



Cedar  
Circle  
Farm

# Crops to Tabletops

Summer/Fall 2008



Farmstand & Education Center  
CERTIFIED ORGANIC  
VEGGIES & BERRIES

## Connecting Kids, Classrooms & Cafeterias: *Rainbow, Three Sisters, Pollinator & Pizza Gardens*

This past spring, Cedar Circle Farm's Education Coordinator, Cat Buxton, contacted Thetford Elementary School (TES) to explore ways to help strengthen links between local farms and schools.

TES had started a school garden in 2007, but was unsure how to integrate it with the rest of the school curriculum. According to the school nurse, Joette Hayashigawa, "It was perfect timing as we were looking for ways to make the garden an ongoing, repeatable operation by tying it to the school curriculum and to the needs of the school cafeteria. Cat is helping us to reach that goal." The aim of the School Garden Program is to connect students, the classroom curriculum, and the school cafeteria to the local farming and garden community through classroom activities, farm field trips, the school garden, and fresh food taste tests.

Jim McCracken is a placed-based educator who has been working with Bradford's Farm-to-School Program. He and Cat met with the TES teachers to develop a plan that would cover the curriculum needs for the primary grades (K-2) for both the 07/08 spring and 08/09 fall lessons. The plan includes classroom visits from both Jim and Cat, field trips to Cedar Circle Farm, and time with the students to plant their gardens.

OPEN THROUGH  
OCTOBER 31

FARMSTAND  
Tuesday-Saturday

10 AM-6 PM  
Sundays

10 AM-5 PM

HELLO CAFÉ  
Tuesday-Sunday

8 AM-5 PM  
Closed Mondays

At the school, there are six raised beds dedicated to the use of grades K-2, one bed per class. They are located next to the playground and ball fields, facing south. Cat designed a plan for each of the beds to correspond with the garden curriculum that Jim put together, whenever possible choosing plants that would provide tools for learning and the opportunity for eating.

The Kindergarten area is called the Sensory Rainbow Garden. These beds serve to teach the lifecycles of seeds for the spring lessons, and provide a setting for the fall lessons about the five senses and the role of birds. The students planted seeds in the classrooms with Cat and Jim and learned how to care for them until they were ready to be moved outside. One bed features rainbow flowers and roots in red (nasturtiums and beets), orange (calendula and carrots), and yellow (marigolds and golden beets). The second bed

features the same in green (basil, dill and fennel), blue (bachelor buttons and blue potatoes), and purple (zinnia, purple basil and turnips). The backs of the beds are lined with very tall sunflowers and  
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Cat Buxton leads a nasturtium taste test with TES students in the greenhouse.



## Connecting Kids, Classrooms & Cafeterias

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beautiful amaranth for making birdseed. Everywhere they could fit there are herbs to taste, touch and smell. This fall, the students will do a taste test of rainbow root sticks with herb dips and herbal tea.

The first grade planted a Three Sisters Garden, which is a companion planting of corn, beans, and squash. Classroom visits included experiments comparing how seeds grow in different types of soils, and a Native American story about the Three Sisters that describes how the plants help each other grow. The students planted native flint corn and beans in the classroom and cared for the seeds until they were ready to be planted in the garden. They honored the earth and the four sacred directions as they planted pumpkins, squash, corn, calendula flowers, and three kinds of beans. This garden holds promise for lots of soups and breads in the school cafeteria this fall. The entire first grade came to Cedar Circle for a tour which included taste tests, and an opportunity to dig in the soil to see what critters could be found in there.

The second grade met their spring lesson needs by studying the lifecycles of seeds, and will complete the fall curriculum by learning about pollinators in their Pollinator Garden. This garden was designed to attract as many bugs, birds, and butterflies as possible. Plenty of herbs, carrots, broccoli, cabbage, and cherry tomatoes are mixed with a delightful array of flowers. In May, the students planted seeds in the classroom with Cat and had a classroom presentation on pollinators from Jim. At the second grade field trip to Cedar Circle, the students searched the greenhouses for pollinating bugs and did a lot of taste-testing.

