

Connections

The News Magazine of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

JANUARY-MARCH 2025

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Winter Sowing Workshop

The Otsego Master Gardener Volunteers are holding a Winter Sowing Workshop on Saturday, January 11, 2025, at the Southside Mall Community Room, 5006 State Hwy. 23 in Oneonta, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.



Winter sowing is a method of starting seeds outdoors in winter popularized by Trudi Davidoff and is now practiced around the world. It is recognized by the USDA as, “A propagation method used throughout the winter where temperate climate seeds are sown into protective vented containers and placed outdoors to foster a naturally timed, high percentage germination of climate tolerant seedlings.”

Learn to sow with workshop presenters, Otsego Master Gardener Volunteers Chris Burrington and Celia Oxley. They will cover the techniques for winter sowing including the materials needed and the various kinds of seeds that can be used, as well as the benefits of this low-cost method of germinating seeds and some of the advantages it has over indoor seed-starting requiring grow lights and the hardening-off of seedlings. In addition, participants will make a mini greenhouse in a container and sow seeds to take home. The workshop will also cover how to handle the seedlings once they germinate. Participants are asked to bring a one-gallon translucent container (milk or water jug) and scissors. We will have some seeds but feel free to bring your own.

No previous gardening experience is needed. The program fee is \$5 to cover materials. Space is limited; registration is required by Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at cceschoharie-otsego.org. For more information call 607-547-2536 ext. 228 or ext. 235.

For more information about Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties' community programs and events, visit cceschoharie-otsego.org or call 518-234-4303 ext. 129. Stay connected to CCE Master Gardeners' daily postings at [facebook.com/cceschoharie-otsegoMG](https://www.facebook.com/cceschoharie-otsegoMG) and follow CCE Schoharie and Otsego on Facebook at [facebook.com/CCESchoharieOtsego](https://www.facebook.com/CCESchoharieOtsego).

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Subscribe to CCESO's "Connections EXTRA!" email bulletin and follow CCESO's agriculture-focused social media profiles to receive timely news about agricultural events and opportunities. CCESO's agricultural social media pages include a general agriculture profile on Facebook @CCESchoharieandOtsegoAG as well as Family Farm Day-specific Facebook and Instagram profiles @FamilyFarmDay. Contact us at schoharie-otsego@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 x111 to learn more about CCESO's agriculture program, or to sign up to receive the **Connections EXTRA!** email bulletin.

FIND US ONLINE

Visit us at cceschoharie-otsego.org

Like us on **Facebook**:

Main association news: CCESchoharieOtsego
Nutrition education: EFNEPCCESchoharieOtsego;
HeathyConnectionsCCESchoharieOtsego
Master Gardeners: CCEOtsegoMG; CCESchoharieMG
4-H: schohariecounty4H; otsegocounty4H
Ag education and programs:
CCESchoharieandOtsegoAG; AnniesProjectNYS;
FamilyFarmDay
Farm to School: LocalFoodsHealthySchools

Follow us on **Instagram**:

Master Gardeners: otsegomastergardener
Family Farm Day: familyfarmday

Follow our **blog**:

Nutrition education: Life's Solutions:
blogs.cornell.edu/efnep-schoharie-otsego



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.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

CCE Schoharie Otsego offers unbiased, research-based education and outreach to improve the lives of all residents of both counties. We want to hear how CCESO's resources have helped you, and we welcome feedback about how we can improve. Please send your comments to the CCESO offices in either county, or contact Executive Director Liz Callahan at eac283@cornell.edu. Thank you!

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State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University,
Cooperative Extension Associations, county governing bod-
ies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

Garden Inspiration in the Winter

BY THERESA KAYA, SCHOHARIE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER



Now that the holidays are over and the decorations are put away, what can you do until the weather turns warmer and you can get out into your garden? While it may be dismal and blustery, there are ways to beat the winter gardening doldrums.

Consider Indoor Gardening with Houseplants

Winter is the perfect time to invest in houseplants and try some that you have not considered before. Succulents are a great way to create an indoor garden that may be moved outdoors in the Spring. For more information: **Cornell Cooperative Extension | Houseplants**

Garden Planning and Journaling

This is a good time to plan your garden, and not just in your head, but on paper. Make a list of what you grew last season. What worked well? What needs to be changed? Prepare a journal. List successful plantings you would like to do again. Perhaps the plants that were not successful can be replaced with another variety. Decide if you will need to expand your garden or make it smaller. Did



you have too many of a prolific producer that you just couldn't use fast enough?

Plant a Countertop Herb Garden

Who doesn't want to have fresh herbs in February? For more information: **Windowsill-Herbs-Pat-Curran-March-2017-21jwe6n.pdf**.

There are many other opportunities for the avid yet bored gardener to try during the depths of winter. These are just a few that are a way to get you started until you can feel the warmth of the sun on the soil.


Do you have a question about growing a vegetable garden? Wish you knew the name of that pesky weed that keeps popping up in your flower bed?

Ask a Master Gardener
Cornell Cooperative Extension



Master Gardener Volunteers are available to answer questions about trees, shrubs, lawn care, vegetable gardens, flower beds and Integrated Pest Management Practices.

