20th Annual Organic Growers School Conference

Organic Growers School Spring Conference

March 9-10, 2013

University of North Carolina at Asheville

A Weekend of Workshops for Beginning Gardeners to Advanced Commercial Growers

Featuring over 100 classes on all aspects of sustainable living!

Join farmers, gardeners, chefs, seed-savers, backyard chicken-keepers, homesteaders, permaculturists, herbalists, composters, beekeepers, orchardists, foresters, landscapers, cheesemakers, local food lovers, wild food aficiandos, butchers, bakers, and sauerkraut makers for the largest gathering of its kind in the Southeastern US!

There are classes for everyone, from all levels of experience:

- Thinking about putting in a raised bed in that one full-sun spot in your front yard? Try Anyone Can Garden, Anywhere in Digging In Track.
- Are you a commercial farmer looking to get a big-picture plan to bring it all together? Check out Whole Farm Planning
- Find the right tool for the job and learn to maintain it in Get Serious about Your Tools.
Interested in curbing energy costs accrued by your greenhouse? Come to the Alternative Greenhouse Heating class in the Alternative Energy Track.

- Want to know more about goats? How about bees? Fish? The Livestock track is for you!
- Learn about uncommon covercrops and their unique benefits in Unusual, Workhorse Cover Crops for Gardeners.
- If you have a question, there's a good chance we've got a class that will answer it! Click the link below for a full conference schedule.

Click Here for a Full Schedule
Click Here to Register
Want to Volunteer? Click Here

Farmer's Corner

Ask Tom

Tom –

I have heard talk about a new fruit fly that is a problem for berry growers. What organic practices are available to manage that pest?

-- Perplexed in Licksillet

Dear Perplexed –

It is called the spotted wing drosophila (SWD) and is similar to our traditional fruit flies, which are attracted to overripe fruit. An important difference is that the SWD will consume and is able to lay its eggs in sound and ripe fruit. They are able to do this because of the females’ large, blade-like ovipositor (egg-laying device). Berries can look fine at harvest but may contain larvae (aka maggots) when the customer gets them home...

To read more, click here...

Commercial Farmers: Got a Question for Tom?
email it to enews@organicgrowersschool.org

Gardener's Corner

Ask Ruth

Dear Ruth,

I want to start some of my own transplants this year. Do you have any seed starting tips?

Thanks,
Ella in Marshall, NC

Dear Ella,

This time of year invites dreaming about the magic of seeds sprouting out of the soil. Did you know that the smell of earth actually lifts your spirits? (I am not surprised! Are you?) This month many of us have been gardening from our sofas...courtesy of our favorite seed catalogues, but it sounds like you are ready to get to your hands in the dirt and actually plant. Bravo!

Here are a few seed starting hints that may help your success...

To read more, click here...

Gardeners: Got a Question for Ruth?
email it to enews@organicgrowersschool.org

Thanks to Our Advertisers!

Businesses!

Reach Organic Growers & Consumers!

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!

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.

Contact Jenn Cloke at jenn@organicgrowersschool.org for more information

CRAFT 2013 Membership Drive

This is the Year to Join CRAFT!

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. Membership fees are $20 - $30 per year, and this gives members access to a wealth of summer tours, winter round tables, and our CRAFT Handbook. Get in now, on the ground floor, and be a part of planning the 2013 CRAFT season!

CRAFT is a coordinated effort to bring established farmers, farm apprentices, and students of agriculture together for a comprehensive training program in the art and science of sustainable agriculture, straight from the hearts, mouths, and fields of seasoned local farmers. CRAFT is designed as a program to mentor and teach the next generation of farmers while also building a stronger network for current
farmers here in the Southern Appalachians. We now have two regional chapters based in Western NC, and the Chattanooga area you can join!

Farmers learn best from other farmers, and apprentices learn best from hearing how successful farmers in the region are running their farms. In this way, CRAFT training occurs through a series of on-farm tours led by experienced growers in the region. These tours are held monthly from April – November and are focused on a specific aspect of sustainable farming. In addition to the tours, members are given a comprehensive CRAFT handbook rich with farmer generated, regionally specific information on all aspects of farming rooted in the valuable wisdom of CRAFT farmer members gained from many years of farming in the Southern Appalachians.

In the winter, focus shifts to workshops for 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 can focus on business planning, loans, gaining access to land and capital, etc.

To learn more about CRAFT and sign up for 2013 membership visit the [CRAFT website](http://www.mynewsletterbuilder.com/email/newsletter/1411601817[11/18/16, 12:02:06 PM]).

Calling All Apprentices Looking for Farms & Farms Looking for Apprentices!

**Apprentice Link is Here to Connect You**

Looking for a farm apprenticeship position in the Southern Appalachians? Looking for dependable farm labor? Then Organic Growers School’s Apprentice Link is the place for you. It is a searchable online matching service for commercial growers and aspiring farmers, and best of all, it’s free!

