



WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER



News From The Orchard

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Fall harvest has come and gone in our small orchard and we are thankful for all the good fruit we collected this year. This year was the first year we felt like we might need a commercial sized cider press. It would be nice to get one set up in our area to do large amounts of apples for anyone and everyone. I talked with an Amish man who grew up in Ohio and remembers as a child taking apples in to a press in his neighborhood and paying by the gallon to get their apples turned into juice. This should be a consideration in our utilization and marketing efforts with The 100 Orchard Project.

I spoke with Judy Heiling recently about her experience with grafting and running a small nursery business she calls "Queenies Greenies". Judy has been running her nursery business for over 30 years and grows a variety of flowers, shrubs and fruit trees which she sells at flea markets around the state. Most of her income comes from these efforts. She is self-taught and likes trying new ideas out. Her first attempt at growing fruit trees was "eaten up" by the local deer population. Since then a fence has been built and a lot has been learned about discouraging the deer.

Judy grafts 100's of trees every year. She told me she can graft about 70 trees in a two hour

sitting and usually gets about a 90% take with her grafts.

Judy and her sister Pat Altrichter have established a 10 acre fenced u-pick orchard near Randall Minnesota where they have 3 acres of Saskatoon berries and over 100 cherry trees. Judy and Pat also have over 55 different apple varieties planted in their orchard for scion wood and just to see how they all do. They plan an open house in July 2009 that will be reported on in a future newsletter. They are still working on a name for their orchard.

Judy's favorite apple is the Fireside but she admits that there are a lot of good apples out there. At our last 100 Orchard workshop that was held at The Farm on St. Mathias, Judy showed a list of over 1200 different apple trees that anyone can order through the mail and graft on to their own root stock.

Judy is the last of ten children still on the home place. She lives with her mom on a beautiful farm near the Little Elk town hall in Todd County. When Judy went to school, girls weren't allowed in FFA or any of the shop classes. After she graduated from high school she looked for a college that taught what she was interested in, with no luck, so she started on her own. She reads a lot and is a member of the North American Fruit Explorers (NAFEX) which is an organization that encourages fruit exploration in its broadest sense. NAFEX is mainly hobbyists interested in growing, finding and evaluating fruits and nuts. They have a yearly meeting in various locations around North America at times that coincide with peak fruit ripening in that area. They also have a publication called "Pomona" where they encourage hobbyists to write about their experiences. NAFEX also has a library where materials can be checked out for a small fee. More information on NAFEX can be found at their website which I got to by entering NAFEX on a google search.



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News from the Orchard (continued)

Judy's advice for people wanting to start a nursery or an orchard is to start small, don't be afraid of trying new things and do your homework. Judy thinks that there is so much diversity across the landscape, with the fruit varieties, the soils, the people and what they like and don't like that there is room for all of us to grow and enjoy some sort of fruit and/or berries - maybe even make a living off of them.

The 100 Orchard Project has more grafting workshops planned for this spring, probably in late March. We will keep you posted on locations and dates.

Submitted By Greg Nolan

FALL FIELD DAY REPORT

The SFACM Fall Field Day was held in conjunction with a 100 Orchards Project Workshop at The Farm on St Mathias on September 13. The workshops were free and were consolidated due to the weather. They included: small woodlot management (for firewood), composting, mulch and dripline installation and operation, garden layout, apple variety comparison. Bob Jones, The Farm on St Mathias owner, stated that he would host the workshops again "in a heartbeat" because of the enthusiastic response.

Coloring Book Available to Local Schools

"Annalid and her Friends" is available again this year to bring to your local school. Please contact

Sue Peterson for your copies of this great educational tool!

Annual Meeting Notice The 2009 SFACM Annual Meeting will take place at the Browerville Community Center (653 Main St N) on Saturday January 10, 2009 from 10AM-3PM

This year's theme is again "Local Foods", but this time with an emphasis on how people are making local foods a part of their community. Our featured speaker is June Varner, who will be speaking about the work she is doing with the Little Falls School district to bring locally grown produce to school children.

After her presentation, we will conduct the business meeting, break for a locally grown lunch, and then divide into focused networking groups with varying topics. Topics include but are not limited to: getting local food into public schools, mulch and dripline installation and operation, marketing grass-based meat, grass-based dairy, orchard planning and maintenance.

Local Foods Update

Lots of good things are happening in local foods right now. Whole Farm Coop reports that their sales have gone up in the past year, and that they are starting to work with a local school district to provide more locally grown items.

In Minneapolis, the mayor has started a program called the Minneapolis Homegrown Initiative in order to promote more locally grown foods. The steering committee will start to meet this winter to set priorities.



