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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Third Annual A Seat at the Table
The third annual A Seat at the Table was a big success and raised money in support of the programs on the Poughkeepsie Farm Project! We are grateful to our volunteers, Board members, staff, apprentices and interns, with special thanks to the A Seat at the Table committee led by Sarah Lee, to our printing sponsor Prime Print Shop, to our guests and event sponsors who joined us in supporting and celebrating food, farm and community.

Harvesters:
Cultivator: Ackerman Quinn Financial Services

Planters: Sam and Gail Simon, Stamford Scientific

Tillers: Bella Luci Salon, DRA Imaging, Elizabeth Boutique, Prime Print Shop

The weather was perfect for the 3rd annual A Seat at the Table local food feast held in the PFP's farm fields. Photo credit: Dick Crenson
Event Chair Sarah Lee and volunteers Marie Murphy and Carolyn Bennett bring fresh flowers cut from the fields to the table. Photo credit: Dick Crenson

Guest Cheryl Johnson helps with last minute placement of flower arrangements. Photo credit: Dick Crenson
The table is set against the backdrop of the fields. Photo credit: Dick Crenson

Farm Manager Wendy Burkhart-Spiegel gives guests a tour of the farm. Photo credit: Dick Crenson
The Botticelli Chamber Players create the atmosphere while guests enjoy appetizers.
Photo credit: Valerie Kind
Late Blight and Tomatoes

Those of you who didn’t read the email about the sad tomato news this season have probably by now noticed the lack of tomatoes at distribution. To recap: For a variety of reasons, we were surprised by a late-blight outbreak in the tomato hoophouse:

- The weather was not conducive to late blight at the time (hot and dry, not cool, cloudy and wet).
- We don’t engage in “risky behavior” relative to introducing late blight to the farm. We don’t buy in transplants (in the south, late blight is more or less endemic) and we buy certified seed potatoes that are supposed to be free of late blight.
- In 2009 late blight appeared in the tunnel last, not first. Typically disease is associated with wet leaves, and the tunnel keeps rain and dew off of the plants.
- The lesions that we saw in the hoophouse didn’t look like late blight lesions typically do in the field.
- We often get another, lesser, disease in the tunnel, so we are used to tolerating a certain amount of symptoms on the tomato leaves.
- We hadn’t seen any notices of late blight spotted regionally, although subsequently we found out that it had been seen in New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine.

It appears that the late blight spread out of the tunnel and to the field tomatoes just about the time we started having more rainy weather creating perfect conditions for the disease to spread rapidly. Organic chemical controls for late blight only work as protectants (they help keep spores from starting new lesions, they don’t keep existing
lesions from getting bigger or shedding spores). We closed up the hoophouse right away to “cook” the plants and the disease to prevent more spores from spreading and we have been removing the worst affected stretches and varieties in the field. We have been treating the remaining tomatoes with an organically approved copper fungicide (which is supposed to prevent spores from creating new lesions) and Oxidate (a hydrogen-peroxide like substance that is supposed to kill spores), but we are rapidly coming to the conclusion that the disease has the upper hand and that we may have to take out all the tomatoes, especially since we are weeks from harvest for most of them—more time for the disease to continue to get out of control. We are likely to keep the cherry tomatoes, since they are already ripening. We will only use Oxidate on those, since that leaves no residue on the plants or fruit.

We hope this should only minimally affect our potato yields this year. The strain of late blight we have seems to be more virulent on tomatoes than potatoes; we only found a few lesions on the potato plants. Potato leaf hoppers had already nearly ended the growing cycle of most of the potato varieties, so we only had to mow off the growing tops of several rows of potato plants to prevent them from being a continuing source of disease spores. Also, the disease is not systemic. Spores have to land on the potatoes themselves to cause them to rot. Since the potatoes are well covered with soil and the potato vines will have been dead for awhile before we dig the potatoes, very few spores should actually make it to the potatoes that we eat. The only precautions you need to take are ones I hope you would take anyway: Don’t eat rotten potatoes and don’t eat the parts of a potato that have turned green. The late blight pathogen is not directly harmful to humans but it allows other rot organisms to get a foot-hold in the potato and some of them could make you sick. Green color on a potato is an indicator of a mild toxin that potatoes produce when exposed to light. At home we store our potatoes in doubled up paper grocery bags in the pantry or a cupboard. This allows them to breath and blocks enough light to keep them from turning green.

