

Connections

The News Magazine of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023

2023 Annual Meeting	1
Celebrate Farm to School Month	1
Another Amazing Family	
Farm Day for 2023!	3
Grow with CCE Activity Garden	
in Full Bloom	5
4-H Happenings	6
CCE at the Fair	8
4-H Afterschool	11
Master Gardener Vegetable	
Variety Garden Trial	12
A Community of Gardeners for	
the Greater Good: No Age Limits	14
A Busy Summer for the	
Farm to School Program	17
Pumpkin Basics	18
Pumpkin Pancakes	19
Pick Apart a Pickle	20
Program Events	23

2023 Annual Meeting

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego's (CCESO) 2023 Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 17th from 6 to 8 p.m. at the CCESO Extension Center*, 173 South Grand St., Cobleskill. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

The Annual Meeting will begin with the Association's annual business meeting. After, join us for a reception that will feature Hors d'Oeuvres and refreshments from local producers. Attendees can mingle and chat with CCESO's staff, Board members and Program Advisory Committee members, volunteers, and program participants.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about CCESO's innovative educational programs and relevant outreach activities, to meet new staff members, and to win door prizes, too!

RSVP requested (but not required) by registering at our website www.cceschoharie-otsego.org or by calling the Cobleskill office at 518-234-4303 ext. 111.

**For those who choose not to participate in person, there is an option of virtual attendance at the Business Meeting and presentations. Contact us for further information.*

Celebrate Farm to School Month



October is National Farm to School Month, a time to celebrate the connections happening all over the country between children and local food! From taste tests in the cafeteria and nutrition education activities in the classroom, to farm visits and school garden harvest parties, schools, child care and education sites, farms, and communities in all 50 states, Washington, D.C. and U.S. Territories take part in the celebrations.

National Farm to School Network advocated for the creation of National Farm to School Month by Congress in 2010 and now organizes the annual celebration with hundreds of partners across the country.

OUR MISSION

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

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Another Amazing Family Farm Day for 2023!

BY ERICH KEENA

Clear skies, perfect temperatures, and an inviting atmosphere welcomed crowds throughout the day on yet another amazing Family Farm Day (FFD). Guests visited participating farms across Schoharie, Otsego, and Delaware counties, making the most of what was offered. They hopped on tractor rides, shuffled through tours, enjoyed family-friendly farm activities, and mingled with farm animals. They connected with local farmers, learned about agriculture, and sampled and purchased the area's various agricultural products. All while their faces beamed with delight amid the backdrop of rural New York's idyllic scenery.

The feedback received from both farms and visitors so far has been very positive, with farms enjoying a good visitor turnout and the opportunity to share their knowledge with the public. New and returning visitors alike also enjoyed discovering new farms, no matter how ambitious their plans initially were. One farm owner remarked how their farm "was enjoyed by all!" Visitors submitting photos and completing surveys were entered into a drawing for one of two available prize baskets (one for each task) consisting of FFD merchandise and local farm products totaling a \$50 value.



A young FFD guest pets a dairy cow. (Winner of our photo drawing)

With so much territory to cover, four CCE colleagues and I ventured out to various parts of the three counties to check in with the farms over the course of the day. I covered a large part of Schoharie County starting with Scrumpy Ewe Cider, LLC in West Fulton, where several guests were already gathered in the tasting room, listening attentively to owner Ryan McGiver explain the history and passion behind his hard cider operation and the apple varieties he grows. At Maple Hill Syrup Farms in Cobleskill, I joined two families for a hayride tour of the diversified farm, passing by maple taps, milk cows, corn fields, and more. At Locust-Spring Farm and Van-Dale Farms, steady streams of visitors were asking questions and browsing the products for sale at the farm stores.



Ryan McGiver of Scrumpy Ewe Cider pouring cider for early FFD visitors.



A stop along the way during Maple Hill Syrup Farms' hayride tour.

Continues on page 4

At Central Bridge Farms, the sweet smell of baked goods greeted me as I entered the farm store. Barn tours and a marvelous photo op display were also available. Visitors at Schoharie Valley Farms strolled the farm on self-guided tours and perused through the many products sold at The Carrot Barn, with staff available to answer their questions.

As I arrived at Fox Creek Farm, a cluster of inquisitive guests set out on the last scheduled tour of the day, where owner Raymond Luhrman discussed the practices of regenerative agriculture he adheres to while growing the many types of fruits and vegeta-



A behind-the-scenes look at the facilities at Family Farmstead Dairy in Worcester.

bles his farm sells. At Wayward Lane Brewing, visitors meandered about and gathered at the many seating areas. Music, a food truck, and scheduled tours were available to enjoy. By the time I arrived at my final stop, Wellington's Herbs & Spices, staff were cleaning up and winding down after a busy day hosting guests. Just in time for a nice, refreshing cup of their delicious Island Tea!



A family takes advantage of the impressive photo op display at Central Bridge Farms.



A family enjoying flowers at Hulse Hill Farm in Fly Creek.

Grow with CCE Activity Garden in Full Bloom

BY MARCIE FOSTER

It's hard to believe that in just a few months the new Grow with CCE Activity Garden has blossomed into a fully established demonstration and educational garden. After years of planning and raising support, and with many hours of hard work by the Master Gardener Volunteers, the gardens are finally planted at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Center at 123 Lake Street in Cooperstown, and boy are they beautiful!



Otsego Master Gardener Volunteers (OMGV) started planting the new garden beds in late May using carefully selected plants for each plot. Each raised bed has a different theme which includes pollinator plants, native plants and deer resistant plants. The above photos of the deer resistant plant bed in early June (first) and early September (second).