Ask your questions online at www.cceschoharie-otsego.org



OTSEGO COUNTY: (607) 547-2536 Ext: 228 mastergardener-otsego@cornell.edu Facebook: CCEOtsegoMG	SCHOHARIE COUNTY: (518) 234-430 Ext: 124 schohariemastergardener@cornell.edu Facebook: CCESchoharieMG
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Cornell Cooperative Extension | Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Master Gardener Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties **Cobleskill** GROW • SUSTAIN • REVEAL

Spring **PLANT SALE** Save the Date!

SUNY COBLESKILL
SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025
8:00 AM TO 2:00 PM



A Partnership between the Schoharie Master Gardener Volunteers and SUNY Cobleskill

www.cceschoharie-otsego.org

Otsego County: Mastergardener-otsego@cornell.edu 607-547-2536 ext. 235	Schoharie County: Mastergardener-schoharie@cornell.edu 518-234-4303 ext. 129
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SEED

SWAP

National Seed Swap Day is designed to conserve and promote crop diversity in local communities. Every year, neighbors gather together to exchange seeds and chat about their plans for the upcoming growing season. Bring your own seeds or choose from 1,000's of donated seeds.

Saturday, January 25, 2025

Participation is FREE!

www.cceschoharie-otsego.org

In Schoharie County:

10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the
Middleburgh Library,
323 Main St, Middleburgh

In Otsego County:

9:00 to Noon at the
Oneonta Farmers' Market
24 Market St, Oneonta
(Foothills Performing Arts & Civic Center)



Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Ask a Master Gardener!



Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) and staff at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties (CCESO) are trained to answer residents' questions about home gardening and insect identification. MGVs are residents who have completed a horticulture training course and passed a final exam to become certified. They provide unbiased, research-based information to help people grow healthy gardens and landscapes.

A conversation with a MGV may be enough to solve a plant or insect problem. Often a photo or a sample of the plant will help to arrive at a diagnosis. Should the Master Gardeners not be able to diagnose a problem at the local level, we may consult with colleagues at Cornell University to arrive at an answer.

The best way to connect with a MGV or CCESO staff is to submit your questions online cceschoharie-otsego.org/master-gardener-program/ask-a-master-gardener-volunteer, which will guide you through a series of questions and allows for photos to be uploaded. Email is typically the best (and fastest) method for communication, but phone

calls are also okay. Non-urgent questions may take up to one week to answer.

If you need further assistance and live in Otsego County, call 607-547-2536 ext. 228, or email mastergardener-otsego@cornell.edu. If you live in Schoharie County, call 518-234-4303 ext. 129, or email schoharie-mastergardeners@cornell.edu. If an MGV is not available to take your call, please leave a voice mail message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Wonder what that funny-looking insect is that is crawling across your shoe?

Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) has an Insect Diagnostics Laboratory and a variety of resources available. At Cornell's Department of Entomology, the Lab can help identify insects and related arthropods and provide management suggestions if needed. There is a \$25 fee for samples or photos submitted to the lab for an ID. For more information visit www.CALS.cornell.edu/insect-diagnostic-laboratory or email iddiagnosticlab@cornell.edu.

Schoharie County Ag Networking



Last spring CCE Schoharie and Otsego (CCESO) and the Schoharie County Farm Bureau hosted two pilot "Ag Networking Gatherings" that were well received. The next Schoharie County Ag Networking gathering, on Tuesday, February 18 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at SUNY Cobleskill, will build on the momentum from last year's gatherings. The Schoharie County Farm Bureau, CCESO, the Institute for Rural Vitality (IRV), and Schoharie County's Ag Development Specialist are collaboratively planning this networking event for farmers and agribusiness which will include an "Expo" of agricultural resources and vendors, updates on agricultural legislative issues and a NY Farm Bureau public policy presentation, lunch and break-out sessions around topics that members of Schoharie County's agricultural community identify as important. This event is free to members of the agricultural community. To underwrite the cost of the event we are seeking financial support from a variety of local businesses and vendors at the Expo. For more information visit www.cceschoharie-otsego.org or contact Liz Calla-

han, Executive Director, CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties, at eac283@cornell.edu.

Free Estate Planning

Cornell Law School students, under the supervision of attorneys who specialize in trusts and estates, will prepare a basic estate plan (last will and testament, a living will, a health care proxy and power of attorney) tailored to the client's wishes. Eligible applicants: must have an income below \$27,500/yr (single) or \$55,000/yr (family); must be a NY resident within commuting distance of Cornell Law School; must be able to attend two meetings at Cornell Law School from January to the end of April.

To apply: email clinicalprograms@cornell.edu with "Estate Planning" as the subject line. Include full name, email, phone number, and a brief statement explaining why you are interested in this service and some information about your circumstances (e.g. "I want to leave property to my children" or "I need to provide for a disabled sibling").



Food Gardening Network

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego County (CCESO) is gathering information about Otsego and Schoharie County organizations' efforts to maintain and grow food gardens for their constituents. Organizations interested in expanding their capacity to address food insecurity through gardening and garden-based education are encouraged to connect with CCESO and complete the survey. The goal is to gather information about which organizations are currently managing food gardens, where they are located, what are the challenges of maintaining the garden, and who they serve. This network is also open to organizations that are interested in starting a food garden.

To complete the survey, click QR Code



Or visit www.cceschoharie-otsego.org

For questions or more information, please email Marcie Foster, Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator (mkf48@cornell.edu) or call 607-547-2536 ext. 235.