There is no way that we can replace the value of the lost tomato production this season, but having the hoophouse free at this time of year does provide us an opportunity to run a couple of planting trials that we have been interested in for quite some time. In the “old days” one could have summer squash and cucumbers nearly until the first frost in the fall. Recently their season has been cut short by a disease, downy mildew, which more and more often blows in on the wind from places it over-winters, like the southern US or the greenhouse cucumber production of Ontario. Likewise, basil succumbs to its own strain of downy mildew—a disease first detected in Florida in 2007—which has already leveled our sweet basil this year.

We started basil seedlings in the greenhouse as soon as we realized we would be pulling the tomatoes out early, and they’ll be ready to transplant into the hoophouse in another week or so. We decided to direct seed the cucumbers and summer squash in the hoophouse and Andrew did that just yesterday. In another couple of weeks, we will start to think about what cool season crops we might plant in the hoophouse either for harvest late in the fall or for over-wintering. Production wise, none of this will add up to much relative to the tomatoes, but at least we’ll gain some experience trying some new
things in the hoophouse.

Tomatoes in the future: Frankly we’re still just trying to deal with the situation in front of us, but clearly we will be scouting for disease in the tomatoes more rigorously in the future. There are also an increasing number of organic treatments available. These are typically strains of beneficial microorganisms that are supposed to colonize crops roots and leaf-surfaces to help keep disease organisms from getting a foot-hold. They are roughly analogous to pro-biotics that we take to help our digestion and improve our immune system. I could well imagine that we will decide that some of these will become a regular part of our tomato-growing practice. I know I don’t want another summer without tomatoes!

Yours in the field,

Asher

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

From the Crew: Summer Squash and Tomatoes

By Caitlin Zinsley, Farm Intern

Summer Squash: A Love-Hate Relationship

I go back and forth between loving summer squash and despising it. Its spiny leaves that scratch up our skin and the hours upon hours spent harvesting while crooking our backs at just the right angles to make them ache are counteracted by its great flavor and versatility.

The first zucchinis and other summer squashes are harbingers of the bountiful summer harvest to come. They are first in the long line of summer fruits that include melons, eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes. One of the most dependable vegetables, pounds upon pounds are harvested and distributed, gracing the plates of welcoming people. Summer squash gives us moist and delicious zucchini bread and adds heft to grilled vegetable medleys.

Soon, it becomes overshadowed by other veggies and baking a fresh sweet bread in
the heat of August is less appealing. The plants get bigger and scratchier, the squash bugs and cucumber beetles more plentiful. It is a joy to watch those beds of squash get tilled in when they are finally finished producing and to know that you never have to harvest them again. Except that there are more successions. But those plants are smaller, less buggy, less spiny, and make you forget about those old overgrown rows. The old stand by pulls through and you want to make zucchini bread again. Summer squash is even the go-to veggie that was planted in the hoop house when the tomatoes had to be pulled out. Summer squash, you are dependable and delicious, but sometimes I just wish you were a tomato.

**Tomatoes**

By Andrew Pezzullo, Farm Intern

The first day I showed up to the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, I spent my whole afternoon in the hoop house trellising tomatoes. At that time in late May, the vigorous green plants were already taking over any open foot paths or extra space in the hoop house. I was stunned by their size, pungent smell, and lush green coloring. I fell in love with those tomatoes soon after our fateful first encounter. I spent weeks irrigating, trellising, suckering, and patiently watching their hard green fruits size up. All the daily chores connected to tomatoes strengthened my emotional commitment to the plants and to their health. Everyone probably knows where this is going... As you know, we lost all of our hoop house tomatoes to a fast and devastating case of late blight, the disease responsible for the Irish potato famine in the mid-nineteenth century and the bane of every tomato gardeners summer existence. The appearance of the disease left me (and the entire farm crew) confused about the cause and utterly devastated by the loss. There is still a small empty place in my heart where a Cherokee purple heirloom tomato should be. I learned a difficult lesson: the reality is that there is sometimes little certainty for farmers in organic agriculture. We do our best, but sometimes the outcome, whether its climate or disease dependent, is out of our hands. Luckily, the rest of the harvest has been bountiful.

**Youth Grow During Summer Farm Visits**
The month of July brought youth from several different summer camps and youth programs to the Poughkeepsie Farm Project for educational farm visits. The majority of the youth came from the City of Poughkeepsie and it was clear that the farm experience was having an influential impact. David, the Education Intern, and I thoroughly enjoyed watching students’ uncertainty about nature transform into wonder as they interacted with the farm and its food bounty. The sessions included cooking workshops with farm-fresh vegetables; smelling and tasting herbs in the Meditation Garden; participating in the work that goes into producing a harvest; and teaching youth about the science behind growing food.