Beds also include Cornell's Vegetable Variety Garden Trial (VVG), which this year showcased eastern Asian vegetables such as snacking cucumbers from Japan and noodle beans from China. Next years VVG garden will feature Eastern European vegetables!



The All-American Selections flower bed and vegetable beds have been a favorite among visitors. They include the lush Wave Carmine Velour F1 Petunia and delicious Midnight Snack F1 tomato!



The rain didn't stop the many donors, volunteers, and the members of the public from celebrating the opening of the garden in a late July event! Master Gardener Kim L'Heureux shows visitors the vegetable bed and the deer resistant bed.

The public is welcome to visit the Grow with CCE Gardens in Cooperstown to learn about different varieties of plants or just enjoy being in the new beautiful community space. Stay tuned for programs and educational workshops in the future!

4-H Happenings

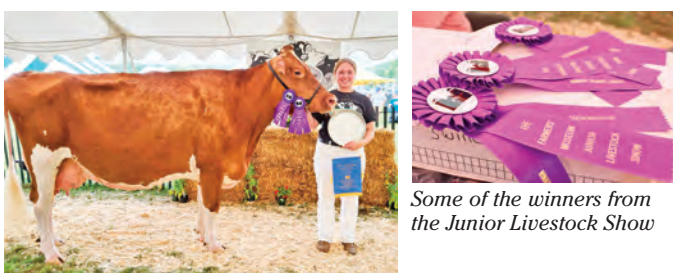


Throughout the summer, Schoharie and Otsego County 4-H youth have been preparing project work for exhibit at the fair and their animals for competition.

Seventy-five 4-H members from across Otsego and Schoharie counties showcased their animals at The Farmers' Museum Junior Livestock Show held July 9th through 11th. The Farmers' Museum works with Cooperative Extension County 4-H educators and clubs throughout Central New York to produce the show each year. The Junior Livestock Show is a salute to youth in agriculture as 4-H'ers work to sharpen their skills and enhance their knowledge as they care for and prepare their dairy, beef, swine, sheep and goats for competition. This year marked the 75th Anniversary of the Junior Livestock Show, and Alumni gathered alongside youth in celebration.

With the start of August, 4-H youth were eager to participate in the 2023 Otsego County Fair and Schoharie County Sunshine Fair. This year, 216 youth from throughout Schoharie and Otsego Counties exhibited nearly 2000 projects at the fairs. Each fair officially started for many 4-H members when they presented their non-animal projects to be judged and displayed within Martin Hall (Otsego) and Progressland (Schoharie) buildings. Wonderful evaluators encouraged, critiqued and judged items entered by hardworking and talented 4-H youth. Projects ranged from sewing, food, fine arts and photography to engineering, horticulture and woodworking. Each youth exhibit was arranged by discipline with the finished product being a colorful and diverse display of all things 4-H. Throughout the week, some youth participated as teen leaders to assist with youth building activities while others practiced their public speaking skills by delivering presentations to fairgoers.

There was no shortage of 4-H animals at the fair this year either. The animal show rings were bustling with the sounds and smells of livestock and horses being showcased in front of judges.



Some of the winners from the Junior Livestock Show





Each show highlighted the results of hours of practice, patience and skills of 4-H youth. Spectators were able to cheer on 4-H youth during the many animal species shows which included; poultry, rabbit, beef, dairy, goat, sheep, swine, horse and dog.

Soon after the county fairs, the New York State Fair began. Both Otsego and Schoharie County 4-H programs were well represented by 4-H youth who showcased their animals, participated within contests, and exhibited non-animal projects within the 4-H Youth Building.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties is so proud of 4-H youth and all the hard work they put into their projects and animals. Now that the fair season is a fond memory, it is time

to forge ahead with the 2023-2024 4-H year. Enrollment is in full swing, with the addition new volunteers, clubs, and youth members. Schoharie and Otsego County 4-H programs are looking forward to the start of the new 4-H year and are determined to continue to provide hands-on, learn-by-doing educational experiences for youth within the community.

CCE at the Fair





Left to Right: NYS Senator Peter Oberacker, CCE Staff Shannon Sears & Erich Keena, NYS Assemblyman Chris Tague, US Congressman Mark Molinaro.