In addition to the K-2 beds, there is a seventh bed in the same location,

dedicated to the use of the fifth- and sixth-grade Garden Group. This bed has a hoop house built over it for use as a season extender. The mini-greenhouse was built by CCF's Field Manager Luke Joanis and Assistant Field Manager Nic Cook, using nearly all recycled materials from the farm. The students interviewed the food service director to learn what veggies she would like them to grow and placed an order for those seeds. In May, Cat and the students, with fifth-grade teacher Abby Logan, planted the hoop house bed with spinach, mustards, lettuces, and arugula. Cat met with the students weekly during their lunch hour to help them with the garden. The garden provided salads for the teachers throughout the last weeks of school. As the greens were harvested, they were replaced with seedlings that the students had started on their own in Mrs. Logan's classroom. As the summer has progressed, Cat has transformed this bed into a pizza garden. The plan is to provide enough toppings for the whole school to have fresh garden pizza for lunch one day this fall. After that, there will be late greens which should go well beyond the frost in their little hoop house.

After the gardens were planted, the students watered their respective

beds during recess, with the fifth- and sixth-grade Garden Group helping the K-2 group. Throughout the summer, Cat held Summer Garden Club every Wednesday morning with volunteer parents, teachers and students as well as the summer school students. All of the helpers were given a share of the harvest to take home, and taste tests happened every week with the kids. The maintenance crew assisted by watering the gardens over the summer.

The experience has been a positive one for everyone involved. According to Cat, "Parents are often impressed when their kids request vegetables at the dinner table because they tried something they liked at school or at the Farm. I love it when parents seek me out to tell me that. Even better is when kids stop me to say 'Hey Cat! I had arugula yesterday and it was good.'" Students in the third, fourth and fifth grades chose to write four stories about the garden in the spring issue of the school newsletter, including an interview with Cat.

When asked what the plan is for next year, Cat says, "This has been such a successful venture that we intend to do the same program next year, improving as we go, working toward the goal of having the garden be an integral part of each student's learning and eating experience at TES."



*The Thetford Elementary School gardens in August.*



## 1100 People – One Bag of Trash!

### Waste Recovery at the 6th Annual Strawberry Festival

What we contribute to the world is important to us. Our festivals are a way of opening up our farm to the public and inspiring them to care about sustainability, organic farming, and delicious fresh food. But what does it all mean if they end up generating too much trash? We decided that waste management had to be part of the plan, and developed an approach that would create less trash, educate people about recycling and compost, and recover nutrients from the organic matter by composting it.

At the 6th Annual Strawberry Festival, held June 29, we set up a staffed Waste Recovery Station (WRS). Rather than have trash barrels available for people to throw things away, we directed everyone to the WRS. There we had a row of well-marked barrels to collect all forms of what would formerly have been “trash”—organic matter for composting, returnable cans, recyclables, and real trash. We put a lot of effort into making sure that the serving containers were made of bio-degradable organic materials, such as cutlery made of corn starch, and plates made of sugar cane fiber. In an effort to divert plastic, we provided tap water in paper cups rather than selling bottled water.

At the end of the Festival, 1100 people created five barrels of compost, one barrel of returnable cans, one small bin of recycling, and only one small bag of “trash” that weighed less than ten pounds!

Cat Buxton, facilitator of the compost project remarked, “Single-use compostables are not the answer, but they are better than plastic and a step in the right direction. We feel that the Waste Recovery Station not only helped to recycle resources, but provided a really



Above, L to R: CCF field crew member Dave Winters, volunteer Mike Feiner, and strawberry picker Jonathan Leitschuh (front) helped guide festival goers to the right waste recovery bins. Gabriel O (Quirk) of White River Junction, performs a “Garden Variety” Puppet Show at Strawberry Festival.

good point of education on that topic for all the folks who attended the Festival.”

When attending the **6th Annual Pumpkin Festival on Sunday, October 12**, please help us keep trash to a minimum by using the Waste Recovery Station!



## Dinners in the Field – Rain or Shine!

This year, our Dinners in the Field sold out early. Approximately 50 people attended each of the three dinners. The first on July 26, **Divine Flavors of the Field**, featured wonderful blueberry-and-herb marinated chicken from Record Ridge Farm in Lyme, N.H., accompanied by vegetarian moussaka and an array of vegetables and salads fresh from the fields. Guest speakers Brent and Regina Beidler of Beidler Family Farm in Randolph Center, Vermont, talked about their efforts to help Vermont dairy farms make the transition to organic systems, and their

experiments with growing oilseed and other grain crops in central Vermont. The increasing demand for locally grown *continued on next page*



Brent and Regina Beidler, guest presenters at Divine Flavors of the Field.