Apprentice Link is designed to connect folks who are serious about learning the sustainable farming trade with farmers who are willing to teach them. In exchange for their labor, apprentices receive intensive training and gain a hands-on understanding of what it takes to farm. Apprentice Link provides the most information about farms and potential apprentices of any online farm labor service. Fill out a profile today and have access to a large, searchable database of farms to work on or apprentices to hire.

Learn more and sign up with a personalized Profile to begin searching for available farm positions or Apprentices [here](http://www.mynewsletterbuilder.com/email/newsletter/1411601817[11/18/16, 12:02:06 PM]).

**Hot Off the Presses**

**OGS Released the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan**

For 20 years, the Organic Growers School has been a leader in the field of organic education for farmers, gardeners, and people striving to live sustainably. OGS has built a broad, diverse, and enthusiastic community of students and teachers sharing cutting-edge information about organic growing in an innovative, grassroots, peer-to-peer model. OGS’s annual Spring Conference has inspired, motivated, and educated thousands of farmers, gardeners, and devotees of sustainable living, providing a forum for sharing practical, accessible, and affordable organic education. In recent years, OGS has expanded our work, providing year-round, in-depth, hands-on education for farmers, helping new and emerging farmers gain skills, experience, information, and support to succeed in farming and helping experienced farmers refine and improve their practices.

2013 marks an exciting turning point for the Organic Growers School. In our 20th year, OGS is committing itself to a new strategic direction that will expand and strengthen our capacity to educate farmers, gardeners,
and organic consumers and to advance organic agriculture and sustainable living in the Southern Appalachian region.

In 2012, for the first time in our organization’s history, the Organic Growers School engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process, collaborating with a broad base of stakeholders -- farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, small business owners, agricultural experts, students and teachers at our annual Spring Conference, and other community members. Over the course of a year, OGS’s Board and staff engaged with these stakeholders and supporters and undertook a process of reflection, visioning, and planning to map a new strategic direction for our organization. This strategic plan represents a clear, focused direction for OGS, significantly expanding the impact and scope of our work.

Building on the success of OGS’s popular and well-established educational programs, our new strategic plan identifies five key strategic directions and details goals and objectives that will help OGS accomplish our mission and vision, transforming agriculture in the Southern Appalachian region and supporting a proliferation of gardening, organic living, and sustainable farming. This strategic direction positions the Organic Growers School to dramatically expand our impact and capacity.

Overview of Strategic Plan for the Organic Growers School:

Strategic directions and goals, 2013-2016:
I. Farmers: Provide programs specifically addressing the needs of farmers, assisting organic farmers to thrive.
   A. Strengthen and focus CRAFT services in WNC
   B. Expand services to experienced farmers, including exploration of equipment sharing, links to capital and land, and increased consumer awareness
   C. Provide services to first year or emerging farmers, including access to land and “path to farming” resources
II. Gardeners: Promote organic gardening by providing support for gardeners.
   A. Continue to expand and improve the Spring Conference, attracting more commercial farmers and including content for non-gardeners that supports their entry into growing food.
   B. Develop a gardener profile to be utilized for economic development and to inform educational needs
   C. Establish an organic component to the Master Gardener curriculum in 2 – 3 WNC counties
   D. Provide more frequent and widespread training opportunities for active gardeners, increasing their knowledge.
   E. Provide more opportunities to educate and inform non-gardeners, and promote gardening as an activity that anyone, anywhere can do.
III. Organic Living: Provide opportunities for consumers to gain information and support for sustainable living.
   A. Increase consumers’ holistic understanding about organic agriculture, emphasizing it’s benefits for economies and environment as well as human health.
   B. Create a speaker’s bureau about organic food and farming that would also be an income stream for farmers
IV. Land Lab – Prepare the groundwork for a Land Lab – a site for study, demonstration and hands-on learning.

Additionally, the OGS Board and Staff have made a commitment within the Strategic Plan to focus on internal infrastructure and organizational capacity over the next 3-5 year period. The OGS Board recognizes that our growth plan will call for an increase in efficiency and capacity, writing goals into the strategic plan that include exploration of a physical office for OGS, increasing fundraising and outreach, and renovating the organization’s website to include dynamic educational content for all of our audiences.

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**Want to Help Support the Organic Growers School**

**Donate Now!**

We at the Organic Growers School rely on the support and participation of you, farmers, gardeners, and organically minded folks! Donate now to help us continue to provide you with all the great programs you enjoy, including CRAFT and Apprentice Link, as well as the Spring Conference!

[Click Here to View Our Donations Page](https://www.mynewsletterbuilder.com/email/newsletter/1411601817)

Another great way to donate to the Organic Growers School is to write a testimony about what OGS has done in your life and send it to us for use in grant writing and other fund raising. We would love to hear from you!