School and Community Garden Leadership Programs Announced through Cornell

Planning a Successful School & Community Garden Program (January 2025)

This course explores the benefits of garden-based learning, teaches gardening basics, and provides the tools, resources, and collaborative support needed to plan, organize, and develop a successful and sustainable gardening program that fits your organization's needs. **Planning a Successful School & Community Garden Program** | CALS

Teaching and Learning in the School Garden (March 2025)

This course provides the tools and resources for classroom teachers and extension educators to develop school and youth gardening programs that easily integrate into the school curriculum. Students build a final portfolio of standards-based, cross-curricula lessons and activities that are ready to use in the school garden and classroom. **Teaching and Learning in the School Garden: Theory into Practice** | CALS

LANDSCAPING PROFESSIONALS INVITED!



Habitat and Ecosystems
Land Pro (HELP)
Conference & Endorsement Program

MARCH 11-13, 2025

- Robust Curriculum:** Presented by the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center
- Remote & In-Person Options:** Zoom option for 2 of 3 days.
- Scenic Location:** Hosted at the Hartwick College Pine Lake Environmental Campus in Davenport, NY.
- Space is Limited!** Limited to 50 landscaping professionals.

Why Attend?

- Learn strategies** to create sustainable habitats through landscaping, as well as how to advertise and leverage these highly-desired services to your clients.
- Earn** Continuing Education credits.
- Get listed** as an Endorsed Eco-scaper on the HELP Program web page, National Audubon Plants for Birds Native Plants Database, and Homegrown National Park website.



ORGANIZED BY
Delaware-Otsego
Audubon Society



Scan or visit for
details & registration:
<https://doas.us/help>

4-H Tractor Safety Certification Course

Registration Deadline March 7, 2025

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties will be offering the Safe Tractor and Machinery Operator's Certification Course.

This safety course is available to youth ages 14 and up. Any youth under the age of 16 must complete this program in order to receive a Certificate of Exemption for farm equipment and tractor operation.

Classroom and driving skill instruction included.

Class fee is \$40. Make checks payable to CCE Schoharie & Otsego Counties. Class is limited, sign up soon! Contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu or 607-547-2536 ext 225.

CLASS DATES: MUST ATTEND ALL CLASSES

Monday, March 17, 4-H Office, 31 Maple St., Oneonta, 6-8 p.m.

Monday, March 24, 4-H Office, 31 Maple St., Oneonta, 6-8 p.m.

Monday, March 31, 4-H Office, 31 Maple St., Oneonta, 6-8 p.m.

Monday, April 7, 4-H Office, 31 Maple St., Oneonta, 6-8 p.m.

Monday, April 14, 4-H Office, 31 Maple St., Oneonta, 6-9 p.m.

Saturday, April 19, Driving Test, River Valley New Holland, 3910 State Route 7, Oneonta, 1 p.m.

Schoharie and Otsego Counties 4-H Happenings



With the start of the new 4-H year, member enrollment has been in full swing with the addition of new youth members, adult volunteers, and 4-H clubs. Over the last couple of months, 4-H staff have been busy enrolling members, conducting club leader meetings, volunteer training, and holding informational meetings for new 4-H families.

The Tractor Supply Company Paper Clover Sale was held from November 29th through December 15th. With the support of Tractor Supply Company in Cobleskill & Oneonta, Paper Clover donations were collected to help provide program scholarships for youth enrolled in Schoharie & Otsego County 4-H. Scholarships will be available to youth who are interested in attending 4-H camps and other leadership events throughout the year.

The annual New York State 4-H Agribusiness Career Conference which is held in collaboration with the State University of New York (SUNY) at Cobleskill and co-sponsored by the New York State Farm Bureau Foundation for Education, was held in October. 4-H youth from across New York State gathered at SUNY Cobleskill to learn more about career opportunities within agriculture and the academic requirements for these degrees. This year's 2-day conference featured mini-tours to farms and businesses in the local area as well as seminars, guest speakers, and guided tours of the SUNY Cobleskill agriculture facilities.



Interested participants at the Plant Science Campus Study Session



A scene from the Agricultural Engineering & Technology Study Session



The 4-H Agri-Business Career Conference welcome and orientation



SUNY Cobleskill Dairy Processing Center Mini-Tour



Youth working on computers in the Agriculture Career Investigation Lab

Looking forward to the start of 2025, the 4-H programs in Otsego and Schoharie Counties will be conducting 4-H Officer Training, re-starting the Earn-an-Animal & Livestock Auction programs, holding workshops, as well as beginning to prepare for 4-H Quiz-Bowl and 4-H Public Presentations programs.

Schoharie 4-H Happenings

Schoharie County 4-H Achievement Night is one of those special events where CCEO gets to recognize youth ages 5-19 who are enrolled in the Schoharie County 4-H program. Acknowledging youth accomplishments is important on many levels, as it supports positive youth development. It helps to maintain motivation and commitment to continuous hard work, strengthens self-esteem, encourages positive behavior, and builds lasting memories. In addition, when accomplishments are acknowledged, it shows that youth efforts and hard work are seen and appreciated. 4-H extension staff collected 4-H records from youth participants at the end of the 2023-2024 year in the form of portfolios, project completion sheets, and achievement books. 4-H members received 4-H year-end participation or completion recognition based on their efforts. Exceptional youth efforts were recognized with Outstanding 4-H Member certificates, as well as Individual Awards. This past 4-H year, there were 231 youth participants in the community 4-H program. Even though not all of these youth were able to attend the Achievement Night celebration, they



Youth and 4-H volunteers and families enjoying snacks (top) and an ice cream social (bottom)



4-H Achievement Night Youth Recognition

will all be acknowledged. We hope that by having this in-person celebration for 4-H participants, youth will feel proud of their accomplishments and be invested in continuing to participate in 4-H projects and club events on a regular basis.