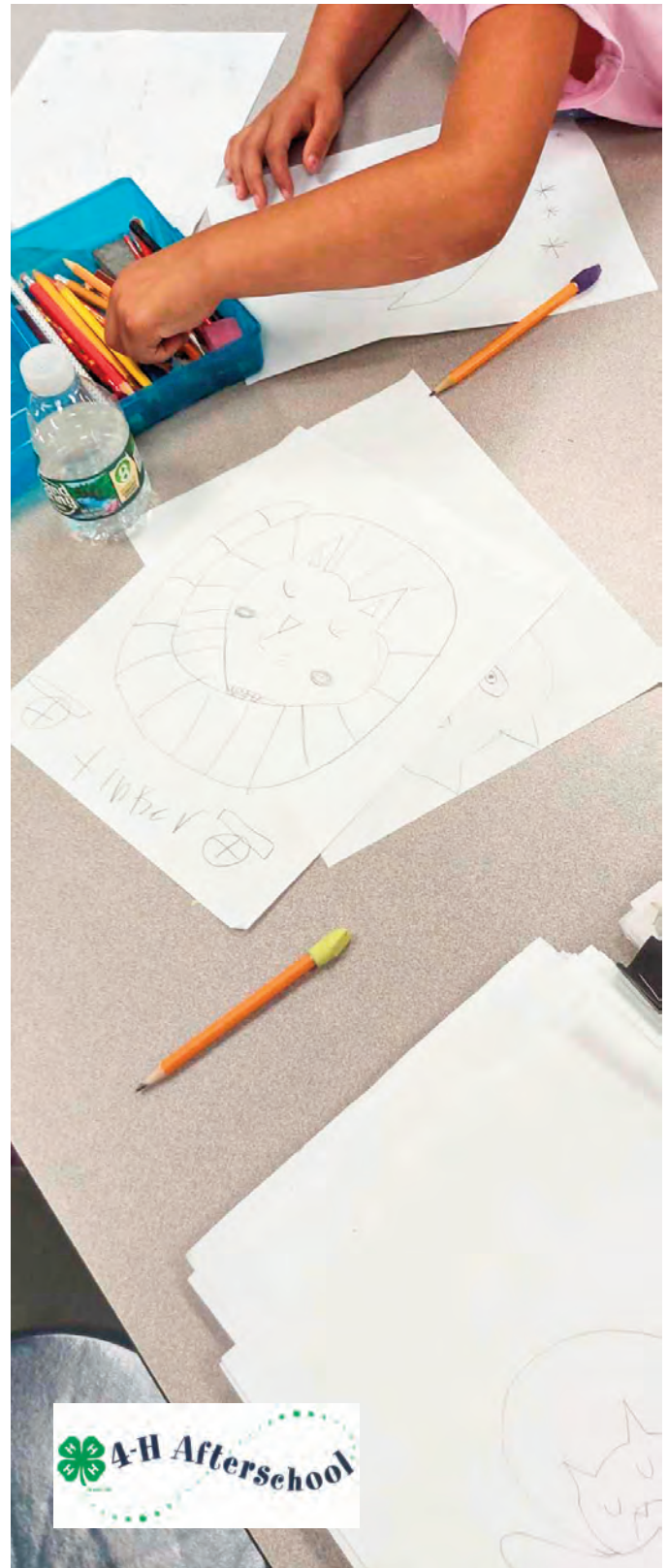


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4-H Afterschool

The 4H Afterschool is so excited to be starting another year at Schoharie Central School. We have 23 children enrolled and still have openings for a few more children if interested in the program. We have started our 4-H Clubs, crafts, homework help and soaking up as much nice weather on the playground as we can. All of our clubs are 4-H Clubs, they each meet an hour a week and do activities, then we rotate clubs at the end of six weeks, with the option to keep current clubs active. For the first 6 weeks of school, the students chose to do an art club, science, soccer club, hip hop dance club and drawing club. We look forward to sharing our experiences with everyone as the year goes on.



Master Gardener Vegetable Variety Garden Trial



BY MARCIE FOSTER

Vegetable Varieties Trial Gardeners (VVGT) is Cornell Cooperative Extension program for community partners across New York State who are cultivating vegetable demonstration gardens for outdoor classrooms in their communities. Master Gardener Volunteers (MGV) in both Otsego and Schoharie Counties participated this year by growing the vegetables at each Cornell Cooperative Extension office.



This year the focus was on Cultural Roots of Eastern Asia which featured vegetables from China, Japan and Korea. Instructions on planting are given to all growers so that there would be uniform planting in each of the different counties. This planning begins in early January with guidance given from Cornell Garden-Based Learning on growing instructions and site preparation. Planting happens between April and June, and by mid-August several vegetables were ready for harvest! Following is a complete list of the vegetables grown this year.

- Chinese Broccoli 'Yod Fah' (*Brassica Oleracea*)
- Celery 'Chinese Pink' (*Apium graveolens*)
- Choy Sum '50 days' (*Brassica chinensis*)
- Chinese Cabbage 'Hilton' (*Brassica rapa*)
- Chinese Cabbage 'Nagasaki Late' (*Brassica rapa*)
- Hot Pepper 'Korean Dark Green' (*Capsicum annum*)
- Sweet Pepper 'Manganji' (*Capsicum annum*)
- Cucumber 'Jibai Shimoshirazu' (*Cucumis sativus*)
- Paste Tomato 'Korean Long' (*Solanum lycopersicum*)
- Bean 'Urizun Japanese Winged' (*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*)
- Buckwheat 'Rpse Red Soba' (*Fagopyrum esculentum*)
- Bean 'Chinese Red Noodle' (*Vigna unguiculata subsp. Sesquipedalis*)
- Komatsuna Spinach Mustard 'Old Tokyo' (*Brassica rapa var perviridis*)
- Diakon Radish 'Japanese Minowase' (*Raphanus sativus*)
- Carrot 'New Kuroda' (*Daucus carota*)



Both the Otsego and the Schoharie Master Gardener Volunteers report their impressions of the trial vegetables. Results are then compiled and feedback given to the companies who supply the seeds. That information is also used for updates to the "Selected List of Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners in NYS," a resource from Cornell Garden Based Learning that describes what varieties do well in different areas across NYS.



Impressions from the Otsego VVGT Bed (123 Lake Street, Cooperstown, NY): The Snacking Cucumber very successful yielding an abundant crisp and tasty cucumbers. The Korean Hot Pepper and the Sweet Pepper were also favorites in the trial garden. Harvested vegetables were donated to the Cooperstown Food Pantry.



Impressions from the Schoharie VVGT Bed (173 Grand Street, Suite 1, Cobleskill, NY): The Korean peppers are “hot” as they claim they are and the Japanese peppers are sweet. The Chinese pink celery tasted like celery but seemed more fibrous.

Visitors are welcome to check out the VVGT Gardens in Otsego County and Schoharie County.