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## Dinners in the Field

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foods has prompted the Beidlers and other farmers, including CCF, to diversify their crop base to include items more traditionally grown in the Midwest, like sunflowers, soybeans, canola, and dry beans.

Our **Italian Dinner** on August 2 featured a delightful meal prepared entirely by guest chef Giovanni Leopardi from Carpaccio Ristorante Italiano in Hanover, N.H. Even though it rained buckets (!), guests enjoyed an incredible rustic Italian country dinner prepared largely with ingredients fresh from the farm. On August 9, our **3rd Annual**

**Mexican Night** finally gave us a rain-free evening. The tamales, chile rellenos, and chicken with mole sauce were all big hits! CCF's co-manager Will Allen gave an overview of his recently published book, *The War on Bugs*. Guests enjoyed the beautiful evening, the zesty food, and participated in a lively discussion about the "real cost of cheap food."

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## SAFE FOOD MESSAGE: *The War on Bugs* Book on Tour



**C**CF co-manager Will Allen has been working hard to promote the message of safe food when he gives talks about his book *The War on Bugs*. The book was published in February, 2008, by Chelsea Green Publishing Company. Since then, Will has been touring the state and various parts of the country promoting the book. In Vermont, he has spoken in bookstores and libraries in Thetford, Norwich, Montpelier, Burlington, Manchester, and many places in between. He has also been a presenter at conferences such as the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, Solar Fest, and Expo West (the largest natural food show in the country) in southern California. He has traveled to New York, Washington, D.C., and all over California speaking about the hazards of toxic pesticides on our food.

"People just don't realize that the use of pesticides has actually increased over the years. They think the FDA and the USDA are protecting them, but they are not," Allen commented. "We need to realize that local and organic are the ways to protect ourselves and our environment. And the good news is that organic food is available! When Rachel Carson talked about silent spring in the '60s, there weren't all that many alternatives. Now, there are thousands of organic farms

across the country, and the movement toward local economies is growing by leaps and bounds. There is no reason people have to continue to eat food that is grown with toxic materials and that is shipped from across the country or the world."

The book has received many favorable reviews in publications such as the *Valley News*, *Times Argus*, *Seven Days*, *Hobby Farmer*, *ACME* (Action Coalition for Media Education) and *PAN North*

*America* (Pesticide Action Network North America's magazine). Will has had two related articles published in the on-line news magazine, *AlterNet* (whose aim is to inspire action and advocacy on the environment, human rights and civil liberties, social justice, media, health care issues, and more). *The War on Bugs* is available at CCF's farmstand or can be ordered through our website at [www.cedarcirclefarm.org](http://www.cedarcirclefarm.org).



Robert Eddy

CCF co-manager Will Allen, author of *The War on Bugs*



## Heirloom Tomatoes, Artisan Cheese & Live Music – Riverside

New this year and held on August 22, fifty folks gathered by the river on a sunny evening to celebrate one of the long-awaited joys of summer: the beloved tomato!

While guests sampled fifteen varieties of heirloom tomatoes, including Red and Yellow Brandywine, Golden Sunray, Striped German, Black Crim, Cherokee Purple, and Green Zebra, along with farm-made crostini, gazpacho and other tomato-based delicacies, local cheesemaker Jeremy Stephenson of Thistle Hill Farm in Pomfret, Vermont, paired the honored food with their certified-organic, award-winning Tarentaise, an aged alpine cheese. To add to the festivities, music was provided by Country Cookin', featuring our own Keith and Kathy Friedland of Corinth, Vermont.

"This event, a first for the farm, provides an opportunity for us to share some of the special delights of summer with friends and neighbors," comments Kate Duesterberg. "There is such a diversity of tastes within heirloom tomato varieties. It's just another reason to celebrate the pleasures of fresh, local, organic food."

## CCF's New Education Program Coordinator Off to a Great Start!

Cat Buxton started working at CCF last fall. Her first assignment was to help coordinate the Pumpkin Festival, and she's been going strong ever since! Cat has plenty of organizing experience around the Upper Valley, serving on the board of the Upper Valley Co-op and volunteering to help organize their education and outreach program. She also has helped organize a group of Upper Valley citizens who oppose the use of genetically modified organisms in food. About five years ago, Cat started her own cleaning business using all environmentally sound cleaning products, many of which she and her partners made themselves.