In December, Schoharie County 4-H held two county-wide programs, a 4-H Shooting Sports Archery clinic and a 4-H Fine Arts & Crafts workshop. 4-H Introduction into Archery was held in collaboration with Middleburgh Rod and Gun Club. This clinic focused on teaching youth ages 8 and older the basic rules of safety, proper equipment selection and care, as well as beginning shooting techniques. The following week, a 4-H Arts and Crafts workshop was held under the direction of 4-H Program Coordinator, Nancy Brumaghim. The workshop provided 4-H youth of all ages with crafting materials, supplies, and tools to create three different winter craft projects including a beaded tree ornament, snowman plaque, and a button art canvas.

Continues on page 10

4-H Happenings, continued from page 19



4-H Arts and Crafts workshop completed winter craft projects



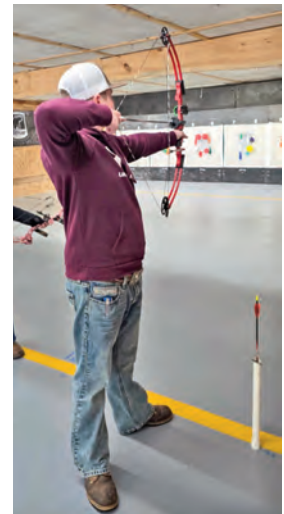
4-H youths working on their craft projects



4-H Shooting Sports Archery clinic at Middleburgh Rod & Gun Club



Youths practicing their archery skills (above and below)



Otsego County 4-H Happenings

4-H clubs and members have been working on a variety of 4-H projects. The Ewes and Friends and the Garrattsville Gray Wolves 4-H clubs celebrated National 4-H Week with outdoor displays. The Ewes and Friends also carved and decorated pumpkins in October. The Lord of the Reins 4-H club has been busy planning and holding their equine drill team exhibition in October, they made their sparring costumes with help of local quilters. After many practice sessions, their event was a success. The Springfield High Meadows 4-H club was making wreaths to display for the holidays.

Two Otsego County 4-H members, Julia Vunk and Tyler March, have joined the NYS 4-H Animal and Agricultural Leadership Program. This program is designed to bridge the gap between high school education and careers in the dairy, livestock, and equine industries.

In November Otsego County 4-H held the National 4-H STEM Challenge workshop, Food for Thought. It is a collection of three engaging activities that equip kids with fundamental knowledge of factors that contribute to Food Security, how people are impacted both globally and locally, and how youth can personally contribute to creating a more food-secure community.

In December a 4-H Fine Arts Painting Workshop was held for 4-H youth to use their creativity and imagination to paint on a canvas, with a holiday theme.



The Ewes and Friends 4-H club carving and decorating pumpkins



Garrattsville Graywolves 4-H club National 4-H Week display



The Lord of the Reins 4-H club sewing their equine drill team costumes



Helping Hands 4-H club member Bentley painting at the 4-H Painting Workshop



The Springfield High Meadows 4-H club made wreaths for the holidays



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Smart Energy Choices – Mohawk Valley

**Join us for a FREE Weatherization Workshop
 and FREE meal with Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Saturday, January 18, 2025

11am-1pm

In the Community Room of the Southside Mall

5006 State Highway 23, Oneonta, NY 13820

- Learn how energy is wasted in your home
- Access programs to reduce your energy use
- Receive a FREE home energy savings kit (**worth \$40!!!!**)

Visit our website to register:

<https://www.mohawkvalleyenergychoices.org/events>



Contact for more info:

Michaela Fisher

Energy Educator

518-234-4304 ext.114

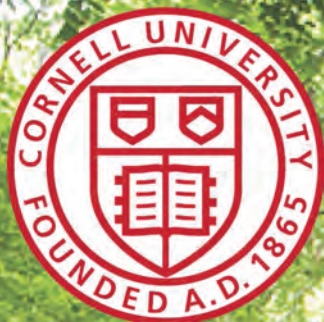
**Registration is required
 and space is limited**



Cornell Cooperative Extension
 Oneida County

Cornell Cooperative Extension
 Schoharie and Otsego Counties

SOUTHSIDE
 M A L L



NY Master Forest
Owner Program



ForestConnect

2025 CORNELL MASTER FOREST OWNER TRAINING



Have you ever thought about using your knowledge and experience to help fellow woodland owners?

Become a volunteer MFO

Enhance your knowledge with our training!

