IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Here Comes 2012

Today we are starting up the greenhouse! We'll be planting onions, herbs, broccoli, lettuce and more this week. Usually when we start the greenhouse it is inconceivable that spring is coming – we are often chipping away snow and ice to get to things – but not so this year with the winter that never happened. Certainly snow could still come with odd timing – as it did our last week of distribution in early November this past year.

Unpredictability in weather is becoming the norm which makes farming even more uncertain these days. The PFP farm has some advantages in facing unpredictability by not being in a flood zone, having well drained soil that can deal with a lot of rain fairly easily, having access to irrigation during drought, not growing many perennials (which depend on certain conditions to set fruit in the spring), growing a wide diversity of crops planted over a long stretch of time, and being supported by a CSA who has agreed to support us through the risks and the bounty of farming. I wish every farm had that ideal a site, diverse crop mix and supporting community.
We have a number of plans that we look forward to this year. We plan to increase the number of member potlucks, revamp the shareholder / volunteer hours to make it easier for folks to get involved on the farm, and improve our communication in the share room. We’re planning more “snack” peppers, some bigger varieties of red tomatoes, Chinese broccoli, a bed of perennial cut flowers, and of course good sized plantings of the big favorites: sun gold cherry tomatoes, little baby flower watermelons, broccoli, lettuce and much more. We have purchased a transplanter which will hopefully make transplanting the 168,500 plants we put in the ground each year both faster and easier on the body. And we plan to install herb bed borders in the meditation garden to make it easier to navigate and tend.

We are excited to have new crew of farm apprentices coming on soon. Kasey Peterson and Trevis Carmichael are joining us next week from Nebraska, and Julia Sisson, who has worked with the PFP through Vassar and as a volunteer for many years, will join the farm crew in April. We also have an education apprentice joining us in May, Mara Estes. We are excited that another season is starting and for our community to convene at the farm to connect with the land and each other and be nourished by the food.

Yours in the greenhouse (and behind the computer),

Wendy

**Thank You for Your Gifts - You Helped Set a Record!**

By Susan Grove

As we look forward to spring, the start of the planting season and our farm- and garden-based education programs, we want to thank you – our members – for your remarkable generosity. The PFP received more than $25,000 in membership and restricted donations (for capital improvements, education and Food Share) with member forms turned in during Early Bird sign-ups. This total is 46% more than last year’s Early Bird total, and a record number!

The importance of your contributions cannot be overstated. Your contributions provide the PFP with a solid base of support at the beginning of our fiscal year, allowing us to better plan programs and capital improvements for 2012. We are humbled by your generosity. We look forward to seeing you at the plant sale and open farm day this...
year (May 12th and 19th), when you can start to take advantage of all the benefits your membership provides, and to keeping this generous community spirit alive throughout the 2012 season. Thank you!

About the photo and another opportunity to support the PFP’s work:

This is the photo of a food market in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, which has an anti-hunger plan that goes beyond affordable meals to the production and distribution of food. The city of Belo Horizonte has achieved amazing and inspiring results. This is one of many examples we will share at a series of forums held all over Poughkeepsie in April to envision ways we can change our local food system to ensure access to nutritious food for all. These Community Food Forums will culminate in an all-City planning meeting to be held on June 23, 2012 to draft a Poughkeepsie food system plan. We would like YOU to participate in one of these gatherings to help us generate ideas.

Read more about the Poughkeepsie Plenty project

Read more about the Creating a Hunger-Free Community

Read more about participating in a Community Food Forum

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

Winter Education Update

By Jamie Levato

Starting last fall, the Poughkeepsie Farm Project’s education programs have been offering workshops and cooking demonstrations in some of the local schools and community organizations. We facilitated a five session series with four classes from Clinton Elementary school who had visited the farm twice in the early fall. The sessions reinforced and extended what the students had learned at the farm and focused on food systems and healthy eating.

In addition, we have been working with students in after school programs at two elementary schools and at the Catharine Street Community Center. Right now these
programs are concentrating on healthy eating and preparing vegetable-based snacks.

