



# D Acres of New Hampshire

## Organic Farm & Educational Homestead

www.dacres.org

Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2005

### Garden Tips for Tyrants

(a few words from this season's Garden Manager, Michelle Nowak...)

While recently looking through Shane Smith's *Greenhouse Gardener's Companion* (Fulcrum Publishing 1992), I giggled when I saw the author's suggestions for brutality in gardening:

*"If things do come up too thick, then you have to be ruthless and get to the job of thinning. This is where new gardeners often fail. They can't bring themselves to pull up (and kill) baby plants. If this describes you, wait until you are in a bad mood, after paying the bills or having a domestic argument. It does wonders to your thinning abilities, and when you are done, you'll find yourself to be in a much improved mood" (105).*

Since seeing this, I've thought about ruthlessness a lot, especially during the hours I've spent transplanting seedlings from six-packs into beds in our greenhouses and into larger pots. I've realized that ruthlessness in gardening goes far beyond thinning. Though I used to think that the best gardeners were nice, gentle people, I see now that would-be dictators might in fact do better. We should send power-hungry young people to work in the garden before their dreams to rule corruptly and absolutely wreak havoc on society. It's a terrific win-win situation: they'll be great gardeners, and freedom will reign. People don't enjoy being ruled by an iron fist, but plants actually seem to enjoy it. Those of us who are less cruel need to remember, while gardening:

- Bury transplants deep, up to their first set of true leaves. This means pinching off the small leaf-like cotyledons that appear before the true leaves. Cotyledons are originally part of the seed, and function to provide food reserves to the developing plant, but drop off naturally as the

*continued on pg. 2*

What a long winter! Just when we thought it was coming to an end, the snow began in earnest. As April unfolded, bare ground emerged and snow beat a hasty retreat, everywhere but Dorchester! In the last few days, Spring has come at last. Daffodils are peaking out of the ground, the willows and witch hazel are blooming, and the chickens refuse to go inside their coops until well after dinnertime. The greenhouses are full up with growing greens and we are feeling the giddiness of Spring sunshine.

### Since we last spoke...

In November, Josh led a small group of North Americans to an ecovillage in Argentina called Asociacion GAIA. The trip included participation in a Sustainable Living course at the ecovillage near Navarro, trekking in Patagonia, and exploration of Buenos Aires.

This winter, Josh will be leading a Study-Abroad program to Argentina. The trip is open to learners of all ages, but is especially relevant to college students that are interested in expanding their Spanish language skills through immersion, and natural science majors that thrive in a



[Sharing a meal at GAIA Ecovillage in Argentina, November 2004]

learning-by-doing environment. Participants will have the opportunity to take part in gardening and earthen building projects at GAIA. In addition, program participants are encouraged to spend the six weeks prior to departure at D Acres, learning fundamentals of organic gardening, alternative building and the teambuilding skills that make traveling as a group manageable. If you are interested in learning more about the trip, visit the Programs page of our website.

In February three new interns joined us at the farm: Michelle Nowak, who will be serving as our Garden Manager this season, as well as Sarah Haggett and Matt Felling, who kicked off our organic bakery for the season. Michelle has been busy starting flats of veg

www.dacres.org

### *Garden Tips cont.*

plant develops.

- When transplanting tall seedlings up to larger pots, to make sure they get buried deep enough, you can curve their roots into a J. Be a little gentle, but don't be afraid to bend the root. The important thing is to bury the plant up to its neck.

- Push the limits of the short growing season; trust hardy crops to handle cold late winter/spring nights in an unheated greenhouse or cold frame without much coddling on your part.

- Give up on seeds that don't germinate. Give them a reasonable time frame, then move on to seeding other crops. Don't waste space or time with seed more than a couple years old.

- If you have more seedlings ready to transplant than you have space, compost or give them away. Don't squeeze more plants into a bed than actually fit with correct spacing.