Join us for an online training

Tuesdays, March 11 - April 22, 6:30-7:30 pm

For consideration to participate,

Register by March 4th

Apply at CornellMFO.info or
Contact us for more information

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Columbia and Greene Counties**

**Agroforestry Resource Center
6055 NYS Route 23
Acra, NY 12405**

New: **\$35/person, \$50/couple**

Returning: **\$18/person, \$25/couple**

Contact Regional Director - Catskills/Lower-Hudson
Shane Stevens, ss3666@cornell.edu
518-622-9820 Ext. 118

WINTER QUICK TIPS

Building Healthy Habits: Food and Community Nutrition



Tips for Your Choosy Eater

Many preschoolers may choose to eat only certain foods or may want to play at the table and not eat. As long as your child is active and is growing, they are likely eating enough to stay healthy.

Here are some ideas for encouraging a choosy eater:

1. Stay positive and don't refer to your child as a choosy eater. Children often believe what they hear.
2. Offer new foods one at a time and in small portions.



**Cornell
Cooperative
Extension**

3. At the start of the meal, offer new foods before offering foods your child enjoys. Children are hungry at the start of a meal and are more likely to try new foods.

4. Let your child decide between two healthy foods - try "Would you like an apple or strawberries?" This gives your child a choice yet gives you control over the choice being offered.

5. Be a good role model - let your child see you enjoying a variety of foods. Children often imitate the adults in their lives

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

GET MORE *Healthy* RECIPES

Apple Sandwiches

Makes 2 servings, serving size 1/2 apple

Ingredients

- 1 medium apple
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon raisins

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Cut apple in half from the stem down and lay each half, cut side down on a cutting board. Slice each half into 6 half-round slices and cut out the core.
3. Spread 1/2 teaspoon of peanut butter on one side of each apple slice.
4. Put 4-6 raisins on top of the peanut butter on one apple slice. Top with another apple slice, peanut butter side down. Squeeze gently.
5. Continue with remaining apple slices.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Find more recipes at: <https://fnec.cornell.edu/for-participants/recipe-table/>

Nutrition Facts for 1/2 apple: 150 calories, 1.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat; 48% calories from fat; 0mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 20g total carbohydrates, 3g dietary fiber, 1g added sugars, 4g protein, 0mcg Vitamin D, 18mg calcium, 0mg iron, 206mg potassium

Source: FoodHero.org

Kids Corner

Visit your local library with your child, and check out *A Day So Gray* by Marie Lamba. Read the book with your child, then take a walk together to discover the colors you see on a gray day in January!



MEET YOUR EDUCATOR:

Michelle Leveski (518)
234-4303 ext. 115
mml39@cornell.edu

Sign up for a FREE class!

All Schoharie and Otsego County residents are eligible for our fun, interactive, supportive nutrition education classes.

REACH OUT TODAY TO SIGN UP!



<http://www.facebook.com/adopdinghealthyhabits>



Adopting Healthy Habits

This material is funded by the USDA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

Are you Getting Enough Fruits and Vegetables?



According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025; almost 90 percent of the U.S. population does not meet the recommendation for vegetables and about 80 percent of the U.S. population does not meet fruit recommendations. Your vegetable and fruit needs depend on age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity. Vegetable intake should be between 2 and 4 cups per day, while fruit intake should be between 1.5 and 2.5 cups per day. You can visit www.myplate.gov to tailor a MyPlate plan to meet your needs.

All forms of vegetables and fruits matter when it comes to good nutrition. Fresh, frozen, canned, or dry. The choice of fresh, frozen, canned, and dry is largely a matter of taste, preference, availability, and cost. Frozen and canned are often processed close to the field thus they are nutritionally similar to raw fruit and veggies. Vegetables and fruits are packed with nutrients that help protect against some cancers, heart disease, and other chronic diseases.

DID YOU KNOW – Vegetables and fruits use their colors to signal which beneficial substance they contain!!

Red fruits and vegetables help to keep your heart healthy and lower your risk of certain types of cancer.

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables help support a healthy immune system, good vision, clear skin, and bone health.

Green fruits and vegetables help keep our vision clear and our skin healthy. They also protect against certain types of cancer.

Blue and purple fruits and vegetables help improve memory while keeping our hearts healthy and lowering the risk of certain types of cancer.

White fruits and vegetables help lower cholesterol and blood pressure, as well as reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer.

TRY THESE TIPS to get more COLOR in your diet!

- Add chopped summer squash, onions and mushrooms to spaghetti sauce or soup.
- Dip carrots, broccoli, tomatoes or celery in low-fat dip or hummus.
- Feature veggies in main dishes like omelets, sandwiches, pasta and stir-fry.
- Top cereal, oatmeal or yogurt with berries, sliced banana, or dried fruit.
- Make a fruit salad or a smoothie with your favorite fruits and for extra nutrition try adding a handful of spinach!
- Keep fruits and vegetables visible so you are likely to choose them.

A New Year Goal: Cultivate Success with Better Bookkeeping

Join us for a six-session virtual series designed to boost your knowledge about what bookkeeping services are available to help you excel in farm recordkeeping.

6 Sessions from 12noon-1pm

- January 16th - Meeting Goals with Keeping Books
- January 30th - Low(er) Tech Options That Still Work
- February 3rd - Quick Books - Upgrading to On-Line
- February 27th - Other On-Line Options (Ag Squared, PC Mars, AmBrook)
- March 3rd - More On-Line Options (Wave & Farm Raisa)
- March 27th - Keeping Receipts, Comparing Packages: Pros & Cons

Program is team taught by CCE & Farm Net Business Management Educators and experts from the companies.

Why This Program??