Again, many of the youth arrived to the farm with skepticism about gardening and farming. But throughout each visit, we saw and heard their rising excitement and appreciation. We have some favorite memorable moments. While showing one group the Snapdragon flowers, the youth exclaimed in unison, “oooooOooOooh” at its variety of vibrant colors. One said that we “make the best strawberries I’ve ever tasted!” While smelling fennel, another expressed, “I could sit here and smell this all day.” On the same visit, one student began the farm tour expressing distaste for most vegetables. But, one taste of the sugar snap peas changed that. She loved the peas, and from then on, the student eagerly tasted the plants we offered.

These are only some of the examples of the transformation that occurs when youth visit the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. July also included off-site lessons at one of the local community gardens, the Fall Kill Partnership Gardens (FKPG) on North Hamilton Street. The Poughkeepsie Farm Project’s education staff led garden tours and cooking workshops for youth participating in the REAL Skills program at the Family Partnership Center. The students from the REAL Skills program learned about community gardening and gained cooking skills.

As we worked with these groups, we also brainstormed ideas and reflected on how to best make use of the garden space as an educational tool. It is our goal to develop the youth garden plot at FKPG as an educational space for teachers and community educators. This goal is part of our Growing City Seeds project, which aims to connect residents, youth and youth educators with community gardening, which will lay the necessary foundation for developing another community garden in the City of Poughkeepsie. We will continue to use the FKPG as an educational tool, where educators will teach youth about biodiversity, plant ecology, nutrition, math and other
academic subjects. It is important to have this garden-based educational space in such a central location because not all school and camp groups are able to make it out to the farm.

Those who did have the opportunity to visit the farm, gave us very positive feedback. Some students wished they could spend the entire day at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, or never leave it at all. At the end of one of our sessions, we thanked the group for coming and for their help during a work project. In response, they said, “I think you gave more to us than we gave to you.” Many also expressed hopes to work at the farm in the future. We hope that they do!

**Announcing Fresh Connect Checks at the Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market!**

$1,000 in Coupons Are Available to Food Stamp Customers

With the harvest season in full swing, the Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market will now be 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. The market is held in Pulaski Park on Washington Street from 2 - 6 pm every Friday, rain or shine, until October 26.

The Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market exists to provide fresh, healthy, local each week to the City of Poughkeepsie. 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.

Starting Friday, August 3rd, the Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market welcomes Sweet Central Express to the market, with frozen custard, Italian sorbet, and more!

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.

GET INVOLVED

Soup-A-Bowl Is a Community Effort!
Can you help by:

1. Volunteering to sell Soup-A-Bowl tickets during Saturday (9:30am-12:30pm) and Tuesday (3pm-7pm) distribution.
2. Volunteering to help with setup/takedown/soup/tickets on the day of the event, September 8th.
3. Providing a propane tank, turkey fryer or outdoor propane burner for use at Soup-A-Bowl.
4. Providing extra rectangular (6ft) tables or square card tables for use at Soup-A-Bowl.
5. Providing referrals or contacts for finding extra chairs and tables.
6. Putting up posters or putting out postcards at neighborhood businesses to advertise the event.
7. Donating a product or service (approx. $50 value) for our teacup raffle.

If you are interested in helping out in any way, please contact soupabowl@farmproject.org with how you’d like to help and the best way to contact you.

Last Pottery Glazing Party August 21!
The next and last bowl glazing party will take place on Tuesday, August 21st, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Barrett Clay Works located at 485 Main Street in Poughkeepsie. There are 75 more bowls to be glazed to reach our goal of 300 beautiful bowls. Come lend your artistic talents to the effort!
Call 845-486-4048 or email soupabowl@farmproject.org for more information.

SAVE THE DATE

Soup-A-Bowl

Sunday, October 6, 2013 - 11:00am - 3:30pm

Join the PFP and friends for a celebration of food and art in Poughkeepsie at the Alumnae House at Vassar College. Proceeds benefit the charitable and educational programs of the PFP. Soups, pottery, raffle and silent auction, and live music from the Roundabout Ramblers and lots more...

Purchase online tickets here
New this year: 2 seatings! 11-12:30 pm and 1:30-3 pm.

This event has been sold out the past three years ~ ticket prices increase after September 30th ~

When: Sunday, October 6th with two seatings: 11-12:30 pm and 1:30-3 pm.

