



# Crops to Tabletops

Fall 2004



Farmstand & Education Center  
CERTIFIED ORGANIC

## We're Certified Organic!

We are delighted to announce that Cedar Circle Farm (CCF) earned Vermont Certified Organic status last May. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) awards certification in Vermont. Certified farms use no chemical or synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides on the foods they produce. For farms converting from conventional to chemical-free agriculture, certification takes a minimum of three years, culminating in a thorough practical and written assessment. NOFA-VT visited the farm last spring to review our records and our farming practices.

Unlike conventional growing practices, organic production is not a science with hard rules. Organic techniques continually evolve and can be very specific to a particular farm or region. However, all growing practices must meet minimum federal organic certification standards. Regional certification organizations such as NOFA-VT may set standards that exceed the federal standards in their rigor or methods of working with farmers. However, the federal program must accredit each local certification organization.

Now that CCF has completed the

conversion and certification process, our goals are three-fold:

- ❁ To aid other Vermont and Upper Valley farms in their transition to organic methods;
- ❁ To research and experiment with new organic growing techniques; and
- ❁ To act as a model farm to demonstrate

the economic and agronomic viability of organic farming in Vermont.

Organic certification means that when customers buy food from Cedar Circle Farm, or any other certified organic producer, they know their food is safe, healthy, clean, and fresh. Folks can be equally assured that CCF's produce is grown right here on a farm that they can visit, by farmers whose hands they can shake, and who will gladly answer any questions they have.



## Meet the Farm Managers

CCF managers, husband and wife team Will Allen and Kate Duesterberg, both together

and separately, have been involved for many years in the "field" of sustainable agriculture. Will has taught anthropology and agriculture at the university level and has also farmed his entire life. He was one of the pioneers of organic farming in California and helped start that state's certification program through the California Certified Organic Farmers organization. In 1990 Will founded the Organic Cotton Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to both helping cotton growers make the transition to organic production and to working with cotton companies to encourage them to purchase and use organic cotton in their manufacturing processes. Known throughout the United States and in other parts of the world as an expert on



E. Perry

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## Meet the Managers

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organic cotton, he now serves as an advisor to the Organic Consumers' Association on its Clothes for a Change campaign which focuses on promoting organic and sweatshop-free clothing.

After graduate school, Kate worked with the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, a nonprofit farm group. In that capacity, she and local farmers advocated for legislation at the state and federal levels that would benefit small, family farmers and encourage a transition to sustainable techniques. In Vermont she worked for Rural Vermont for a year before moving on to a position at the College of Agriculture at the University of Vermont. There, she helped organize the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture and served as its program coordinator

Kate Duesterberg



for eight years. In addition, Kate worked with the Women's Agricultural Network at UVM. For three years she also served as managing director of the Sustainable Cotton Project. She is currently on the board of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont.

## Our First Year as a CSA Farm

This year, CCF welcomed twenty-three members to our first Community Supported Agriculture Program.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a collaboration between a local farm and a family or household. Early in the growing season (March, April, or May), a household commits to buying produce

from a local farm by purchasing a "share" in the CSA. That share entitles them to a weekly portion of whatever produce is in season. In return, the farm commits to growing enough produce to fill the shares for the season. We also donate a portion of our harvest to the Vermont Food Bank.

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## Meet our Knowledgeable Staff

**Melissa Gray:** Melissa has been at CCF for 15 years and is our assistant farmstand and greenhouse manager. Melissa's crew of six to eight employees works in the farmstand, grows flowers, makes flower arrangements, and maintains CCF's perennial gardens.

**Norm Staunton:** Norm is CCF's director of Education and Program Development. He comes to the farm with a background in experiential education and in working with young people in outdoor settings. Applying his skills and experience to teaching young people about sustainable farming is a natural for him.

**Dean Whitman:** Dean has been with CCF for almost two years. He is our mechanic, but that title doesn't do him justice. On any given day you might find him plowing fields, planting, maintaining irrigation systems, fixing a truck, mulching strawberries or performing any of the other innumerable tasks he does.

**Eddie DeAnda:** Eddie has been an assistant field manager at CCF for three years, but he has worked with Will and Kate for nearly ten years on various projects related to sustainable agriculture. Eddie co-manages the field crew's eight employees while conducting a wide variety of planting, growing, and harvesting tasks.

**Luke Joanis:** This is Luke's first season with CCF, but he comes to us as an assistant field manager and general jack-of-all-trades. In addition to his

field experience, Luke has expertise in carpentry, produce buying, and sustainable housing.

**Gregg Stephens:** Gregg is in his second year of the CCF Apprenticeship Program and has become a key member of the farm management team. His areas of expertise on the farm include seeding, overseeing our salad mix operation, and running our booths at both the Norwich and Lebanon farmers' markets.

We are fortunate to have a large crew of great employees who work in our fields, and greenhouses, and at our farmstand. While they are too numerous to mention here, they each bring something unique and special to the mix, both in terms of skills and personality. Our staff helps make CCF a special place and contributes greatly to its success.





## Our First Year as a CSA Farm

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A \$350 share provides enough organically grown vegetables for a small family each week through one growing season. From June through October, members come to the farm weekly to pick up a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables, all harvested fresh that day. Shares also include opportunities for members to “pick-their-own” berries, peas, beans, herbs, flowers, or pumpkins right from our fields. This gives folks who want to experience harvesting but lack a home garden a chance to participate.

