IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Soup-A-Bowl Showcases Our Community

The wonderful support, energy and involvement of our community were showcased at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project's 5th annual Soup-A-Bowl in early September. Volunteers, donors, sponsors and attendees helped raise more than $7,000 to allow us to continue to donate and subsidize healthy food for our low-income neighbors and
provide positive fresh food learning experiences for urban youth.

Three hundred people gathered at the Mid-Hudson Childrens' Museum pavilion to enjoy delicious soup, fresh bread, dessert and iced tea provided by Adam's Fairacre Farms, All Shook Up!, Cake and Coffee Café, Coppola's, Cosimo's, Culinary Institute of America, Farm to Table Bistro, Milanese Italian Restaurant, Mother Earth's, Nature's Pantry, Panera Bread, River Station, Shadows on the Hudson, Soul Dog, The Crafted Kup, The Derby, The Ground Hog Coffee House and Motorcycle Company, The Spruce Hill Inn, Twisted Soul and Vassar College Dining Services.

Guests chose pottery bowls to take home and participated in a raffle and silent auction while enjoying live music performed by the Roundabout Ramblers.
We greatly appreciate the many creative and generous people shared their time and talents by playing music or donating pottery, food, raffle and auction items.

We are very grateful to the volunteers who planned the event and for the generous financial and in-kind support of our sponsors, including Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union, Main Printing, Central Hudson Gas & Electric and Rhinebeck Bank.

Summer in Review
The harsh heat of the summer sun becomes a warm autumn glow, my role as the Education Apprentice at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project winds down for the season. Although there’s still much to do – many farm visits and seed saving tasks left! – I’ve been processing what I’ve learned over the past several months. Overall I have learned the joys and responsibilities of being a youth educator, becoming a better gardener, the importance of saving seeds and how to do it, management and decision-making and not least, the art and craft of farming.

- First and foremost, I’ve come to a fuller realization of my responsibility as a youth educator and mentor. The more time I spend with youth, the more I see the importance of not only filling the educator role, but that the role comes with an important responsibility. This includes ensuring that the youth remember the farm positively and perhaps apply the lessons they learn to their lives one day. To do this well, I’ve learned that some necessary characteristics include commitment (to offer stability), excitement, and genuine interest in youth’s lives and well-being. It has been my aim to convey these things while leading groups as they experienced the beauty of nature and increased their understanding about food and science.

- Helping to manage two gardens and one community garden plot for an entire season – the Seed Garden at the PFP, the school garden at the Poughkeepsie High School, and a youth plot at the Fallkill Partnership Garden – helped me to learn in two separate categories:
  - Becoming a better gardener: I acquired a more intimate knowledge on plants grown in the Hudson Valley, including their life cycles and how to address their needs. I also improved my resourcefulness, by using only tools available to me. Problem solve. Problem solve. Problem solve.
  - Management also made me a better decision maker, helped me to take more leadership initiative, and to develop confidence as a gardener.

- Networking with others in Poughkeepsie who are passionate about gardening showed me that momentum can be gained toward reaching goals simply by developing relationships with other members of the community who have similar passions.

- Seed saving
• How: I joined the ancient practice of saving seeds – growing the plants, harvesting, fermenting and/or drying the seeds, tracking their sources and varieties, and finally packaging them for distribution.
• Why: The reason for saving seeds goes beyond having enough plants to grow for next year – Since the early 1900s we’ve lost about 90 percent of the variety in our food seeds. Saving seeds helps to bring back and maintain some plant variety; it empowers one to intimately know the source of one’s food supply; it continues a heritage; helps plant varieties to better adapt and gain resilience to grow well in a particular region.
• CRAFT visits – Throughout the season the other apprentices and I visited farms in the Hudson Valley. We learned how they run their operations, saw different aspects of farming, and got an overall sense of other farms that produce in this region.

While I’ve written a lot, this is only a small glimpse of what I have learned through one small role here at the PFP. I would need at least a few more pages to delve into thoughts on topics such as food justice and sustainability. But the lessons continue to be learned, so there will always be more pages to fill.

**Seventeen Seasons and Still Guessing**

I don’t mean to count this season as over yet (we’re still hoping for 5 more weeks of distribution), but its passing will mark the end of my 17th season working on vegetable farms in the northeast, and my 10th at the PFP. Thankfully for my sanity, I have already stopped thinking that we are going to get to the point where everything works out perfectly all the time, but I guess I am still kind of hoping to understand better why things don’t work out as well as we’d hoped, or even why they do, sometimes, work out better than expected.