The struggle towards ruthlessness has been a tough one for me. But I am inspired when I think about how cruel gardening can cure potential tyrants by satisfying their egos and releasing their anger. I think they'll come to realize that their lowly subjects -- their plants -- are really their masters, because without plants, they'd go hungry. And with that understanding, would-be dictators will lose their need to cruelly subjugate their fellow humans. They'll realize the shallow limits of power, and forget the desire to exploit the working class, as the little people are the ones responsible for their food, clothing, and shelter. Isn't gardening amazing? -MN

*Michelle Nowak joins us this year to organize our efforts in the annual gardens. She will be facilitating workshops and supervising interns on annual vegetable production. Prior to D Acres, Michelle was a visiting professor at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico; taught urban planning and composting; served as an educator with the Garden Mosaics Program in Sacramento California; taught Community Gardens Composting class; served as a summer intern at Gardens of Earthly Mirth Organic Farm in New York, and worked in the biocontrol lab at Cornell University, where she graduated with a BS in Urban & Regional Studies.*

gies, herbs and flowers under the lights in the basement, while still finding time to visit her newborn niece, Skylar, in the Upper Valley and rock climb at the Rumney Crag.

## Sweet smells in the kitchen!

Sarah and Matt have done a fabulous job of coordinating and implementing the start of the baking program this year. Bread and a great variety of organic cookies and sweets are available directly from the farm, as well as in Plymouth at Café Monte Alto and Peppercorn Natural Foods, and in Rumney at Miller's store. We also enjoy contributing to the community: donations of bread have gone to the Senior Center in Plymouth, a raffle to support the Wentworth Parent Teacher Organization, and to a Teacher's Appreciation Luncheon.

The duo has also implemented a CSA-type weekly bread program. Participants sign up for a weekly delivery or pickup of organic baked goods and/or fresh farm eggs. The program allows us to get our products directly to the consumer, our favorite way! There is no fee to sign up. Call today and begin enjoying fresh whole-wheat goodies this week!

Though Matt has moved on, we are pleased to have Sarah stay on as the Kitchen Manager for the 2005 growing season. Sarah comes to us from Fairport, NY. Before she arrived here, Sarah was working at Heifer International's Overlook Farm. No stranger to the gardens, she assisted in all aspects of growing heirloom and regional vegetables as well as preparing for the weekly CSA pick-up and farm stand. Previously, Sarah worked at Benevolence Cafe in Columbus, OH, an enterprise owned by the non-profit Sanctuary. There she baked whole grain breads and created spice and herb-laden soups from scratch, as well as making fresh garden salads and baked tofu sandwiches. Are you hungry yet?

Sarah is your contact for the Bulk Food Club and weekly baked goods pickups. She will also be the culinary artist behind workshop vittles and our contributions at the monthly Full Moon Potlucks. Not to be missed!

## Wealth from the woodlot...

Baked goods aren't the only D Acres products seen recently on the town. D Acres donated a table to the Friends of the Arts Auction in March. A local businesswoman from Plymouth ultimately went home with a beautiful piece from the Trimurti Collection – fine furniture made from sustainably harvested wood at D Acres. If you were not at the auction, don't worry, pieces of the Collection are available at Earthly Treasures in Bristol, New England Craftsmen Association in Wolfeboro, and in downtown Plymouth at the Unlimited Man starting around the first of May.

The furniture will also be available at Artistic Roots, a cooperative retail store and gallery in Campton, NH. D Acres already displays small craft items, including wooden utensils and birch bark framed prints and mirrors. In addition to displaying the range of talent in the area,

the artists and crafters at Artistic Roots are committed to offering a wide array of classes and workshops for youth and adults. We are delighted to collaborate with this community-oriented organization. You can learn more about Artistic Roots and the contributing artists at: [www.artisticroots.com](http://www.artisticroots.com).



[Restoration & Finishing workshop participant Sharetha Marsicovetere revitalizes an old table, April '05]

We would be remiss if we did not mention our own

New  
Addition!



