

D Acres of New Hampshire

Organic Farm & Educational Homestead

www.dacres.org

Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn 2004

Leaves falling, smoke rising from the wood-fired herb dehydrator, pumpkins piled up in the garage, a new season has certainly arrived. A cool, rainy summer has turned into a perfect autumn. Anticipation of the frost had us harvesting the last of the garden, canning elderberry jam and dilly beans, freezing vegetables and making pesto to feed us through the winter. Learning to gather food from the garden as it ripens is always an educational experience for new folks at the farm. People that are used to having tomatoes throughout the summer are surprised when they have to wait until September or October, and then far too many to eat are suddenly ripe in the same week. Preserving the harvest is a useful skill for everyone that has space and inclination for a vegetable garden.

Last month a slew of interns and Executive Director, Josh Trought, went to the Common Ground Fair in Maine to participate in workshops and watch demonstrations on a variety of topics related to agriculture, health, spirituality and much more. The work-traders loved the gathering of more than 20,000 people per day, all interested in personal and professional development, as well as meeting other folks interested in organic farming and sustainable living. Workshops and demonstrations at the fair complemented the learning that took place here this summer on gardening, animal husbandry, alternative energy and building, irrigation, herbs, Permaculture... (more than we could possibly describe).

Moving on

Sadly, our crew of summer interns is slowly returning to college, work or heading off on new adventures. Miriam Kessler (work-trader at D Acres earlier this summer) and her partner David returned midsummer to New York City. They wrote back at the beginning of September to say that they were harvesting string beans and tomatoes. All that time spent learning in the garden had such quick, tangible results! They recently invited a few people over to their apartment to make Tempeh (fermented soybeans), a process that they learned at D Acres this summer from fellow work-trader Alex Edelson.

Alex, who had been at the farm since June, took off on a long journey on Wednesday. Originally from Indonesia, Alex is head-



ing off to live in Argentina to begin work at a new community of which he is a founder. Alex came to D Acres with knowledge valuable to sustainable community living such as alternative building and consensus decision-making. His time at the farm was well spent in honing these skills, expanding his knowledge and passing this information on to others. Alex learned to make homemade Tempeh and taught a different work-trader or staff member to make it each week. Working in the kitchen (baking bread, sweetbreads and making Tempeh) gave him valuable skills not only in teaching, but also in developing a product, marketing and sales. Using his experience in making adobe, Alex coordinated the process of making the adobe bricks that have been incorporated into our alternative building project this summer.

He was also able to witness one example of people living and working cooperatively toward a shared mission. He must now use what he has observed at D Acres and his experiences in different cultures to determine how to shape a community that is just beginning. What an opportunity!

Autumn Activities

The work trade crew has been busy this fall working on the combined animal husbandry/greenhouse building. The first floor, made of cob and cordwood, decorated with glass bottles and shells, was completed in late September. A quick introduction to carpentry class taught by Josh enabled work-traders to place a ceiling/floor, erect a set of external stairs, and frame windows for the second floor. At last it was time to mortar in the adobe bricks that were made throughout the summer! With the second floor nearly to height, trenches are being dug for the foundation of the greenhouse portion of the building.



In addition to the greenhouse, staff, work-traders and workshop participants contributed to the enhancement of our cob oven. The oven, our favorite place to go for wood-fired pizza, cookies, pies and casseroles gave birth to a cob cook-top, equally suitable for making tea, soup or boiling pasta. Between the solar shower and the cob cooking area, we barely have to go indoors during the summer! Utilizing resources at hand (such as wood

and solar energy) is an important aspect of the design of D Acres. Our choice to limit the use of gas and oil as much as possible in the daily operations of the farm is one step that we are making toward our goal of sustainable living.