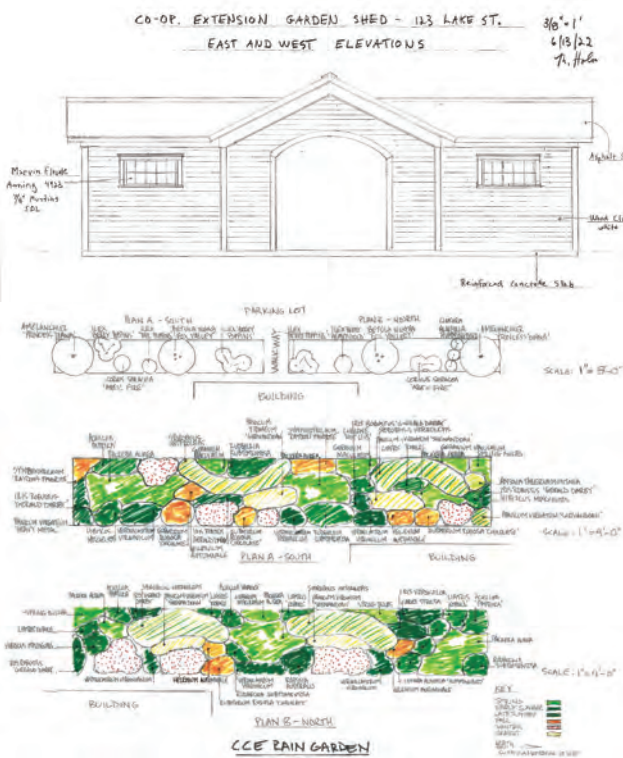
Watch our new gardens grow!

WE'RE ALMOST THERE!

**What's next?
Your donation will help CCE finish the gardens and garden house!**



Creating a Place for Learning through Gardening



Donate

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<https://tinyurl.com/growwithcce>

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Schoharie and Otsego Counties

A Community of Gardeners for the Greater Good: No Age Limits



BY MARCIE FOSTER

The summer of 2023 saw two new GROW Initiative Projects. Both summer projects brought Otsego Master Gardener Volunteers (OMGV) to Hampshire House, an assisted living facility in Oneonta, New York. The mission of both Cornell Cooperative Extension and National Extension Master Gardeners has since their very beginnings been devoted to exploring avenues to address the horticultural needs of our local communities. In that spirit, the Otsego County Master Gardeners Volunteers developed the GROW Initiative in 2016 as a way to collaborate with communities and community groups to support garden-based projects.

In the first GROW project, OMGV Fiona Dejardin collaborated with Tammy Bryden, the Activities Director at Hampshire House, to develop a tomato bucket project that would allow interested residents an opportunity to plant tomatoes in containers as a stimulating activity that would encourage them to socialize and enhance both their pleasure at witnessing plants growing through their endeavors, but also provide them with a simple addition to their diet. OMGV Francine Stayter assisted Fiona.



Fiona, Francine, Tammy, and residents planted buckets in the courtyard in late May. They filled the buckets with soil and nutrients and transplanted tomatoes with varieties chosen to ripen across the summer. OMGVs grew the tomato plants. The residents took delight in Francine's instruction to "tickle the roots" to get them ready for transplant. OMGVs visited regularly and the staff at Hampshire House made sure the plants were well watered in between. Toward the end of July, the Juliet tomatoes began ripening and they were collected from then on for salads and snacks. At the

start of the project, the residents were most excited about having BLTs with *real tomatoes*, like the ones they remembered from their gardens. The end-of-season project celebration will be a Hampshire House/OMGV BLT party.

As we worked in the courtyard, we noticed a large 20'x12' raised bed that was currently unused. The residents talked about gardens they'd had as we planted and tended the tomatoes. Talking with residents, several said they wished they could see flowers in the



raised bed that would attract birds and butterflies. Tammy indicated interest in a second collaboration to turn the weedy raised bed into a pollinator flower garden. Her desire was to create an outdoor space where residents could enjoy the flowers, birds, and butterflies they loved when they lived independently. She also wanted a space that could provide for gentle gardening exercise. And so, the seed for a second GROW project idea was planted.

OMGV Francine Stayter took the idea back to the Master Gardener Volunteer meeting. Suzanne Belew, Chris Burrington, Mary Ellen Calta, Bonnie Jones, and Celia Oxley all wanted to be part of the project. All had experience with friends and family who had resided in assisted living or nursing homes facilities and felt a personal connection to the potential of this project.

Mary Ellen Calta has been a Master Gardener Volunteer for a decade. She understood that outdoor activities had been very important to her family members. She noted:

"I have had family members in nursing homes and found the activities they were able to do were very important to them. With my mom,

I was able to do some gardening that enabled the residents to enjoy their outdoor areas. The raised beds at Hampshire House provided accessible outer edges that made it possible for residents to do what they could to make the garden their own. With my husband's six months in a nursing home, I was able to see how much the residents enjoyed sitting outside to enjoy the flowers, birds, and butterflies and the calming presence of being in a garden setting."

Together this OMGV group gathered to draw up a proposal and develop a schedule. The goal of the project was to restore the unused raised bed and turn it into an attractive spot where residents could gather to enjoy nature and socialize. It would also be a place where some residents could do some gentle gardening as they had done in the past.

The group researched plants known to be beneficial for pollinators both for the summer as well as flowering bulbs for the following spring. The bed would be planted with a variety of native perennials and colorful annuals known to provide food for birds, bees, and butterflies. Spring bulbs would provide food for early pollinators. We knew the residents could not do this themselves, but working together, we could restore the raised bed. The original plan included collaboration with the Activities Director, but when the Activities Director, the Food Service and nursing staff.

In mid-July, Master Gardener Volunteers and residents worked together for several days to clear the bed. Francine and residents worked at the edges while Chris, Suzanne, and Celia climbed right into the beds to begin the clearing. As we cleared the beds of weeds, we talked. The residents shared stories of what they grew, what their mothers grew, and what flowers they loved. We became collaborators – a community of gardeners at Hampshire House.