- New to farm bookkeeping or experienced and looking to find more efficient or effective methods?
- Looking to learn and compare, firsthand, about various means and services?

This program is for you!

Fee: \$60 per farm for the entire series

Register Here
http://webink.cornorperfect.com/2024NewYear_BetterBookkeeping

brought to you by...
Cornell Cooperative Extension

PROGRAM EVENTS

Visit cceschoharie-otsego.org to see the most up-to-date listings offered.

Otsego County 4-H Public Presentation Workshop

Saturday, January 11, 10:00 a.m.
Rowe House, 31 Maple Street, Oneonta
4-H Members will learn new skills and practice doing a Public Presentation. To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu 607-547-2536 ext. 225

Otsego Master Gardener Volunteers Winter Sowing Workshop

Saturday, January 11, 10:00 a.m. to noon
Southside Mall Community Room, 5006 St. Hwy. 23, Oneonta
Learn about starting seeds outdoors and start a mini-greenhouse to take home. \$5 program fee for materials. (See page 1)
Pre-registration required by January 8. To register visit cceschoharie-ortsego.org or call 607-547-2536.

Smart Energy Choices Weatherization Workshop

Saturday, January 18, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Southside Mall Community Room, 5006 St. Hwy. 23, Oneonta
Free weatherization workshop where participants will learn about cost-saving programs to reduce energy use, receive a free home energy savings kit (\$40 value) and a free meal. (See page 12)
To register visit mohawkvalleyenergychoices.org/events. Contact Michaela Fisher for more information: nbm53@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 114.

Martin Luther King Day (offices closed)

Monday, January 20

Otsego County 4-H Cooking Clinic

Saturday, January 25, 10:00 a.m.
Rowe House, 31 Maple Street, Oneonta
4-H Members will learn skills about how to decorate cupcakes.
To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu or 607-547-2536 ext. 225.

Seed Swap

Saturday, January 25
For more info see page 4.

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 6:30 p.m.
Meetings of CCESO's Board of Directors are open to the public and are held synchronously at the CCESO Extension Center in Cobleskill and the CCESO Education Center in Cooperstown.

Otsego County 4-H International Day

Sunday, February 2, 1:00 p.m.
Southside Mall Community Room, 5006 St. Hwy. 23, Oneonta
4-H Clubs will showcase countries around the world. To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu. 607-547-2536 ext. 225

Schoharie County 4-H Public Speaking Workshop

Tuesday, February 4, 6:00 PM
Cobleskill Extension Center
To register, contact Catherine at cmr336@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 113. 4-H youth participants will get tips for selecting a topic, learn the parts of a presentation and how to organize their thoughts, get tips for creating a poster and/or visual aids, and practice speaking in front of others.

Otsego County 4-H Earn-an-Animal Program Interviews

Saturday February 8, 10:00 a.m.
Rowe House, 31 Maple Street, Oneonta
4-H members will participate in interviews for funds to support the purchase of an animal. To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu or 605-547-2536 ext. 225.

Schoharie County 4-H Earn-an-Animal Information Night

February 11, 6:00 PM
Cobleskill Extension Center
4-H youth ages 8-18 (as 1/1/2025) can apply to earn funding toward a project animal to raise and show as their own. 4-H youth

and parents can ask questions and learn about the requirements of the program and will be given an opportunity to ask questions. EAA program applicant interviews and program orientation will be held in March (date TBD).

President's Day (offices closed)

Monday, February 17

Schoharie County Ag Networking Gathering

Tuesday, February 18, 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at SUNY Cobleskill
Sponsored by CCESO, the Schoharie County Farm Bureau, the Institute for Rural Vitality (IRV), and Schoharie County's Ag Development Specialist. Includes an "Expo" of agricultural resources and vendors, updates on agricultural legislative issues, lunch, and break-out sessions. Pre-registration is required. For more information contact Liz Callahan, eac283@cornell.edu.

Otsego County 4-H Sewing Clinic

Saturday, February 22, 10:00 a.m.
The Rowe House, 31 Maples Street, Oneonta
4-H members will learn and practice sewing skills. To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu or 607-547-2536 ext. 225.

Schoharie County Earn-an-Animal Program Application Deadline

Friday, February 28, 2025
Contact Catherine at cmr336@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 113 for information or for an application.

Otsego County 4-H Public Presentations

Saturday, March 1, 9:00 a.m.
Morris Central School, Morris
4-H members will give a demonstration, illustrated talk, recitation, or speech. To register contact Teresa Adell, tla47@cornell.edu 607-547-2536 ext. 225.

Schoharie County 4-H Public Presentations Day

Saturday, March 1, 9:00 AM through afternoon
Cobleskill Extension Center
County-wide event where 4-H youth make presentations to a panel of evaluators and an audience. To register, contact Catherine at cmr336@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 113.

Capital District Horse Quiz Bowl Competition

Saturday, March 8
Location/time TBD
4-H members to demonstrate their knowledge by competing in a Jeopardy-style contest, answering questions about horses. Quiz bowl team practices will be held January through March, times & dates TBD. Contact Catherine at cmr336@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 113 for more information.

Capital District Dairy Quiz Bowl Competition

Saturday, March 15
Location/time TBD
4-H members to demonstrate their knowledge by competing in a jeopardy-style contest, answering dairy-related questions. Quiz bowl team practices will be held January through March, times and dates TBD. Contact Catherine at cmr336@cornell.edu or 518-234-4303 ext. 113 for more information.

