the West Asheville Tailgate Market.

Bordeaux was bred specifically for use as a fresh, young salad green. In addition to it's bright looks, it has a sweet, bright flavor. In the field, Bordeaux is fast growing, maturing in as little as 4 weeks for baby leaves, and less than 14 for mature spinach. It is also quick to bolt, however, so harvest early and often. Spinach in general is considered a

superfood--rich in antioxidants and vitamins. Look for Bordeaux at your local tailgate market, or, [get some seed](#) to grow for yourself.

Help OGS in our Community

OGS has some great opportunities to volunteer this summer. [Visit our website](#) for more details on how you can get involved in the Family Farm Tour, the True Nature Country Fair, and other important food & community initiatives.

This Month's Picks

Each month, we hope to feature a seasonal recipe and a website. Hope you like these as much as we do! [Send your seasonal recipe or website recommendations to us anytime.](#)

Lettuce Soup



It's
spring
and
we're

delighted to have lettuce for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. But when you can't face one more salad--try taking some of those lettuces and turning them into a soup. Yes, a soup.

Here is a simple but sumptuous recipe that will make the most of your spring market finds. Thanks to Blue Ridge Food Ventures for this month's recipe submission!

Rich Spring Lettuce Soup with Herbs

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup sliced onion
- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley leaves, plus more for garnishing
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives, plus more for garnishing
- 2 teaspoons chopped tarragon leaves, plus more for garnishing
- 2 heads Boston lettuce, leaves torn
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or evaporated milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Chive blossoms, for garnishing, optional

Directions

Heat olive oil over medium-low heat in a large saucepan. When hot add the onions and garlic and cook until the onion is translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the parsley, chives, tarragon and lettuce and stir until the lettuce is completely wilted, about 3 minutes. Add the chicken stock and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. When ready to serve, process the soup, in batches, taking care since the soup is hot, then return to a clean saucepan. Stir in the heavy cream or evaporated milk and the salt and pepper and simmer for another 5 minutes, or until heated through. Adjust seasoning, if necessary, and serve immediately, garnished with fresh herbs and chive blossoms, if desired.

Website Touches on All Food Issues

Our favorite website for May is www.Ethicurean.com. Ethicurean is a blog about food, and not just cooking. A collaborative effort of 9+ writers, Ethicurean touches on food news, policy, safety, eating, and humor. The blog shows lots of reader reactions to posts, and you can easily link to the writers' source articles for more reading on particular topics. If you are committed to good food-- meaning not just good-tasting but also local, ethical, and/or sustainable, you'll find this blog a great way to stay informed, and, as Ethicurean's by-line reminds us, "Chew the right thing."

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