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“Gardening Matters” a nonprofit in Minneapolis which promotes community gardens is expanding to include small livestock. “Barnyards in Backyards” is working with the local animal control people to change ordinances, and putting together information in English, Spanish, and Hmong to promote small livestock in the city.

People are really catching on to local foods, so now we face different challenges. The next step in promoting locally grown foods is to rebuild the necessary infrastructure (like processing plants and commercial kitchens) according to Mary Hanks at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

The future of local foods is definitely positive. It is up to us to take advantage of the opportunities now presented to us to help everyone eat better!

Upcoming Events: Alternative Crops Program January 6

Agriculture Alternatives 3rd Annual Conference

Colin Peterson staff, Understanding and utilizing The Farm Bill – Dr. Craig Schaeffer report on alternative crop studies - Bob Shafer and Bob Hunt discuss alternative energy and growing energy crops-. Other features include a Shared Community Kitchen, High tunnel innovations, and more.

Information booth space is available for \$50; includes attendance and lunch. General Admission is \$8 pre sale or \$10 on event day. A local foods lunch will be served. Event brochures are available at Buckwheat Growers, Staples Ag. Center, Village Emporium Wadena and either Staples or Wadena Chamber office.

Reservations email DeEtta Bilek deebilek@wcta.net or call at 445-5475.

Exhibitors can call David Evert 612-282-9301 or Del Moen at 639-0305. Payments direct to Agriculture Alternatives. Location: Central Lakes Community College, Staples, MN

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Date: January 6, 2009

Expand Your Zone – Extend Your Season Workshop

This season extension workshop will be led by one of the nation's leading experts, Eliot Coleman, author of The New Organic Grower, Four Season Harvest, and Winter Harvest Manual. He will discuss suitable crops, soils and fertility management, tunnels and tunnel construction, timing of plantings, yearly scheduling, growing crops not normally grown in northern zones, and much more. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions. The \$50 Registration Fee includes the workshop, afternoon break, and a copy of Eliot Coleman's book, Winter Harvest Manual.

Seating is limited. Questions: Mary Hanks, 651-201-6277 or mary.hanks@state.mn.us

Location: St. Cloud Civic Center

Time: 1:00pm – 5:30pm

Date: January 15, 2009

9th Annual Minnesota Organic Conference & Trade Show

This conference provides great information about organic agriculture to excite experienced organic producers as well as people new to this farming system. Besides the keynote speakers there will be more than 30 breakout sessions on organic production of crops, dairy, livestock, fruits and vegetables, marketing, and many more topics. We will serve organic and grass-fed products for our snacks and meals, and highlight these growers and processors at the conference. For more information visit www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/conference.htm.

Location: St. Cloud Civic Center

Date: January 16-17, 2009

Gardening Like The Forest: Home Scale Ecological Food Production An Evening with Dave Jacke

Learn how you can grow an abundant food-producing ecosystem in your backyard! Join us and learn how to grow food, fuel, fiber, fodder,



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fertilizers, farmaceuticals, and fun. We can meet our own needs and regenerate healthy ecosystems at the same time! Cover charge = \$10. All are welcome.

Location: Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 2501 Stevens Ave, Minneapolis, MN
Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm
January 16, 2009

Grape Growing 101 (a.k.a. 11th Annual Learn to Grow Grapes Seminar)

If you are considering starting a vineyard, are a new grower or need guidance in developing your vineyard, we believe this event, based on grower experience, will be of enormous benefit to you. Visit our website

www.greatrivervineyard.com for information and a sign up form or call (877) 345-3531. Cost is \$65 per person; \$45 for each additional person from same entity. Make your check payable to GRV. You can also call us with your credit card information and we can take your registration over the phone.

Location: Great River Vineyard, Lake City, MN
Time: 8:30am – 4:30pm
Date: January 31, 2009

11th Annual Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference

Thursday and Friday January 22 and 23, 2009

Located at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, MN Come learn how to profit from the growing market for local food and renewable energy. Visit the trade show, participate in round table discussions and eat your fill of great locally grown food!

<http://www.rivercountryrca.org/valad.html>

Upper Midwest Regional Fruit & Vegetable Growers Conference & Trade Show

January 22 & 23, 2009
St. Cloud Civic Center - St. Cloud, MN

www.mfvga.org/

Back to Basics

Saturday, January 31, 2009 8:00AM – 4:15PM
Pine River-Backus School Information and registration at www.happydancingturtle.org

The Third Clean Energy Resource Teams Conference will be held in St. Cloud on February 10-11, 2009.

www.cleanenergyresourceteams.org/events/conference/

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's 18th Annual Conference

Sustaining Our Farms: Produce, Pasture & Perseverance

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2009
Time: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location: Buntrock Commons, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN

Keynote Speaker: Joel Salatin

Visit www.sfa-mn.org for more information