



SPRING CONFERENCE

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Organic Growers School Hosts the 25th Annual Spring Conference, March 9–11, 2018

The 25th Annual Spring Conference—for farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, and sustainability seekers—is hosted by Organic Growers School (OGS), a local non-profit organization. The conference takes place Friday–Sunday, March 9–11, 2018, at the University of North Carolina in Asheville and various locations in Western NC.

The Spring Conference offers practical, region-specific workshops on farming, gardening, permaculture, urban growing, and rural living and includes a trade show, a seed exchange, special guest speakers, and a Saturday evening social.

More than 150 classes—both 90-minute sessions and half-day workshops—are offered on Saturday and Sunday in 17 learning tracks:

1. Community Food
2. Cooking
3. Earth Skills
4. Farmers: Beginning
5. Farmers: Experienced
6. Gardening
7. Herbs

8. Homesteading
9. Livestock
10. Mushrooms
11. Permaculture
12. Pollinators
13. Poultry
14. Soils
15. Sustainable Forestry
16. Sustainable Living
17. Thinking Big

This one-of-a-kind event brings people of all walks of life together for a weekend of learning, inspiration, and networking and features a host of local and regional experts. The mission of the Spring Conference is to provide down-to-earth advice on growing and sustainable living while remaining affordable and accessible. The Spring Conference is the largest locally run sustainability conference in the Southeast and is proudly focused on regionally appropriate growing methods.

Three full-day, on-farm, pre-conference workshops with special guest instructors are available on Friday, March 9, 2018 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They are:

1. *Food for All: Growing our Community as We Grow Our Food* with special guest Karen Washington at The Sherrill Center at UNC Asheville.
2. *Human Health = Soil Health* with special guest Dan Kittredge at Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River, NC.
3. *The Independent Farmstead: Smart, Savvy, Scalable Land Stewardship* with special guests Beth and Shawn Dougherty at Living Web Farms in Mills River, NC.

Prices for the pre-conference workshops are \$55 with conference registration (Saturday, Sunday, or both) and \$70 without.

Prices for weekend registration are as follows:

- Saturday Only
 - \$59 on or before January 31
 - \$74 on or after February 1
- Sunday Only
 - \$49 on or before January 31
 - \$64 on or after February 1
- Saturday and Sunday
 - \$99 on or before January 31
 - \$129 on or after February 1

The Spring Conference features a trade show on Saturday and Sunday that showcases a wide array of exhibitors and products from local farms, gardening suppliers, and cottage industries that specialize in organic products and resources. Also featured on Saturday and Sunday is the annual Seed and Plant Exchange booth which offers the opportunity to preserve genetic diversity and protect regionally adapted varieties. Attendees may bring excess seeds and small plants to share, barter, or trade.

For 25 years, the Spring Conference has allowed OGS to reinforce Western NC's role as a regional leader in sustainable food and farming. Attendees come from 18 states and Canada and have described the event as the kick-start to the growing season. The event has grown exponentially—from a small gathering of 100 growing enthusiasts in 1993 to a regionally recognized conference drawing over 2,500 attendees, exhibitors and speakers.

“The 25th Anniversary of the OGS Spring Conference is really a celebration of our regional wisdom and commitment to land stewardship, sustainable food systems, and local farming,” says OGS Executive Director, Lee Warren. “The conference is a gathering place, a source of inspiration, and a reminder of the richness of our community,”

Sponsors and supporters of the 25th Annual OGS Spring Conference are Carolina Farm Credit, French Broad Food Co-op, Mountain Rose Herbs, Living Web Farms, Earth Tools, Chelsea Green Publishing, Biltmore, Red Moon Herbs, Premier 1 Supplies, SARE, Reems Creek Nursery, UNC Asheville, Fedco Seeds, Yetter Farm Equipment, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, Fifth Season Gardening Co., Bountiful Cities, Hi-Wire Brewing, Sierra Nevada Brewing, Self-Help Credit Union, Signarama, NC State University, New Society Publishers, Thyme in the Garden, Organic Valley, Capital at Play, WNC Woman, Laurel of Asheville, Sow True Seeds, Mountain Xpress, Hendersonville Community Co-op, IWANNA, Edible Asheville, Mother Earth News Fair, Asheville, WNCW, School of Integrated Living, OMRI, Dig Local, Organicfest, iheartmedia, The Collider, and WCQS.

The Spring Conference is organized annually by the Organic Growers School, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to inspire, educate, and support people to farm, garden, and live organically. OGS is the premier provider of practical organic education in the Southern Appalachians, building a vibrant food and farming community by boosting the success of organic home growers and farmers in our region.

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