In the following weeks, the OMGVs brought an assortment of native plants, perennials, and colorful annuals, all known to be beneficial for bees and butterflies. We tried to find many that the Hampshire House gardeners told us they loved – zinnias, sunflowers, and dahlias. We also installed a hummingbird feeder and a sunflower seed feeder. Together the residents and OMGVs planted as Barbara, one of the residents, reminded us to "tickle the roots" as we did the transplanting.



Suzanne Belew and Celia Oxley, two new 2022 OMGVs, were a part of the project. Both have extensive health-care experience working with older adults. Suzanne Belew explained:

"When I heard of the opportunity to revitalize a garden at the Hampshire House facility, I was delighted at the chance to serve in a way that might brighten the lives of others."



As an avid and newly certified Master Gardener, I was aware of the mental and physical benefits that a garden can bestow. The residents and staff became part of our efforts and did not disappoint. Their engagement and enthusiasm were very gratifying. I look forward to similar garden projects that foster the well-being of others.

Continues on page 16

Celia Oxley has considerable experience working with older people. She loves to watch faces as they soften in response to an interaction with something an older person loves. "At the Hampshire House,



I saw a woman's face soften when she started pulling weeds. I wondered what wonderful memories she was experiencing at that time." The raised bed went from a few perennials overtaken by many weeds to a beautiful site with thriving flowers and a well-attended bird feeder. We sometimes forget the importance of aesthetics.

The Otsego County Master Gardener Volunteers' theme for the year is Gardening for the Greater Good. Both Hampshire House projects enabled us to put our theme into action by collaborating with residents and staff to plant beneficial plants that provided food for pollinators while the garden's beauty provided a positive aesthetic experience for the residents and staff. In addition, research tells us that gentle exercise in the gardens can lessen the effects of osteoporosis, and reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes, depression, and heart disease. (National Institutes of Health, Jan 22, 2020). Even when not outside, the garden can be seen through the windows of the dining room. The garden became a place where residents could enjoy flowers, birds, bees, and butterflies, celebrate their efforts, and share memories of gardens past. Working with all our collaborators was an enlightening experience for us. There are no age limits for this kind of gardening community.

Thanks to all of our friends who donated to our Otsego County Programs through Mohawk Valley Gives community-wide giving day! We look forward to continuing our participation in this annual event.



A Busy Summer for the Farm to School Program

BY SHANNON SEARS



Wait! Where did summer go? The Farm to School Program has been very busy this summer and we can't believe it's already October. In the end of June, we had the privilege to visit two local producers in Otsego County: Middlefield Orchard and Dream Weaver Farm. We were accompanied by the food service directors from Milford, Cherry-Valley Springfield, and Sharon Springs Central Schools.



A summer look at Middlefield Orchard, located in Middlefield, NY owned by Wilfred (Willy) and Joan Bruneau. They produce apples, other fruits, vegetables, jams, and fresh baked goods.

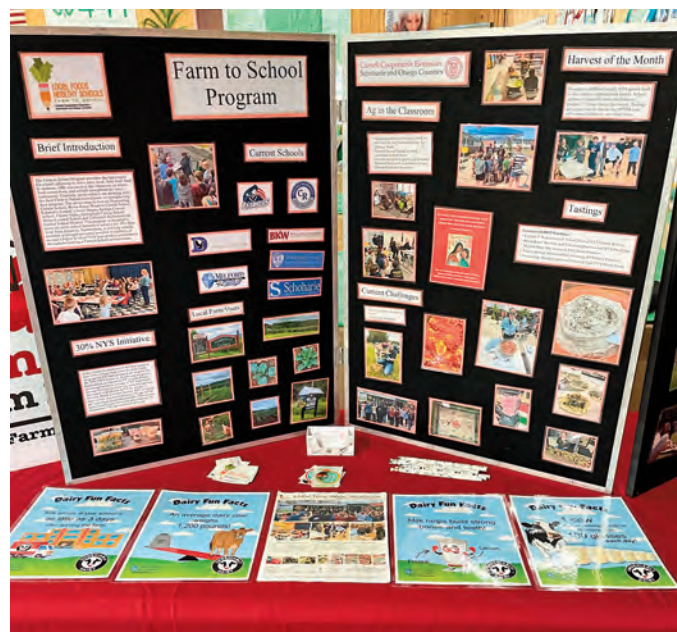


Potato fields at Dream Weaver Farm, located in Richfield, NY and operated by Theresa Pullis and her family. They sell fresh produce items and meat from the livestock in their onsite farm store.

At each location the food service directors were able to learn about the products that were grown, how they were harvested and able to ask questions about the operation. This was a great opportunity to start to build relationships between local producers and schools to offer more New York State

products in school cafeterias. Thank you to these local producers for allowing us to visit to learn more about your operations and the food you grow.

We kicked off July by holding meetings with the food service directors in our program to complete tracking for the 30% New York State Initiative. The 30% NYS Initiative increases the reimbursement rate that schools can receive if they spend 30% of their total food costs for lunch on New York State products. Working with each school we were able to determine what products they currently purchase and were able to set goals for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year.



Information for the Farm to School Program was displayed at the Otsego and Schoharie County Fairs.

August is fair time and you may have seen the Farm to School display set up at both the Otsego and Schoharie County Fairs. We loved hearing feedback on what NYS items students would like to see offered at their schools and suggestions for local producers in the area. Our experience at the county fairs helped us raise awareness of our efforts in local schools and strengthen our relationship with the local communities. As the new school year starts, we have been planning Harvest of the Month (HOTM) tastings, and we think students are going to be excited to see the New York State products schools will be featuring this year. Follow our Facebook page for HOTM updates.



Give Them More
of the
Good Stuff!