4-H Tractor Safety Certification Course

Six classes in Oneonta from March 17 to April 19 (see page 7).
Pre-registration required by March 7.

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, March 25, 6:30 pm
Meetings of CCESO's Board of Directors are open to the public and are held synchronously at the CCESO Extension Center in Cobleskill and the CCESO Education Center in Cooperstown.

Program Advisory Committee Meetings

2025 meeting dates TBD. Please check the website or call 518-234-4303.

Cornell Vegetable Variety Trial Garden at the CCESO's Otsego Education Center in Cooperstown

BY FRANCINE STAYTER, OTSEGO MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER



VVT Garden at CCESO's demonstration garden in Cooperstown.

For 50 years Master Gardener Volunteer programs have been dedicated to sharing research-based information with the public. Cornell's Vegetable Variety Trial Gardens (VVTG) are one of the ways we learn and share through planting vegetables in a demonstration garden. In this citizen-science project we plant and monitor how well the vegetables grow in our region and evaluate the re-

sults. The results are then published as a resource for the public. In recent years, the trials have focused on vegetables from different regions and cultures around the world to match the diversity in our state and nation. The information gained from the VVTGs across New York State is analyzed, compiled, and shared as a reference so gardeners know which plants will grow best in the various regions of New York. You can find it at [Vegetable-Varieties-list-2024](#).

In 2024, Master Gardeners Tina McGurrin and Celia Oxley led the VVTG at the CCE Otsego Education Center with help from the OMGV Grounds Committee. The vegetables in the trial this year were those with roots in Eastern Europe. Some of the plants originated in Eastern Europe and others were vegetables that originated elsewhere but were very popular in vegetable gardens in Eastern Europe. Interestingly, Eastern Europe has climate that is similar to New York State, with certain areas being “climate twins” to areas in New York State. This makes the vegetables well adapted to growing conditions in NYS. Cultural connections to Eastern Europe run deep in NYS. Between 1880 and 1914, when at least 7.5 million people from Eastern Europe migrated to the US, New York was the entrance point for the vast majority. Since 1990, immigration from Eastern Europe to New York State has risen.

Preparation for the VVTG began with a webinar by Doug Muller who presented information about the cultural origins of Eastern Europe and growing tips for the vegetables that would be part of the VVTG. Doug is the co-founder of the Hudson Valley Seed Company which provided the seeds for the 2024 trial. In May, Tina and Celia went to Cornell to attend presentations and picked up seeds, plants and other useful materials. All the VVTGs receive specific directions for growing the vegetables so that growing conditions are consistent.

For Tina and Celia, this was their first time to lead the VVTG. They were very curious about how well these vegetables from Eastern Europe would grow in Otsego County. While both are seasoned gardeners, this provided some new challenges.



Otsego MGV Celia Oxley harvesting beets.

They found excellent support from Cornell throughout the project. Working as co-chairs helped them share ideas and questions along the way.

Cornell provided excellent signage to post in the garden. The signage included information about the varieties as well as cultural practices used to reduce plant disease. The gardens were cultivated using the cultural practices described on the signage.


The VVTG included Cosmonaut Volkov Tomatoes, Ukrainian Slicing Cucumbers, Elba Potatoes, Bulgarian Carrot Peppers, Robert Wakefield Dry Beans, Gigante d' Italia Parsley, Bouquet Dill, Genovese Basil, Mint, Danvers Carrots, Cherry Bell Radish, Early Jersey Wakefield Cabbage, Clear Dawn Onion, and Detroit Dark Red Beets.

Celia noted that the cucumbers were especially prolific, and it was hard to keep up with picking them. She found the Bulgarian Carrot Peppers – which look like carrots – were beautiful and very hot. She was also impressed by the dry beans. It was easy to know when they were ready to pick as their outer shells turned yellow. While the beans looked unimpressive, she was surprised when they yielded a big harvest for the number of plants. When cooked the beans were tasty and cooked relatively quickly for dried beans. The abundant produce from the gardens was shared with local food pantries.




VVTG Cucumbers

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell Garden-Based Learning



Cultural Roots of Eastern Europe
'Ukrainian Slicing Cucumber'



Ukrainian Slicing Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*):

This variety doesn't get bitter, even after a heatwave.

A straight green slicing cucumber with slight ribbing and pale green speckles. Produces nice yields of uniform, 8-inch fruits which should be harvested when cucumbers are green and white and the skin begins to smooth, but before they become shiny and yellow.

Growing Tips:


Cucumbers should be grown in full sun.

Growing them on a trellis saves garden space!

Provide regular and sufficient water for best production.

Mulching the base of the plant(s) with straw or chopped leaves from last fall, will help retain soil moisture.

With special thanks to



Continues on page 20


Tina was most impressed by the Elba potatoes. They took one Elba potato with eyes and divided it into four pieces, each having at least one eye. Surprisingly, in a few weeks there were four plants growing to a height of six inches. Since Elba potatoes are indeterminate and grew in multiple layers, they needed to add four inches of loose soil around the plants to improve yield. Adding soil protects the plants and prevents greening (potatoes exposed to the sun develop a greenish hue which indicates solanine, a bitter, potentially toxic alkaloid if eaten in large quantities). They also added mulch to minimize weed growth. Indeterminate potatoes, like Elba, do well in raised beds or potato towers.

