More Fall Gardening & Homesteading Classes to Come!

Conference Encore SERIES 1 has come and gone, but we've got two more series in store! Come learn about micro-farming, raising mushrooms, all the herbs you could be taking to boost your immune system, and SO MUCH MORE!

CLASS SERIES 2, Saturday, NOVEMBER 2 Room 125, Rhodes/Robinson, at UNCA

9am-10:30am Session 1 Urban Permaculture in Action: An Introduction To Backyard Micro-Farming
Zev Friedman, Living Systems Design Bringing fresh practical techniques for veterans and a strong infusion of permaculture thinking for newcomers, Zev has spun a yarn out of photographs, a short video documentary, and real living examples of how our urban culture is growing a post-petroleum economy by seed and deed. You'll leave with tangible next steps for getting involved in your own life, and a sense of purpose and connection to go home with.

11am-12:30pm Session 2 Herbs for Mental Health Janet Kent, Medicine County Herbs This class provides an introduction to herbal approaches for supporting mental health. We will cover specific herbs for conditions
2pm-3:30 pm Session 3 Soil Nutrient Management for the Garden and Small Farm  
**Franklin Sides, The Lord’s Acre**  
Come learn to preserve and cycle nutrients on the farm and in the garden, gain an understanding of nutrient forms, and learn about proper quantity, placement, and timing. Learn why composting and cover crops are such an important part of the yearly cycle.

4pm-5:30pm Session 4 Introduction to Backyard Fungal Farming  
**Rodney Webb, Salamander Springs Farm**  
Harness the power of decaying plants to produce food in the form of mushrooms! Inoculation methods, harvesting, pest management, storage and drying will be covered, with a primary emphasis on shiitake and oyster mushrooms.

Don't forget to [check out SERIES 3](#)--it's not too early to register for those classes, too!

Click here to [REGISTER ONLINE](#)  
or call 828.668.2127 or email meredith@organicgrowersschool.org to register

### Gardener's Corner

**Ask Ruth**

**Hello Ruth,**

_I live in East TN and will be digging sweet potatoes in my home garden by the first frost which usually comes in the third week in October. The sweet potatoes are in a 500 square foot area. I am new to cover cropping and have experimented with oats, Australian pea and buckwheat. I am trying to decide which cover crop to plant where the potatoes were. It will be too late for the above mentioned. I found info that suggests winter rye but I also learned that it will tie up nitrogen. I also want to be sure that I can get rid of a crop come spring and it won’t be aggressive. Can you help me on this question?_

Thank you and love reading your articles, Nancy Gray

Dear Nancy,

Bravo. Sounds like you will be eating lots of delicious sweet potatoes this fall and winter! Your cover crop choice depends partly on what you want to do with that particular garden spot next spring. First, let’s go over a few cover crop basics.

Bottom line? Never leave your garden soil bare. Why? You want to prevent topsoil loss, soil erosion, and control weeds. You can mulch the area, or plant a cover crop. If you ignore this simple rule, nature will happily assist you in planting the area (with weed seeds). Cover crops

### Organic Living Corner

**Ask Meredith**

This month’s Organic Living article comes from guest writer Jennifer Miyakawa Cloke, the Organic Growers School’s Communications Coordinator and Spring Conference Assistant. Enjoy!

Hi All!

When I think “organic living,” the first thing that comes to my mind is, of course, organic eating. We do this by shopping at tailgate markets, using organic ingredients, and doing our best to grow our own food (or, if you’re like me--living in an apartment with a front yard that gets about enough sun to grow kind of wimpy kale a few months out of the year--you get a CSA!) But there is so much more to organic living than just the food we eat. It’s about what we subject the environment to as well.

Next time you’re in the shower, take a look at the back of your shampoo bottle. I’m guessing that, unless you have your PhD in something like Cryptozoological Medicine, most of those ingredients are unpronounceable. Take a peek under the kitchen sink next. When I first did this inventory of the chemicals in my house, I started to get pretty nervous for everyone living downstream of me. Moreover, I started to wonder what all these mystery chemicals were doing to me, my family, and my pets. While it’s possible that all those products are okay to touch and breathe, I never managed to finish my graduate degree in Cryptozoology, so I just don’t know for sure.

Enter my obsession with apple cider vinegar.
can reserve and build nutrients over the winter, provide weed control, improve soil structure, break up compacted soil, and draw up nutrients from deep in the soil. They act as a green manure if turned into the soil or they can be utilized as a living or dead mulch.

Read more at Our Blog

Gardeners: Got a question for Ruth? Email it to us at

enews@organicgrowersschool.org

Organic Thinkers: Got a question for Meredith? Email it to us at

enews@organicgrowersschool.org

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Farmer's Corner

Ask Tom

This month we offer several products and ideas that may be useful on the farm and elsewhere. If readers have others that we should spread around, please let us know.

At our last CRAFT tour of the year Ben and Cedar at Goldfinch Gardens in Celo introduced us to a couple of tools that may be useful to others. One is the Hoss precision seeder from Hoss Tools. They found it very workable and perhaps a less expensive alternative to other brands at
Flea beetles drive many of us crazy. Goldfinch Gardens uses Proteknet available here combined with an azadirachtin molting disruption spray prior to installing it. It reminds me of mosquito netting and comes in a variety of mesh sizes depending on how big your problem critter is. It is fairly expensive at about a dollar per foot for a two meter width. The maker is in Quebec so ask for a bilingual salesperson when you call.

Bill Hagemann who works on our crew and manages the farm at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center brought in a Theracane last week for us to try. See it at www.theracane.com. It seems great at reaching pressure points that you cannot quite reach after loading a few too many cases of produce. It looks very promising and possibly an idea for the farmer on your holiday gift list. If you are puzzled, check their site for a video demonstration.

$160. This company also offers wheel hoes but the seeder may fit one you already own. Ben adapted their Glasser wheel hoe to accommodate the Hoss.

Farmers: Got a question for Tom? Email it to us at enews@organicgrowersschool.org

SAVE the DATE!

The Organic Growers School is pleased to announce the dates of the 2014 Spring Conference!

Join us Saturday & Sunday, March 8-9, 2014 with pre-conference workshops on Friday the 7th!

Stay tuned for more information, and we can't wait to see you!

Questions? Thoughts? Comments?

We want to hear from you!
Email them to us at jenn@organicgrowersschool.org