Pumpkin Basics

Canned Pumpkin

- Canned pumpkin is convenient and available year round.
- Unopened canned pumpkin is safe to eat for up to 5 years after the 'use by' or 'best by' date if the can has no dents, rust or swelling.
- Once opened, canned pumpkin can be kept in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days.



Pumpkin is a very good source of
vitamins A and C, potassium and fiber.



Winter
Luxury



Baby Boo



Jack Be
Little



Fairytale



New England Pie

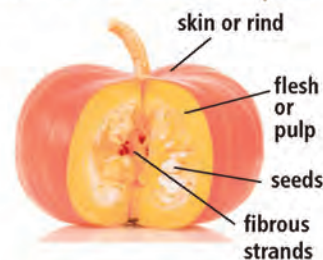


Baby Pam

Shop and Save

- ☀ Pumpkins are a type of winter squash available in October and November.
- ☀ Pumpkins grown for cooking are called "pie pumpkins" and usually weigh from 2 to 10 pounds. Their flesh makes a smooth and flavorful puree.
- ☀ Choose pie pumpkins that are firm and heavy for their size, without cracks or soft spots.
- ☀ Each pound of uncut pumpkin will provide 1 to 1½ cups of cooked puree.
- ☀ Seeds can be dried and saved for growing pumpkins next year.

The Parts of a Pumpkin



Store Well Waste Less



- Store whole pumpkins in a cool, dark and dry place for up to 3 months.
- Scrub pumpkins under running water before cutting or cooking. Once cut, wrap tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.
- Freeze cooked or unused canned pumpkin to use later. Package in airtight containers and use within 1 year.
- Roast the seeds from any type of pumpkin.

Pumpkins grown for carving are often large and have a thinner wall of flesh that can be cooked but the texture and flavor are not pleasant.



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. SNAP can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact Oregon Safe Net at 211.
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PUMPKIN PANCAKES

Mmmmm! The smell of fall will be in the air!

Serves 9



Nutrition Facts	
9 servings per container	
Serving size	2 Four inch
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	170
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4.5g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 290mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	10%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 3g Added Sugars	6%
Protein 5g	10%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 166mg	15%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 134mg	2%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients

1 cup whole-wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons brown sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1¼ teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1 egg
¾ cup canned pumpkin
1½ cups 1% milk
1 cup water
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
Vegetable oil spray

Directions

1. Combine flours, salt, brown sugar, baking powder, and pumpkin pie spices in a large mixing bowl.
2. In a medium bowl, combine egg, pumpkin, milk, water, and vegetable oil; mix well.
3. Add wet ingredients to flour mixture, stirring just until moistened. The batter may be lumpy.
4. Lightly coat a skillet with cooking spray and heat on medium.
5. Using a ¼-cup measure, pour batter onto hot griddle. Cook until bubbles begin to burst, then flip pancakes and cook until golden brown, 1½ to 2½ minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.

Notes:

Use ¾ teaspoon cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg, ⅓ teaspoon ginger, ½ teaspoon clove, may be used in place of pumpkin pie spice.

Fresh or frozen winter squash or pumpkin puree may be used in place of canned pumpkin.

Know the facts . . .

- You might ask yourself, is a pumpkin a vegetable or fruit, well let's break it down . . . Pumpkins along with Zucchini, squash, marrows, cucumbers, melons, and gourds, are all part of the Cucurbitaceae family. From a botanical perspective, we define anything growing from a plant's flower as a fruit, while we consider everything else that grows from other parts of the plant a vegetable. Fruits usually contain seeds, and vegetables often incorporate roots, leaves, or stems. Pumpkins are, in fact, a fruit because they come from the seeds of a flowering plant, whereas other parts, such as the root, stem, leaves, and bulbs, would be classified as vegetables. However, since they are dense, dry, and hard, they can be treated like vegetables when cooking or baking. Some foods technically fall under one category but are more widely recognized under the other because of their flavor profile.
- Pumpkins produce both a male and female flower, with fertilization usually performed by bees.
- Pumpkins are very healthy. The meat and seeds are loaded with antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals and are an excellent source of beta-carotene. Beta-carotene, is converted to vitamin A in the body. Studies have shown this nutrient helps keep you healthy by fighting off infection, strengthening your eyes, and protecting your skin.
- The United States alone produces more than 1.5 billion pumpkins each year, and I'm sure it is no surprise that most pumpkins are sold in the month of October here in the US.
- If you have ever carved a pumpkin, then you know they are full of hundreds of seeds. These seeds are not only delicious, but they are also nutritious. Roasted whole pumpkin seeds are a great source of magnesium.
- Try adding spices like curry powder, chili powder, garlic powder, or just salt and pepper to your roasted seeds.
- Add seeds to trail mix, smoothies, salads, cookies, and breads and give them an added nutritional punch.
- Try this delicious recipe for Pumpkin Bread! pumpkin-bread (cceschoharie-otsego.org)



Pick Apart a Pickle

BY **BARB BRENNER**, CERTIFIED MASTER FOOD PRESERVER

If you run out of topics to talk about this summer at a family gathering, I have one for you that will get anyone talking. Talk about pickles. Go ahead ask what their favorite pickle is, where they purchase it or how they make it. Dill, sweet, or bread and butter? Is it fermented in a crock or canned in a jar? Is it stored in the basement or kept in the refrigerator? Is it a cucumber or green bean? What? Aren't all pickles made from cucumbers? For sure, this topic will keep the conversation going for hours as the topic isn't crisp, though we often want our pickles to be.

Let's pick apart the topic of pickles. Pickling is about producing an environment in which the food is preserved by acidity. Which food are we talking about? Referring to the recipes in the book "So Easy to Preserve" I can create a list of vegetables to pickle: asparagus, beets, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, green beans, green tomatoes, okra, onions, peppers and zucchini. But the list doesn't stop at the end of the alphabet for veggies, it continues at the letter "A" with fruits: apples, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, plums and watermelon rinds. Pickling isn't just for cucumbers.