I have to mark as a key success this year our spring crop of broccoli. We had come to think of broccoli as a “stinker”. It’s something we really want to grow because we like it, CSA members like it, it sells well at the farmers market and even our kids will eat it. On the other hand, it has been pretty labor intensive to plant and harvest; when harvest coincides with wet weather it has often gotten “head rot” (thankfully humans don’t get plant diseases!); and we have not been impressed with the yields we have been able to achieve.

This spring, the broccoli crop was, mostly, in a whole different league from what we had achieved in the past, as we had a number of abundant beds. And even some of the less abundant beds were affected by woodchucks, not poor growth or disease. (One school of thought holds that unhealthy plants are particularly “attractive” to insects and diseases, but that only healthy plants are attractive to mammals like deer, woodchucks and us, so woodchuck damage is, after a fashion, a sign of success.)

I feel like we have made slow but steady progress on the head-rot issue as we have, over the years, honed in on varieties that are less susceptible; recognized the importance of protecting the plants from flea beetles (which vector one of the diseases
associated with head-rot); and tweaked the soil fertility so the plants are healthier and less susceptible (potassium, boron and calcium all seem to be helpful).

This year it all of a sudden became less onerous to transplant bed after bed of broccoli, because we bought a tractor drawn transplanter that speeds the process up significantly, but what accounts for the generally better yields? This is more than an idle question, since we really, really would like to be able to replicate the results. Here, unfortunately, we have probably changed too many things all at once to tell for sure whether one or all of the changes was responsible: We put the plants in with a transplanter, instead of by hand; we are using a new style of plant tray in the greenhouse which is supposed to produce a healthier transplant; although our soil is abundant in phosphorus, it isn’t very available in the cool soils of spring, so we added a little to our fertility blend. Good luck sorting those factors out, short of trying some double-blind replicated trials over a couple of years. Even if we did that, the availability of broccoli varieties changes over a couple of years, so we’d have to start again.

Fast forward to the fall broccoli crop: we have treated the fall broccoli pretty much the same way as in the spring. The plants do look good, maybe not as good as the spring, but now they are taking much longer to start producing heads than we anticipated. And despite planting several different rounds to spread out the harvest, we have some heads coming out of the very last planting just as we are starting to harvest the very first planting. We also have cauliflower and cabbages that are taking longer to reach maturity than we anticipated. We have no idea why. Seventeen years and still guessing.

Yours in the field,

Asher

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

CSA Notes

Wondering when we do CSA sign ups for next year? Not quite yet, but soon! In mid-October, we will make early bird membership and shareholder forms available to current shareholders who want to sign up for 2013 and receive an extra, pre-Thanksgiving pick up (which is scheduled for Saturday, November 17). Others interested in joining the CSA for 2013 should contact Donna at membership@farmproject.org to be added to the waiting list. We will invite people on the waiting list to join starting in January as space allows.

For those who still haven’t signed up for their working share hours, there isn’t very much time left! The shareholder hours sign up book is self-serve and available at CSA distributions. Any un-worked hours will be billed at $10/hour in December. Thank you
everyone who has helped out on the farm this season!

City Seeds Interns Compete in CIA’s 2nd School Lunch Challenge

The picture above shows City Seeds intern Claneice Outten and a School Lunch Challenge team-member preparing the winning meal.

City Seeds Interns Compete in CIA’s 2nd School Lunch Challenge

By Jamie Levato, Education Manager

After hearing about the great fun the City Seeds interns had at last year’s School Lunch Challenge, the students were eager to take part in the event during the Culinary Institute of America’s Sustainability Day on September 23rd. Five City Seeds interns from Poughkeepsie High School were placed on teams with CIA students to compete to create tasty nutritious school lunches that adhere to the national guidelines. Two interns from Poughkeepsie Middle School served on a panel of judges that included Tim Cipriano (director of New Haven school food service program), Ann Cooper (leader of the school lunch revolution), and Janet Poppendieck (author of Free for All: Fixing School Food in America). The teams of culinary students and high school students worked in the kitchen from 10:00am to 2:00pm preparing and cooking delicious well-balanced meals including a roasted beef and vegetable wrap with melon-grape gelatin and a pork-stuffed baked apple with kale and bulgur salad. Although each meal was both beautifully presented and delectable, only one team could win. The prize went to Claneice’s team, Las Chicas Locas for their chicken and cheese quesadilla with zesty corn and black bean salsa.

SAVE THE DATE

PFP End of Season Potluck

In the fall of each year, we like to celebrate the season together with a potluck, usually indoors at Vassar College. We don’t have the details yet, other than that it will be in late October or early November, but keep an eye out in the distribution room and on the
FEATURED VEGETABLE AND RECIPES

Winter Squash

Winter squash--from butternut to acorn--provides a wide and balanced array of nutrients and minerals, with particularly high concentrations of antioxidants, dietary fiber, manganese, and vitamins A, C, and B6. Though the squash is composed mainly of carbohydrates, this high starch content provides key health benefits. The complex polysaccharides in squash have been shown increasingly to promote antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, as well as anti-diabetic and insulin-regulating effects. Winter squash is one vegetable that health experts strongly recommend buying organic, since squash are especially vulnerable to absorbing soil contaminants. The squash's hard skin makes it an excellent storage vegetable (squash can last from 1 week-6 months), and thus a popular winter staple.