Shares for our 2005 CSA Program will go on sale in late winter. Please join us for an economical, healthy, and mutually beneficial way to provide fresh, locally grown, certified organic food to your family.

## Cooking Fresh from the Garden Hands-on Classes

Cedar Circle Farm teamed up with Ellen Ecker Ogden, co-founder of The Cook’s Garden seed company; a cooking instructor from Manchester, Vermont; and the author of From the Cook’s Garden cookbook, to offer a series of hands-on cooking classes that focus on delectable ways to prepare local seasonal produce. “Cooking Fresh from Your Garden” classes occur one Sunday a month from 1 to 4:30 P.M.. Each class includes a tour of our farmstand, advice, and tips for selecting seasonal produce, plus instruction from Ellen on how to prepare several recipes, tastings, and samples to take home. The classes are hands-on and take place in our newly renovated bakery and kitchen facility. **The final class of the season, “The Great Pumpkin”, takes place on October 10. Please call to register.**

## 2nd Annual Strawberry Festival

On Sunday, June 27, more than 550 people gathered at the farm for a festival to celebrate summer, luscious ripe red strawberries, and local agriculture. The weather was ideal, and the activities varied. Families enjoyed horse-drawn



wagon rides to the strawberry patch, strawberry picking, guided farm tours, a demonstration of draft horse cultivation and planting, plant pot decorating and planting, face painting, and live fiddle, flute, and guitar music by “The Peels.” At the food concession, festival revelers enjoyed grilled sausages from Vermont Smoke & Cure, of Barre, farm-fresh salad greens, homemade strawberry shortcake, and organic ice cream from Strafford Organic Creamery.

According to farm managers Kate Duesterberg and Will Allen, “This festival provides an opportunity for us to share our passion for sustainable farming with the community. We want the farm to be a resource for the community—a beautiful, fun place to visit and a source for organic produce, quality flowers, and educational opportunities.” Looking ahead, next year’s Strawberry Festival will be held the last Sunday in June 2005.



E. Ferry

## CCF Teams Up With Inner-City YMCA To Offer Farmer Outreach Program

Vermont farmers are a bit of a rarity in inner-city Worcester, Massachusetts. But visit the Greater Worcester YMCA Central Branch on Saturday afternoons during the summer, and you might find young YMCA members selling produce they harvested at CCF at an inner-city organic produce farmers’ market.

These youngsters are members of the Farmers’ Outreach Program (FOP), a joint program

sponsored by CCF’s Education Center and the Greater Worcester YMCA. The FOP brings teens from inner-city neighborhoods in Worcester to CCF on weekends. These teens work alongside CCF staff to grow, harvest, and market organic produce.

Other projects include pumpkin give-aways, the making and marketing

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Norm Staunton

Don't miss the **Second Annual Pumpkin Festival** on **Sunday, October 17**, from 10:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M., rain or shine. We'll be offering fun for the entire family, with horse-drawn wagon rides to the pumpkin patch, pumpkin painting, guided farm tours, information about how pumpkins grow, a demonstration of draft horse cultivation, live music, hot soups, apple cider, pumpkin pie and pumpkin bread, local sausages, and organic ice cream.



**CC Farm Teams with YMCA**  
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of value-added pumpkin products, as well as food system and nutrition projects. This year's FOP began with the sale of Mothers' Day flowers to YMCA members throughout Worcester. The FOP members arranged the baskets by hand and coordinated all marketing activities.

Norm Staunton



**Programs for New & Aspiring Farmers**

In an effort to foster the development of a new generation of farmers, CCF offers a wide variety of programs designed specifically to meet the educational and social needs of new and aspiring farmers. Programs include a two-year apprenticeship program, a summer internship, and a variety of New Farmer workshops. In conjunction with Valley Food and Farm, we also co-sponsor an

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 225 Pavillion Road  
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 Valid through October 31, 2004

Intern and New Farmer Farm Tour and Potluck Series.

New Farmer Workshops cover such topics as tractor skills, basic farm machinery mechanics, using auctions to purchase affordable farm machinery, and buying your first farm.

In addition to these programs, CCF conducts on-farm research to aid new and established farmers in the production of organic vegetables and berries. Currently, we are working on a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant investigating the economic and agronomic viability of harvesting beans and peas used as cover crops.

**Horse-drawn Rides to the Pumpkin Patch**

During the last three weekends in **October — 16-17, 23-24, and 30-31 —**

from **11 A.M. to 4 P.M.**, those in search of the perfect jack-o-lantern or decorative pumpkins can enjoy horse-drawn wagon rides to and from the pumpkin patch to pick their own. In addition, farm visitors can meet the farm animals, peruse educational displays, and shop for fall flowers, decorations, and vegetables at the farmstand.

**Closing for the Season—October 31**

Sunday, October 31, is the final day the farmstand will be open (10 A.M. – 6 P.M.) for the season. This will be the last chance to pick up pumpkins for Halloween and vegetables for the winter. Bring the kids for free horse-drawn wagon rides and pumpkin painting throughout the day.

*Everyone at Cedar Circle Farm thanks you for your patronage throughout the season and looks forward to serving you next year!*