Some folks will mention using a crock for making pickles. Others will talk about vinegar. How about pickles that go in the refrigerator or in the freezer? So which is it? How are pickles made?

An acidic environment inhibits the growth of bacteria that can cause spoilage. You are either going to create an acidic environment by adding vinegar or through lacto-fermentation.

Lacto-fermentation can be broken down into two similar but different approaches: dry salting or brine pickling. Sauerkraut is an example of dry salting, where cabbage and salt are mixed together and a brine (salty solution) results. With brine pickling you make brine by adding salt to water. You then pour the brine over the vegetable such as when fermenting cucumbers (3/4 cup salt to one gallon of water). Both approaches create brine, either from the salt pulling water out of the cabbage (dry salting) or by mixing salt into water and pouring over the vegetables (brine pickling). Both of these methods are lacto-fermentation where the



food creates its own acid environment as it ferments. You can learn the basics of fermentation at the National Center for Home Food Preservation, www.nchfp.uga.edu, click on the How Do I Ferment button.

Often you will hear someone say they make their pickles by adding vinegar. This is another way of making pickles vs. by lacto-fermentation. Vinegar is used when canning pickles or for making refrigerator or freezer pickles. Choosing to can pickles in a boiling water bath or to make refrigerator/freezer pickles is a personal choice. Do you have room to store the pickles in your refrigerator? If you want to store them for a longer time, canning or freezing might be a better option. If the weather is too hot to fire up your stove and process pickles in a boiling water bath canner, you might prefer to make refrigerator or freezer pickles. The decision is yours and there are recipes to try in all categories. Follow a trusted recipe and don't reduce the amount of vinegar in a recipe, especially if you intend to can it because *Clostridium botulinum* could grow causing botulism food poisoning in your canned pickles.

When canning or making refrigerator/freezer pickles, think of the vinegar as a replacement for the time needed for lacto-fermentation to occur. It is a quicker way to make pickles, thus the term quick pickling, as the vinegar creates the acidic environment. One of my favorite recipes for a refrigerator pickle is "Overnight Pickled Cauliflower" from the book "Pickled Pantry" by Andrea Chesman which uses red wine vinegar. The red tint from the vinegar gives this pickle a beautiful rosy color.

Pickles and pickling is a huge topic with many different paths one can follow. Pick a vegetable or fruit, select lacto-fermentation or the addition of vinegar, find a trusted pickling recipe and give it a try.

By the way, to quote Andrea Chesman: “It is inevitable that if you make pickles, you will end up with refrigerator shelves bursting with half-filled jars of pickles”. She is so right. Pickles are addicting and you may end up with many jars in your refrigerator of all types of vegetables or fruits. Currently, in my refrigerator I have half-filled jars of sauerkraut, asparagus kimchi, pickled asparagus, dilly beans and

napa cabbage kimchi, all of which are made by “pickling”. All I am missing is the basic cucumber dill pickle, but a new gardening season is here . . .

For more information on pickling refer to the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <https://nchfp.uga.edu>. If you prefer a hard copy reference, check out the book “So Easy to Preserve” which can be purchased from <https://setp.uga.edu>.

Barb Brenner has been preserving food for years and is a Cornell Cooperative Extension Certified Master Food Preserver in Livingston County. With thanks to Katherine J. T. Humphrey, Cornell Cooperative Extension Home Food Preservation Expert, for her review of this article.

Explore the Nutrition Education Programs at CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties!



Cooking with Kids

Join us for a 6-8 week series of interactive, hands-on fun. Bring the kids and come prepare a dish with us while learning practical nutrition information you can use at home.

The program is free for income-eligible families. Children 4+ welcome.

Virtual classes are also available!

EFNEP

Where adults and youth learn by doing!



Whether participating in a group class, one-on-one lesson, or a nutrition event, either online or in person, these programs can make a difference for your family and you!



- ✓ Build habits of healthy eating and activity for a lifetime
- ✓ Learn to make meals that save time and money
- ✓ Try out new dishes and skills
- ✓ Practice food safety and reduce food waste when selecting, prepping, and storing food

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

HEALTHY EATING MADE CLEAR + SIMPLE

Cooking + Nutrition classes

FREE, supportive, fun, interactive classes. All ages welcome.

Recipes use affordable ingredients and typical kitchen tools.

In person: Offered regularly in Cohleskill, Oneonta, and Cooperstown, plus in partner spaces throughout Schoharie & Otsego counties.

Zoom: Learn in the comfort of your own home. Plus, have a dish for dinner ready at the end of class!



To learn more about these programs or to sign up, contact our Nutrition Program Educators:



Michelle Leveski
EFNEP Nutrition Program Educator
518-234-4303 Ext. 115
mml39@cornell.edu



Kimberly Ferstler
Healthy Connections Nutrition Program Educator
518-234-4303 Ext. 120
kmf239@cornell.edu



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Schoharie and Otsego Counties

2023 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 17, 2023
6-8 p.m.

CCESO Extension Center
173 South Grand St, Cobleskill

For those who choose not to participate in person, there is an option of virtual attendance at the Business Meeting and presentations. Please call the number below for details.

The Annual Meeting will begin with the Association's annual business meeting. After, join us for a reception that will feature Hors d'Oeuvres and refreshments from local producers.


Attendees can mingle and chat with CCESO's staff, Board members and Program Advisory Committee members, volunteers, and program participants.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about CCESO's innovative educational programs and relevant outreach activities, to meet new staff members, and to win door prizes, too!

