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Spring fever

Organic Growers School conference and other events usher in the growing season

For Western North Carolina farmers and gardeners, spring is heralded by more than just soil prep and seed starts. Now in its 27th year, the Organic Growers School Spring Conference welcomes growers and sustainability-minded folks of all types for a weekend of region-specific educational offerings, a trade show, seed exchange, guest speakers and opportunities for socializing and networking.

This year's conference takes place Friday-Sunday, March 6-8, at Mars Hill University. More than 150 classes and half-day workshops are scheduled in 17 learning tracks ranging from permaculture to cooking to livestock on Saturday and Sunday, with additional events scheduled on Friday at locations in Buncombe and Henderson counties. Visit organicgrowersschool.org for more information.

Notable among the Friday offerings is *Farming While Black: African Diasporic Wisdom for Farming and Food Justice*, an evening lecture with farmer, author and food sovereignty activist **Leah Penniman**. In 2011, Penniman co-founded Soul Fire Farm in Petersburg, N.Y., a community farm led by people of color with the mission to end racism and injustice in the food system.

"[Penniman] is actively a part of a movement that's reviving younger peo-

ple of color, providing trainings and shifting policies," explains OGS board member **Tarinii Shanai**, who is in her third year teaching and organizing the garden track for the spring conference. "As we work to heal inequality and insecurities in our food system as a whole, it seemed like a perfect time to ask her to come and speak for OGS."

OGS program coordinator **Sera Deva** agrees with Shanai that although the spring conference tries to feature mainly local experts as presenters, Penniman was an obvious choice for a headliner. "Leah just published her book, *Farming While Black*, last year, which has made a big splash in the sustainable agriculture community," she says. "This, married with OGS' commitment to social justice and wanting to bring that more as we sink deeper into our organizational learning, made her an obvious pick."

Hendersonville Farmers Market comes to Seventh Avenue

Starting Saturday, May 9, shoppers craving farm-fresh goods will have another option in Hendersonville. The new Hendersonville Farmers Market will set up shop at the Historic



SHIFTING GROUND: Author, farmer and activist Leah Penniman will present an evening lecture, *Farming While Black: African Diasporic Wisdom for Farming and Food Justice*, as part of this year's Organic Growers School Spring Conference. Penniman co-founded Soul Fire Farm in New York, a community farm led by people of color with the mission to end racism and injustice in the food system. Photo courtesy of Organic Growers School

Train Depot on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Maple Street from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. every Saturday through Oct. 31, with holiday markets planned for Nov. 21 and Dec. 5.

The market is a project of Hendersonville's city government under the auspices of its Downtown Economic Development Department. "We are excited for this opportunity to support local products that are homegrown or handmade and see the market as a catalyst for local business health and customer growth in downtown overall," said **Lew Holloway**, the city's director of downtown economic development, in a press release announcing the market.

Vendor applications are currently open, with priority given to Henderson County residents; sponsor and volunteer opportunities are also available. More information, vendor guidelines and sign up forms are available at avl.mx/6z4.

Stock up

- The French Broad Food Co-op hosts the Plants for Everyone Sale on Friday, March 6, 12-6 p.m. More than 150 varieties of bare-root edible and ornamental trees and plants will be available; prices range from \$1.50 to \$10 per plant or tree. For details, visit avl.mx/6yx.

ECO

AWE AND THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHAOS

- WE (3/11), 6-7:30pm - Photographer Dr. Roger C. Helm communicates the challenge of climate change in a six week series. Admission by donation. Held at Jubilee Community Church, 46 Wall St.

PARADISE LOST: HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITIES

- WE (3/11), 5:30-7:30pm - *Paradise Lost: How Climate Change is Impacting our Communities* talk by

Tony Dunn. Free. Held at Hendersonville Public Library, 301 N. Washington St., Hendersonville

RIVERLINK RIVERFRONT BUS TOUR

- 1st THURSDAYS, 10am-1pm - Proceeds from the Riverfront bus tour benefit RiverLink. Registration: avl.mx/68a. \$45.

SIERRA CLUB: ASHEVILLE CITY BUDGET, FUNDING CLIMATE CHANGE PRIORITIES

- TH (3/5), 7-9pm - The Sierra Club of Western North Carolina (WENOCA) presents an update

on Asheville's budget priorities related to transit, urban forestry and renewable energy by Steve Hendricks. Free to attend. Held at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville, 1 Edwin Place

SPRING SMIE TRAINING

- SA (3/7), 9am-4pm - MountainTrue's SMIE (Stream Monitoring Information Exchange), a volunteer based water quality monitoring program training. Free to attend. Held at Blue Ridge Community College by the Lake, 180 West Campus Drive, Flat Rock

THE COLLIDER'S OPEN HOUSE

- WE (3/11), 4:30pm - The Collider's Open House includes demonstrations of climate technologies, tools and services, plus mingling with Collider members and the community. Registration: avl.mx/6yw. Free. Held at The Collider, 1 Haywood St., Suite 401

FARM & GARDEN

27TH ANNUAL ORGANIC GROWERS SCHOOL SPRING CONFERENCE (PD.)

March 6-8, 2020 at Mars Hill University, NC.

Pre-conference workshops & Leah Penniman lecture in Buncombe County. 150+ practical, affordable, regionally-appropriate workshops on organic growing, homesteading, farming, permaculture. Organicgrowersschool.org. (828) 214-7833.

PLANT WALK (PD.)

Mary Plantwalker will be leading a plant walk. Come connect with our plant allies every 1st Thursday of the month! Registration required: info@herbmountainfarm.com. \$10-20 sliding scale. Weaverville at

Herb Mountain Farm off Maney Branch. Email for directions. 4:00-5:30pm.

4-H SPRING PLANT SALE

- Until (3/13) - Proceeds from the Spring Plant Sale benefit 4-H. To pre-order plants visit: avl.mx/6yu. \$1-\$16. Held at NC Cooperative Extension Center, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville

ANNUAL SEEDLING SALE

- TH (3/5) & FR (3/6), 8am-6pm - Annual plant and seedling sale. Free to attend. Held at

Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District, 49 Mount Carmel Road

ASHEVILLE CSA FAIR

- TH (3/12), 3-6pm - Talk with farmers at the CSA Fair and learn about the products they offer, their growing practices, any opportunities to get involved on the farm and when and where they deliver locally. Free to attend. Held at New Belgium Brewery, 21 Craven St.

COMMUNITY GARDEN MEETING

- TH (3/5), 6pm - Leicester Library Community Garden is starting up. Learn how to get involved. Free. Held at Leicester Library, 1561 Alexander Road, Leicester

FARMING WHILE BLACK

- FR (3/6), 5:30-8:30pm - *Farming While Black: African Diasporic Wisdom for Farming and Food Justice*. Sliding scale \$5-\$25. Held at Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center, 285 Livingstone St.