- April 23 Hand-cut Dovetail Box 10-4pm (\$25)
- April 24 Full Moon Potluck 6-9pm (free)
- April 30 Perennial Forest Gardening 10am-3pm (\$25)
  
- May 1 Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser 10am-Noon (\$10 adults, \$5 kids)
- May 1 Open House 2pm (free)
- May 6 FILM : Earthaven – Farming with Nature/Global Gardener 7pm (free)
- May 7 Mushroom Plugging 2-4pm (\$15)
- May 14 Let Worms Eat Your Garbage 2-4pm (\$20 adults, \$30 for the whole family)
- May 20 Endangered & At-Risk Native Medicinal Plants 6:30-8:30pm (\$5)
- May 21 Sustainable Forestry 1-4pm (\$20)
- May 22 Full Moon Potluck 6-9pm (free)
- May 28 Jigs, Fixtures & other time saving devices 9am-4pm (\$25)
- May 29 Plant Walk 2-4pm (free)
  
- June 3 FILM : Unconstitutional : The War on Civil Liberties 7pm (free)
- June 5 Open House 2pm (free)
- June 11 Composting 2-4pm (\$15)
- June 18 Tempeh Making 1-4pm (\$15)
- June 24 Summer Solstice Party 6-9pm (free)
- June 25 Introduction to Woodworking 9-4pm (\$50)
- June 26 Plant Walk 2-4pm (free)

Already this season pre-registration for two of our woodshop workshops with Sam have required us to put folks on the waiting list. To ensure a spot in any upcoming workshops, be sure to let us know in advance. The full calendar for the year is available on our website on the Workshops & Events page.

## Gettin' the gardens goin' (and other outdoor fun)...

The departure of snow and ice has us busy reclaiming our outdoor projects. Josh, our new intern Bruni, horticulturalist Micki Visten and Garden Manager Michelle have been building raised beds in our new greenhouse /animal husbandry building [photo at right], affectionately referred to as the “g-animal.” The structure, nearly completed last fall, offered cozy accommodations to goats and chickens this winter. The chickens, at first apprehensive about the ramp that was designed to transport them from their second floor loft to the ground, now race past each other on the



incline to get in and out of the building hundreds of times a day. The goats have moved back to their 3-season house by the lower gardens, and like the chickens, they spend their days out enjoying the weather.

Earlier this Spring the newly constructed beds along the glass walls of the g-animal were built up using wooden slats and sifted loam from a still semi-frozen pile just off the Northwest corner. Farm Manager Abby Holm added a couple cartloads of compost with the help of August & Henri (our team of Jersey oxen). The two woodstoves built into the building were going day and night to get the temperature of the soil ready for planting. The sun has pretty much taken over that job now, so we only light the fires in the evenings when it gets chilly. Kale and other resilient starts have been transplanted into the lower greenhouse. We can hardly wait to start munching!

As the ground thaws, we will be busy with the posthole digger, expanding pasture for our grass-loving oxen and fencing off a new forest garden area that the goats have spent five years preparing for us. Later this month a crew from Sun-weaver in Norwood, NH will be assisting us in the installation of a solar array for the Community Building. Josh has already begun digging a hole by the driveway to accommodate the pole on which the tracker will rest. The tracker will hold 15 photovoltaic panels which will convert energy from the sun into electricity. The tracker allows the entire array of 15 panels to shift throughout the day in response to the angle of the sun, thereby generating more electricity than a stationary mount. The power that we generate goes to the electrical grid and turns back our meter. The small-scale photovoltaic project furthers our goal of home-made energy production.

We are also delighted this Spring to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors. Local Community Guarantee Savings Bank executive, Mike Long, and Recreational Educator from Johnson State University, Kel Rossiter joined the Board at our quarterly meeting in March. We are excited about the expertise and enthusiasm that they will add to the project.

If you can't tell, the farm is abuzz with activity. We hope you'll have a chance to come by and join in the fun.

Peace... the staff at D Acres

Spring Newsletter 2005



D Acres  
of New Hampshire

Organic Farm & Educational Homestead  
P.O. Box 98 Rumney, NH 03266  
603.786.2366 [www.dacres.org](http://www.dacres.org)