RSVP requested (but not required) by registering at our
website: www.cceschoharie-otsego.org

Or by calling our Cobleskill office at

518-234-4303 Ext. 111



PROGRAM EVENTS

Go to our website cceschoharie-otsego.org to see the most up-to-date listings offered.

SCHOHARIE 4-H

October

1st–8th—National 4-H Week

5th—4-H Information Night

4th–15th—Tractor Supply Paper Clover Sale Event

19th and 20th—NYS 4-H Agri-Business Career Conference

November (DATE TBD)

4-H Achievement Night

December (DATE TBD)

Fine Arts Clinics

OTSEGO 4-H

October

1st–8th—National 4-H Week

4th–15th—Tractor Supply Paper Clover Sale Event

4-H Community Club, October 11, 6 p.m., The Rowe House, Oneonta

4-H Community Club, October 25, 6 p.m., The Rowe House, Oneonta

4-H Community Club, November 1, 6 p.m., The Rowe House, Oneonta

4-H Community Club, November 22, 6 p.m., The Rowe House, Oneonta

4-H Community Club, December 13, 6 p.m., The Rowe House, Oneonta

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

What's For Dinner?

This series is offered regularly both in person and via Zoom; contact Kimberly for specific dates. Join our nutrition educator, Kimberly, for a 6-week, in-person series of classes to learn about both the “why” of eating healthy and the “how.” One hour a week includes a nutrition lesson and time for participants to create a dish—together in person which they can then sample, or have for dinner if at home via Zoom. All ages are welcome (basic reading skills and the ability to help create the dish will make it a more satisfying event for the participating children). The classes are free for all participants. Registration required. Please let us know in advance if you have any food allergies. If interested, contact Kimberly Ferstler at kmf239@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 120.

Cooking With Kids

This series is offered regularly both in person and via Zoom; contact Michelle for specific dates. Join us after school for a 6-week series of interactive, hands-on fun. Bring the kids and come prepare a dish with us while learning practical nutrition information you can use at home. This series is free for income-eligible families. Each family will receive a kid's knife set and cookbook upon completing 6 classes. Registration is required. If interested in upcoming classes, please contact Michelle Leveski at 518-234-4303 ext. 115 or mml39@cornell.edu.

HORTICULTURE

Improving Soil Health

Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Soil health is a key component to a successful and thriving garden. The Schoharie County Master Gardener Volunteers will be holding a workshop for home gardeners on Improving Soil Health at The Gathering Place 50 Plus Community Center, 127 Kenyon Road, Cobleskill. This will be an indoor Powerpoint presentation where participants will learn about proven methods to improve and maintain healthy garden soil. Schoharie Master Gardener Volunteers will guide participants through a step-by-step approach, requiring no special skills. This program is free and open to all ages of the public. Register at https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events_landing.cfm?event=Improving_Soil_Health_243.

FARM TO SCHOOL (HOTM: Harvest of the month)

October Harvest of the Month

October 5—NYS Corn on the Cob, Sharon Springs Central School

October 5—NYS Corn on the Cob, Duanesburg Elementary

October 5—Milford Central School Open House

October 12—BLT with NYS tomatoes and lettuce, Sharon Springs Central School

October 13—Pumpkin Soup made with NYS Pumpkins, Milford Central School

October 14—Community Resource Fair, Southside Mall Oneonta

October 19—Butternut Apple Soup made with NYS squash and apples, Sharon Springs Central School

October 25—NYS Corn on the Cob, Duanesburg High School

October 26—Apple Crisp made with NYS Apples, Sharon Springs Central School

October 31—Pumpkin Soup made with NYS Pumpkin, Ryder Elementary

November

November 15—NYS Multicolored Carrots, Ryder Elementary

November 16—NYS Cauliflower, Milford Central School

November 17—Apple Crisp made with NYS Apples, Duanesburg Central School

December

December 15—NYS Brussels Sprouts, Milford Central School

AGRICULTURE

Farm Asset Protection Workshop

Monday, Nov. 20, 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the CCESO Schoharie Extension Center, 173 South Grand St., Cobleskill. The CNYDLFC Team is proud to conduct a workshop on farm asset protection to help you preserve long-standing agricultural legacies. In these uncertain times, safeguarding valuable farm assets has become paramount to ensure our farming communities' continued success and sustainability. The workshop, titled Farm Asset Protection Strategies: Safeguarding Agricultural Legacies for Future Generations will be presented by Nicole Tommell and Steve Hadcock. Nicole is a Farm Management Specialist with the Central New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team. Steve Hadcock is a Beginning Farmer specialist with the Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program. Nicole and Steve have many years of experience working with farm families on farm management and estate planning topics. Topics included are:

- How can I use my current records to gauge how well my business is doing? Various suggestions will assist you in looking at your records differently.
- What can I do to retain employees? Ideas will be shared on how to get new employees off to a good start. Also, ideas on how to help retain employees as well.
- Am I ready to consider diversifying my business? Thoughts on how to approach evaluating the diversification of your farm business will be shared.
- When and how do I start the succession process? It is never too early to begin discussing farm succession/transfer. Topics will be covered to help you feel confident to begin the process for your business. Shared topics may help you with your process if you have already started.

Registration costs \$10 per person. For more information and to register, visit tinyurl.com/mpk9je9w. There is a pre-registration deadline of November 13, 11:59 p.m. Each participant will receive written materials and a flash drive containing various resources. Lunch will be provided. If you have questions or would like further information contact, please contact Nicole Tommell at 315-867-6001 or nt375@cornell.edu.

Visit our website, cceschoharie-otsego.org, to see additional events not listed.

CCE in Action!



Here is how you can support CCE outreach:

Making a donation is as simple as going to www.cceschoharie-otsego.org and clicking this button:



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