Where: Alumnae House at Vassar College: 161 College Ave Poughkeepsie, NY 12603


An event ticket includes a generous soup lunch and a bowl of pottery to take home. There are two kinds of tickets available for purchase.

- Individual Ticket - $25 - good for one pottery bowl and a generous soup lunch
- Child Ticket (to age 12) - $10 - good for soup lunch
- Children 4 and under eat free

GIVING BACK

Your Matching Support Helps Keep the Conversation
Going

We recently sent out a letter about how the PFP’s programs get conversations going that lead to changes in our local food system - for the better. Your support is a critical piece of the equation, helping us cover the expenses of our organization that make programs possible. We are asking for your continued support, with this good news: The PFP’s Board of Directors has made a generous pledge of $6,000 to challenge to you, our supporters, to match their gift, dollar for dollar. Whatever you can give will go twice as far in supporting our work. Please consider giving today! Our community is grateful for – and benefits from – your partnership in helping us build a just and sustainable food system.

FEATURED VEGETABLE AND RECIPES

Basil

In ancient history basil, which derives from the Greek word “basilikohn” for “royal,” was considered a sacred herb because of its strong immune-boosting qualities. Basil is extremely high in essential oils, flavonoids (or plant pigments), anti-oxidants, magnesium, and vitamins K and A among many other trace nutrients and minerals. Some of these molecules are responsible for basil’s anti-bacterial and anti-cancer properties. Basil has now been proven to inhibit the growth of even the most antibiotic resistant strains of bacterium, such as staphylococcus (or “staph”). Furthermore, some substances in basil act on your body in the same way that NSAIDs like aspirin or ibuprofen do in alleviating headaches and promoting blood circulation. Choose basil that is fresh, shiny, and vibrant green without blemishes.
Beet and Fennel Salad

Summary

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Prep time 1 1/2 hours

Description
adapted from Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*

Ingredients
1 lb beets
1 fennel bulb
2 T olive oil
1 T lemon juice
1 T basil (minced)
1 T tarragon (minced (or 1/2 tsp. dried))

Instructions
Preheat the oven to 400. Wash the beets well. Wrap them individually in foil and place them on a baking sheet or roasting pan. Cook, undisturbed for 45 to 90 minutes, until beets are easily pierced (they may cook at different rates). While beets are cooking, trim the fennel bulb and chop it into 1/2 to 1 inch chunks. Remove beets and plunge them into ice water until cool. Then peel beets and cut them into chunks the same size as the fennel. Toss beets, fennel and remaining ingredients together in medium bowl and serve immediately. If you plan to let the salad sit awhile, hold out on the lemon juice until the last minute.

Japanese Eggplants with Basil

Summary

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**Description**
Simple and Exciting!

**Ingredients**
- 2 chili peppers (Sliced)
- 2 medium-to-large japanese eggplants
- 2 T fish sauce or soy sauce
- 2 clv garlic (Minced)
- 1 T sugar
- 1 bn basil
- 1 T vegetable oil

**Instructions**
Slice the eggplants. Heat a pan or wok over medium-high heat. Add the oil, peppers, and garlic. Stir until the garlic begins to brown. Add the eggplant and stir. Add a cup of water, cover the pan, and let simmer for about 5-7 minutes. The eggplant should turn translucent. If the eggplant is still not cooked, add a little more water and recover. Remove the lid and let the excess water evaporate. Add the fish sauce and sugar and stir. Add the basil, stir, and then turn off the heat.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Fall Shares Starting Soon, Summer Shares Wrapping Up**
The last day for PFP CSA summer shares will be August 25 for Saturday shareholders and August 28 for Tuesday shareholders.

The fall shares will start on September 1 for Saturday shareholders and on September 4 for Tuesday shareholders. Distribution coordinators and assistants will be on hand to orient new shareholders to CSA distribution.

As of August 3, we still have a number of fall shares available and are accepting new fall shareholders first come, first serve. For more information and to sign up, please contact Donna at membership@farmproject.org

**PFP in the Media**
The August issue of Chronogram highlights the work of the PFP. The full text of the article is available here.
On Sunday, August 5, 2012, the PFP was mentioned in a Poughkeepsie Journal article entitled "Hudson Valley fields form our 'foodshed' " as an initiative that helps "supply fresh produce to urban 'food deserts,' educate kids and provide jobs." The full text of the article is on our website (see below).

Also on Sunday, the Poughkeepsie Journal printed a letter to the editor under the title "Farm Project thanks those who helped" that thanked all the supporters of A Seat at the Table. The full text of the letter is on our website (see below).