Our newest school-based program is a collaboration with the food services department at Poughkeepsie High School. Once a week, we are preparing a healthy vegetable-based side dish in the cafeteria for students to taste. The recipes are created by a student from the Culinary Institute of America who is interning with the food services department. The high school students who choose to taste the dishes fill out comment cards where they rate the dish and give feedback about why they liked or did not like it. The can also include recipe suggestions. So far, the students have tried a barley salad, braised kale, and sautéed red cabbage. Dishes that have high ratings from the students may be included as side dishes on the school lunch menu for next year. This program is part of the food services director’s effort to promote healthy eating and healthier school lunch options. The PFP is providing recipe suggestions, doing live cooking demonstrations, serving the students, and talking with the students about the vegetable dishes and healthy eating.

Two PFP Learning Journeys

By Ron Patkus, PFP Board Member

On two rather balmy days (at least for January and February!), members of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project Board of Directors and others had the opportunity to tour both our own PFP campus, and the Sisters Hill Farm in nearby Stanfordville, NY. Both tours provided an in-depth look at a variety of aspects of these local agricultural/community projects.
Attendees were guided around the facilities, and while the focus was on infrastructure, I was also happy to learn about history, governance, finances, operations, and programming. It was especially helpful to hear about the experience at Sisters Hill after gaining a better understanding of how our own CSA functions; we both grapple with a number of similar issues, and it was good to be able to compare approaches to common problems. Together, these visits expanded my understanding of farming in our region, and I am sure other attendees felt the same way. I hope our ongoing effort to expand our knowledge will lead to some practical solutions for us!

*Note: 2012 is a strategic planning year for the Poughkeepsie Farm Project! This effort began when a group of 20 spent three days together in January. This weekend included an opportunity to articulate key questions of our organization at this stage of our history and development and to identify people we could talk to and organizations we could visit to help us answer these questions. These Learning Journeys are giving us insights that will help us plan a sustainable future!

**GET INVOLVED**

**Community Food Forums**

Unpublished

What if Poughkeepsie were known as a food city?
What changes can be made to ensure all residents can secure nutritious food?

We need YOUR input at an upcoming forum!

Your participation in a Poughkeepsie Plenty* Community Food Forum** can make a difference in our local food system.

At forums, we share inspiring example and invite you to help envision possibilities for Poughkeepsie. Forums are positive, engaging, fun and free ~ and food is provided!

The dates, times and locations (in Poughkeepsie, unless otherwise noted) are:

- May 25, 1:00 pm - Family Partnership Center, Room L24 - 29 N. Hamilton St. (NOTA: Foro EN ESPANOL)
- May 30, 8:30 am - Family Partnership Center, Room L24 - 29 N. Hamilton St.

**A Community Food Forum is a facilitated group process designed to identify community assets, generate ideas and prioritize opportunities for using our resources to ensure plenty of nourishing food for all residents. We plan to include the perspectives of as many different organizations, residents and stakeholders as possible. Community Food Forums will culminate in a large, City-wide action planning forum on June 23, 2012 that will invite people from every forum and other stakeholders (~100 in total) to draft a plan for how food is sourced and made easily available to all Poughkeepsie residents.

CLICK TO REGISTER

If these dates won't work for your schedule stay tuned, as additional forums may be scheduled in May. If you want to be sure to receive an invitation to upcoming forums, send an email to: PoughkeepsiePlenty@farmproject.org.

If you want to be sure to receive an invitation to upcoming forums, send an email to: PoughkeepsiePlenty@farmproject.org.
*Poughkeepsie Plenty is a community collaboration led by the Poughkeepsie Farm Project and working to ensure that all residents of the City of Poughkeepsie can secure nutritious food. The project is surveying residents, facilitating community food forums, creating a plan for a hunger-free city and forming a Community Food Coalition to oversee its implementation. Read more about [Poughkeepsie Plenty](#).

**Poughkeepsie Plenty Survey Weekend March 31-April 1**

You can help us finish the Poughkeepsie Plenty community food survey! We have less than 50 to complete (out of 375 total) and will finish, with your help, by the end of our survey weekend March 31 - April 1. Come either or both days to be trained in survey administration and head out in pairs to administer surveys door-to-door at selected addresses.

This is part of a community food assessment studying and creating action plans on food security in the City of Poughkeepsie. If you are interested in learning more about food in Poughkeepsie, meeting your neighbors and helping to improve the food system, mark your calendar and plan come on out!

We’ll have more details in the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you have questions or want to RSVP, contact [Leonard Nevarez](#).