Not only is the squash itself delicious and nutritious, but the seeds are as well! Simply toss squash seeds with a little olive oil, salt and pepper and roast them in an oven at 275 F for 15 minutes, or until the seeds begin to pop.
**Summary**

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**Prep time** 45 minutes

**Description**
A little sweetness on the side

**Ingredients**
- 2 winter squash (I use acorn squash)
- 4 T butter
- 4 T brown sugar
- 2 T cinnamon

**Instructions**
Preparation: Preheat oven to 375. Cut squash in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Fill each squash half with 1 T butter, 1 T sugar, and ½ T cinnamon and roast for 30-45 minutes or until squash is tedner. Add more butter if desired.

**Winter Squash Rolls**

**Summary**

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**Prep time** 2 1/2 hours

**Description**
From Allrecipes.com: People can't believe it when I tell them that they're made from winter squash. These delicious rolls taste best fresh out of the oven.
Ingredients

1 1/2 c winter squash (cubed)
1 c milk (scalded)
2 active dry yeast (.25 oz packages)
1/2 c warm water (110 degrees F/45 degrees C)
6 c all-purpose flour
1/2 c sugar
2 t salt
1/2 c shortning

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). In a small saucepan, cover squash cubes with water. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, cool and mash.

2. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. In a large bowl, combine 5 cups flour, sugar and salt. Stir in the yeast mixture, shortening, squash and milk. Mix well. Stir in the remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, beating well after each addition. When the dough has pulled together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and supple, about 8 minutes. Lightly oil a large bowl, place the dough in the bowl and turn to coat with oil. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.

3. Divide the dough into twelve equal pieces and form into rounds. Place the rounds in a lightly greased 13x9 inch baking pan. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in volume, about 30 minutes.

4. Bake at 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden brown.

MISCELLANEOUS

Corn Stalks Anyone?
We'll have PFP popcorn stalks for sale at CSA distribution in the next couple weeks for those who are interested in fall decorations. $1/stalk

2012 PFP Herbal Products Almost Here!
The meditation garden team has been tending the herb garden and processing herbs all season and we are now almost finished making our 2012 batches of herbal tea, lip balm, salve, and tinctures. Click here or below to see a list of products that will become available at CSA distributions in the next few weeks. We will have valerian tincture back again by the last week of distribution after a couple years of crop failure. We still have some 2011 salves left and are selling those at half price ($3/1 oz.) We can do mail order for orders of $20 or more.

Attachment | Size
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PFP Herbal Product List, fall 2012.pdf | 439.57 KB

**Last Month of the Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market!**

October is the last month of the Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market. Come down to Pulaski Park on Washington Street from 2 - 6 pm every Friday, rain or shine, until October 26 to enjoy the fall harvest season!

The Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market exists to provide fresh, healthy, local each week to the City of Poughkeepsie. The market is still distributing $2 Fresh Connect checks with every $5 purchase made by customers using their EBT cards to access SNAP (formerly called food stamps) benefits. This program of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, now in its second year, provided the local market in downtown Poughkeepsie with 500 checks to distribute in 2012. In addition to SNAP/EBT and Fresh Connect checks, the market accepts Farmers’ Market Nutrition Coupons (FMNP) for seniors and WIC recipients, debit cards and cash. Regular customer Valerie Taylor sums up her thoughts on what the market means for Poughkeepsie: “I think [the market is] truly a wonderful thing. People in a lot of [Poughkeepsie’s] neighborhoods don't get a chance to get truly good food – the market gives us a chance. [The market is] helping us to...get honest, good, earth food. A lot of our children have never even
tasted a real, true, organic tomato. I've turned a lot of my friends onto [the food], and they're like, wow, I didn't know a tomato could taste that good."

The market has a free weekly e-newsletter, sent to subscribers, that features a seasonal recipe highlighting a vegetable or fruit available at the market along with a reminder of market day. Subscription information is available at farmproject.org/market.

The Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market's mission is threefold: to provide locally-produced, fresh and nutritious foods to the community; to afford local growers the opportunity to sell their agricultural products directly to their customers; and foster positive interactions to support community development and revitalization efforts. The market is made possible through the generous support of the City of Poughkeepsie, as co-sponsor, and other local businesses. Information on sponsorship opportunities is available at farmproject.org/sponsorship.