**Hudson Valley fields form our 'foodshed'

By Steve Rosenberg, Scenic Hudson

What's a 'foodshed' and why does it matter

A foodshed is a region or area from which a population draws its food. Most Hudson Valley residents live in or near one of our seven riverfront cities. These places have the Hudson at their doorstep: vibrant, historic neighborhoods, easy access to New York City and creative and enterprising people dedicated to improving their downtowns. Another thing our cities have in common? They're surrounded by a remarkable amount of open space right in their own backyards, including highly productive farmland.

Enter Scenic Hudson’s campaign to Save the Land That Matters Most — conserving the valley’s most important natural, scenic and agricultural lands — and making our cities and villages attractive, healthy places to live and work. The future of our cities and open spaces depends on strengthening their economic relationship. Satisfying the valley’s growing demand for fresh, local food — by securing our region’s foodshed — is one great way to accomplish this.

The tremendous growth of farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants and interest in local food is turning the valley into a veritable "food hive." For more residents, nutritious local food enhances their quality of life. Increasingly, people also understand that healthy communities require healthy food: those with access to it suffer from fewer diet-related illnesses.

Initiatives such as the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, South Pine Street Farm in Kingston and Red Hook's outdoor garden classroom project help supply fresh produce to urban "food deserts," educate kids and provide jobs.

Our region’s farmers will continue to benefit from all this only if our rich, productive soils remain open and available for farming and the valley’s food-delivery system is working well. Almost 20 percent of the valley’s land base is agricultural. These fields and orchards support an $800-million regional agricultural economy that sustains nearly 4,000 farms and thousands of jobs. Groups like the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, Cornell Cooperative Extension and others are doing
outstanding work to ensure farming remains economically viable.

On a parallel track, Scenic Hudson and fellow land trusts are partnering with farm families to conserve critical areas of productive farmland. We purchase conservation easements that compensate farmers now to ensure their land always will remain available for farming. So far, Scenic Hudson has teamed up with 66 farm families to conserve almost 10,000 acres, putting more than $25 million directly into farmers’ hands to invest in their operations. These easements also make farms more affordable for the next generation of farmers. To date, we've focused our efforts in five towns.

As we complete a region-wide "foodshed conservation plan" — with support provided by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation — we'll know just how much farmland needs to be conserved to supply local food to the entire region and New York City (where there's already a $600 million unmet demand for local food). Getting the job done requires support from multiple funding sources: The federal Farm Bill, New York's Environmental Protection Fund, county programs, local funding and private philanthropy. (And wouldn't it be something if New York City contributed financially to conserve the land that provides fresh food to its green markets, groceries and restaurants?)

As we work to revitalize our cities and take steps to conserve farmland the region’s foodshed, we will increasingly be able to match the region's demand for fresh local food with an adequate, reliable supply. And that, in turn, will help keep our cities healthy and prosperous.

Farm Project thanks those who helped

All who gathered at the third annual A Seat at the Table, held in the fields of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, agreed that the five-course meal, prepared by Executive Chef Ed Kowalski of Lola's Cafe and Catering / Crave, was outstanding.

We thank the numerous local purveyors who donated fresh ingredients, including Adams Fairacre Farms, Coach Farms, Feather Ridge Farms, Harney & Sons, Hudson Valley Fresh, Mother Earth's Storehouse, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, Ronnybrook Farm Dairy, Sprout Creek Farm, The Crafted Kup, Wild Hive Farm, Store & Cafe Bakery and Wilklow Orchards. We are grateful for the generous financial and in-kind support of our sponsors, including Arnoff Moving and Storage, Rocking Horse Ranch Resort, Ackerman and Quinn Financial Services, Botticelli Chamber Players, D'Arcangelo & Co., Gail and Sam Simon, Stamford Scientific International, Bella Luci Salon, Culinary Institute of America, DRA Imaging, Elizabeth Boutique, M & O Sanitation, Prime Print Shop, Chronogram, Country Curtains, EmbroidMe and Walkway Over the Hudson.

Guests had an opportunity to reflect on how food reveals our interdependence with the earth and each other and can be a way of working to see our values reflected in the world around us. Funds raised help us provide fresh and healthy food and learning
experiences for our low-income neighbors and local youth. We thank the guests, volunteers, board members and staff and especially the A Seat at the Table committee led by Sarah Lee for supporting and celebrating the connections between food, farm and community.

Susan Grove
Executive Director, Poughkeepsie Farm Project
Poughkeepsie