Since starting at CCF, Cat has made great strides in reaching out to the local schools to help them establish Farm-to-School programs (see page 1 article). Cat is also working with the Upper Valley Co-op to organize a community garden in White River Junction, where she teaches gardening classes once a month. In addition, Cat writes the weekly updates for the Farm's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and has helped us organize all the summer workshops and events like Dinners in the Field and the new Tomato Tasting by the River. If you see Cat around the Farm, she is always willing to talk about local agriculture and how to raise awareness of its importance.



L to R: Cat Buxton and CCF baker/chef  
Elise Bratcher

## The Beet Goes On

Beets are an excellent source of the B vitamin folate, and a very good source of manganese and potassium. The deep ruby red roots can be roasted, eaten raw in salads, steamed, pickled, grilled, boiled or baked. This simple-to-prepare recipe offered by CCF's baker/chef Elise Bratcher was served at the Divine Flavors Dinner in the Field as an accompaniment to her delicious marinated roast chicken.

### EASY ROASTED BEET "SALAD"

1 bunch beets, washed, trimmed, and quartered

1-2 T olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1-2 tsp fresh anise, washed and minced (or other fresh herb of choice)

2 tsp balsamic vinegar

1. Toss the beets in oil, salt and pepper to coat.
2. Place on sheet pan and bake at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes, stirring at 15-minute intervals. Remove from oven when beets are easily pierced with a knife.
3. Place in a medium bowl and add anise and balsamic to coat.
4. Serve hot, room temperature or cold.

## CCF Canning & Freezing Guides Now Available

We have just completed our summer cooking classes: Canning & Pickling and Freezing & Drying. Ten people (capacity for our kitchen) attended each of the classes instructed by our baker/chef Elise Bratcher. Elise compiled wonderful “how to” guides for each class, filled with recipes and hints on canning, freezing and drying. These guides are now available in the farmstand for \$5 each. According to Elise, the Canning Guide “is a way of gently extending the life of your local, seasonal harvest through a little heat, salt and vinegar.”

## CSA Keeps on Growing

As awareness about the importance of local and organic foods has grown, our CSA numbers continue to increase! In 2007, we had 144 members. This year, we have 169! If you are interested in signing up for next season, watch for an announcement in January, 2009, on our website. We'll start selling shares for next year at that time.

## Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides to the Pumpkin Patch

Saturdays and Sundays, 11–4, free!  
Oct 18–19 & 25–26



Farmstand & Education Center  
CERTIFIED ORGANIC  
VEGGIES & BERRIES

225 Pavillion Road  
East Thetford, VT 05043



## GROWING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



*Cedar Circle Farm & Education Center is a certified organic, 50-acre farm located off Route 5 in East Thetford, VT—minutes from Lyme and Hanover, NH and Norwich, VT. Conserved in 1990 with the Vermont Land Trust, CCF is a proud member of Farms Not Arms, the Organic Consumers Association, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), Rural Vermont, Slow Food USA, Valley Food & Farm, Vermont Farms! Association, and Vermont Fresh Network. We also support the Upper Valley Localvores!*

Cedar Circle Farm is open through October 31 for organic fall veggies, flowers and harvest decorations—mums, sedum, flowering cabbage and kale, pumpkins, cornstalks and more!

## 6th Annual Pumpkin Festival Sunday, October 12, 10-5

Family Fun! Rain or Shine ~ Plenty of Parking in the Field

- 10 AM–4 PM** Horse-drawn wagon rides to and from the pumpkin patch. Pumpkin and face painting, mural coloring, cider pressing, educational displays, pumpkin picking, self-guided farm tours. **NEW!** Critter Kites kite making (educational/environmental focus)- \$4/kite
- 11 AM** Concessions open. Pumpkin pie, bread and cheesecake, fall soups, local sausages, CCF veggie burgers, organic ice cream. **NEW!** Vermont Crepe & Waffle's crepe mobile
- 12–1 PM** **NEW!** Educational kid's theater: “Chefs Suzette's Feed Bag Restaurant” put on by the Association of Vermont Recyclers.
- 1–3 PM** Live folk & bluegrass by the Crunchy Western Boys of Warren, N.H.
- 5 PM** Farmstand & Café close. Festival concludes.

**Check our all-new website for details!**

Norm Staunton