The Elba, a late maturing variety, took about 110-120 days to mature. They kept checking the plants for yellowing leaves, but the plants thrived throughout the summer until September. When they finally dug them up, they were in multiple layers, white fleshed, and quite large. They harvested over 20 pounds. Tina found the potatoes had excellent flavor, firm, and a slightly waxy texture. They store well and are resistant to early blight, late blight, and scab. These were recommended.




Potato harvest

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell Garden-Based Learning




Cultural Roots of Eastern Europe

Potatoes



Elba Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*):
This pale-skinned variety has excellent flavor and is an impressive all-purpose potato.
The tubers are large with white flesh and they store well.
The plants are high yielding with good resistance to common scab and are Late Blight resistant.
This potato variety is great for soups, stews, salads, or baked.

Growing Tips:
Potatoes can be grown in ground or in large deep containers. Tubers are formed above the root so "hilling" is needed as the plant grows.
Potatoes require plentiful water, and do best in loose, well-drained soil that is kept weed-free.
Potatoes should be harvested 2-3 weeks after the foliage has died back.

With special thanks to 

Celia noted that doing the trials was a real learning experience. They were required to plant and cultivate the vegetables in specific ways they might not have done before. Throughout the season, Tina and Celia were required to keep records, both written and photographic, of the performance. The data required included information evaluating each variety with a 1-5 star rating for the following categories: Taste, Yield, Ease, and Overall. There was also an area for adding any details they wanted to include.



VVTG onion harvest



Tina and Peter Coleman weigh 10 lbs. of onions.

At the end of the season, the OMGVs invited the public to tour the garden to learn about the vegetables, see and taste many of the vegetables, and take samples home. It was a wonderful evening of tasting, talking, and sharing. Tina and Celia will again lead the VVTG next year. The 2025 trial will focus on the “Cultural Roots of the African Diaspora.” Cornell will be partnering with the Truelove Seed Company.

Master Gardener Volunteers are always learning and sharing. Celia summed up her goals for the project: “I wanted to learn... I did that in spades.” Thank you to Tina, Celia, and the Grounds Committee for helping all of us to learn through the Cornell Vegetable Variety Trials.



Join Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Nutrition Programs EFNEP, Healthy Connections and SNAP Ed



Where adults and youth learn by doing!



- ✓ Building 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

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 you and your family!

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



Nelta Miller
Healthy Connections
Nutrition Program
Educator
518-234-4303 Ext. 120
nbm53@cornell.edu



Maegan Freeman
SNAP Ed Nutrition Program
Educator
716-816-6019
mef265@cornell.edu

Mohawk Valley Energy Choices Helps Save Money and Energy

High energy costs affect many area residents, but there are ways to bring those costs down. To help navigate the technologies and programs available to save residents money on their energy bills, New York State created the Regional Clean Energy Hubs.

The local Hub is Mohawk Valley Energy Choices. The Hub is a group of nonprofits that serve Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego and Schoharie counties. Together, they work to make clean energy solutions and jobs accessible.

Mohawk Valley Energy Choices serves all residents, nonprofits, and small businesses in the Mohawk Valley. The Hub focuses mostly on underserved communities and those with limited income.

When residents contact the Hub, they'll be connected to a trained Community Energy Advisor (CEA). For Schoharie and Otsego counties, that CEA is Michaela Fisher. Michaela can share resources on energy efficiency, clean heating and cooling, solar power, and more. She can help residents navigate clean energy assistance programs and make changes to their homes that help them save energy. This energy savings can save residents money on their energy bills. Contact her and other CEAs on the Hub's website for more information: mohawkvalleyenergychoices.org/meet-our-team.

If you prefer to speak over the phone, Michaela can be reached directly at 518-234-4303, ext. 114.

Here are some of the free services we can offer local residents:

- Explain programs that can help with heating bills, drafty homes, heating systems, and solar and other clean energy
- Help learn about jobs and job training in clean energy
- Explain a home energy assessment and how it helps people
- Help someone fill out an application for energy assistance programs
- Explain the energy incentives available to a person or business
- Direct income-eligible residents to home repair programs
- Help learn how to make a home ready for energy improvements

- Explain electric vehicles, charging stations, and vehicle rebates
- Help find a contractor to make clean energy upgrades
- Find a community solar program and help residents and businesses sign up for it
- Conduct community campaigns
- Help boost workforces



Michaela tabling at Miracle on Main Street in Middleburgh, NY



Mohawk Valley Regional Clean Energy Hub



Michaela tabling at the Cooperstown Farmers' Market

2024 Annual Meeting



CCEO staff at the annual meeting included, front left to right: Michelle Leveski, Maegan Freeman, Marcie Foster, Liz Callahan, Nelta Miller, Susan Salisbury, Catherine Roberts; back left to right: Michaela Fisher, Mayra Richter, Nicole Thompson, Nancy Brumaghim

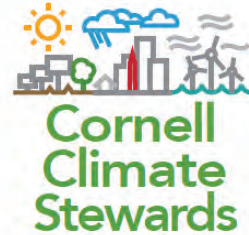


Above:
Guests enjoy appetizers and talking with program staff.

Right:
Tina Douglas (President) and Liz Callahan (Executive Director) greet the audience.



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:



Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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