Debris from tomato plants, squash and peas is making its way to compost piles, green manure cover crops are swaying in the cool breeze, and garden beds are disappearing beneath their blankets of this season's compost, comfrey leaves, straw and leaves. The harvest has been smaller than usual, despite the increase in garden area planted this year. Such is the reality of a cool, rainy summer. Despite the weather, the garlic crop sized up well again this year. This week we plant the

seed garlic for next year, hope for a great crop and enjoy the parts that we play according to the changing of the seasons.

This growing season we planted 48 more blueberry bushes, 50 raspberry canes, and added several fruit trees and perennial plants to our orchard. The design of the perennial plantings is to make an investment in time and effort today that will pay off years down the road in gardens that require little maintenance. The diversified crop system allows us to benefit from a robust, varied harvest even if one or several crops do not thrive in a particularly rainy and cool, or hot and dry season.

Expanding Our Expertise

As this year's growing season comes to an end, staff are discussing the direction that we would like to go for the next growing season. Accordingly, we have placed advertisements for two staff positions at the farm. The Garden Manager will oversee education relating to the production of annual vegetables and culinary herbs. The Kitchen Manager will oversee education in the organic baking operation and the bulk Food Club, as well as mentoring staff and interns in proper nutrition and food preparation. Filling these positions will allow current staff to focus more on their particular areas of interest while expanding educational curriculum for interns and workshops in all areas. The response to our advertisements (still available on idealist.org or on our website on the Opportunities page) has been very exciting. We will continue to receive applicants and hold interviews through the end of October.

Meet Betty

The summer newsletter began an introduction of our Board of Directors with Chairman of the Board, Brian Marsicovetere. This month we introduce Betty Ann Trought, secretary and treasurer of the Board. Betty has been a supporter of on-farm education at D Acres since 1997. Betty lives with her husband, Bill Trought, in Dorchester. A retired nursing administrator and educator, Betty has provided a great deal of organizational guidance that has enabled the organization to continually mature. The combination of her influences: fiscal responsibility and commitment to personal growth through hands-on education, has helped the staff at D Acres progress toward our organizational

goals.

In the last several years Betty and her husband have contributed generously toward the educational mission of D Acres. Betty and Bill contribute to the organization because they believe that the money they invest will be put to empowering tomorrow's leaders to take responsible steps toward a safer world. As an active member of the League of Women Voters, Betty believes that each person has the power to use their voice, their vote, their letters and e-mails to be a part of a democratic world. She has no tolerance for apathy or laziness. Having worked very hard for 40 years, she appreciates that young idealists come to the farm for our internship programs and learn the value of a strong work ethic, and how that relates to progress.

Betty supports our workshops because she understands that while some people learn well by reading a book, others truly understand by the act of doing: comprehending the difference between conventional and earth-friendly building methods by engaging in the process of design, materials acquisition and actual building; understanding the value of a perennial gardening system through participation in seed to seed annual production side by side with perennial planting, maintenance and harvesting; learning the properties of plants and their medicinal uses by harvesting the lovely fragrant sweet stems of the Lavender plant from the garden to make a tincture; or learning the practicalities of erosion-control by hitching a log to a team of oxen and choosing a transport route through the woods that causes the least damage to the forest floor. She believes that education must be available for all types of learners to ensure that no one is left behind because they do not subscribe to a traditional, particular mode of learning.

Betty also supports the organization because she benefits from the work that D Acres has done to bring people together in Dorchester. By supporting annual activities sponsored by the Town of Dorchester, bringing residents together at monthly potlucks and providing workshops at reduced cost to neighbors, she sees the community coming together in ways that will make Dorchester a more supportive, safer place to live.

How can you get involved?

D Acres accepts contributions of all sizes and shapes. Donations can be made out to D Acres of NH and mailed to the address below. For a list of in-kind contributions that the organization is looking for, please visit the Support Us page of our website (www.dacres.org).

Or you can support D Acres by coming to our free full moon potlucks! Potlucks are scheduled for October 29 and November 12 at 6pm. All are welcome. Hope to see you soon!