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Plant Sale**

Unpublished

Saturday, May 12, 2012 - 9:00am - 2:00pm

Join us for our popular annual Plant Sale, where you can enjoy the opportunity to:

- Purchase Certified Naturally Grown seedlings and plants--raised on the farm! Choose from 100 varieties of vegetables, annual and perennial flowers, herbs, and hanging baskets. [Download our 2012 Plant List](#)
- Tour the farm fields and gardens: guided tours at 9:30, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, and 1:30
- Meet members of the staff and board of directors and learn about the various programs and activities the PFP offers and supports
- Support our education and food access programs by purchasing beautiful PFP merchandise
- CSA members can sign up for shareholder work hours
- CSA New Member Orientation at 12 noon

Don’t forget to stop by the Membership booth to pick up your membership card--
you may be eligible to receive free plants! (Based on the level of your membership donation.)

A great chance to pick up a little something for Mother’s Day! Sorry, we can’t accept credit cards—cash or local checks only.

The Plant Sale will continue on the following Saturday, May 19, in conjunction with our annual Open Farm Day.

The Plant Sale is located at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project on the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve at the intersection of Hooker and Raymond Avenues in Poughkeepsie, New York. Follow the driveway down past the red barn to the parking lot.

Proceeds from the Plant Sale support upgrades to farm operations and equipment; proceeds from merchandise sales and membership donations support our education and food access programs.

GIVING BACK

Does Your Company Have a Matching Gift Program?
If you are a member of the PFP and/or have given a donation to the PFP you may be
able to significantly increase your gift by just filling out your employer’s matching gift paperwork. The IBM matching gift form (for current employees or retirees) can be found here.

FEATURED VEGETABLE AND RECIPES

Potatoes

The potato is a universal culinary staple. Potatoes have a bad reputation as being carb loaded or fattening, but this has more to do with the methods by which they are prepared than with their actual nutrient content. When not deep fried or smothered in butter, the potato is a nutritious low calorie, high fiber food that offers significant protection against cardiovascular disease and cancer.

The is a high quality protein, meaning it contains all essential amino acids. Different types of colorful potatoes (red, yellow, purple) even rival broccoli in phytonutrient content. In addition, the potato is a good source of potassium, manganese, and vitamins C and B6. Vitamin C, along with other nutrients found in potatoes such as folic acid, quercetin and kukoamines, have proven to lower blood pressure as well.

Choose potatoes that are firm and not yet sprouty.

Image Attribution
Potato and Kale Frittata

Summary

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<th>Yield</th>
<th>6 Servings</th>
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Source: http://eggsonsunday.wordpress.com/2009/03/29/potato-kale-frittata/

Prep time: 45 minutes

Description

To start the day off right

Ingredients

- 2 c kale (stalks removed and leaves cut into bite size pieces)
- olive oil
- 4 potatoes (cut into 3/4 inch cubes)
- 8 eggs
- kosher salt
- pepper
- 1 onions (large, thinly sliced)

Instructions

Preparation: Pour enough olive oil into a non-stick or cast-iron skillet (whatever you use, it should be ovenproof) so that it generously coats the bottom. Heat the olive oil over medium heat until it shimmers, then add the sliced onions and potato chunks. Cook over medium heat until the onions are golden brown and the potatoes are just cooked through when you pierce them with a fork. Add the chopped kale and cook just until the kale is wilted and bright green. Turn off the heat and season the skillet generously with coarse kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Taste a bit of the mixture; it should taste well-seasoned and delicious. In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs. Pour them directly into the skillet, and smooth out the top a little with a spatula (I usually try to make sure the potatoes/onions/kale are fairly evenly distributed throughout the skillet.) Turn the heat back on to medium, and cook the frittata until the edges are set but the middle is still somewhat runny. Place the pan under the broiler to finish cooking, just until the top is starting to brown a little and the eggs are set. Remove the pan from the oven and let cool a minute or two before you slice it into wedges.

Notes
Green Leaf Salad with Roasted Beets and Potatoes

Summary

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Prep time 5 minutes

Description
Hearty salad with beets and potatoes

Ingredients
- 2 lettuce (heads lettuce (red or green leaf))
- 1 lb potatoes
- 1 lb beets
- 1/2 t salt
- 1 1/2 T white wine vinegar
- 1/4 t dijon mustard
- 1/4 c olive oil (plus 2 tablespoons)
- 1 clv garlic (minced)
salt and pepper (to taste)

Instructions
Heat oven to 425 with oven rack in the upper third of the oven. Toss potatoes and beets in olive oil, salt and pepper and spread them out evenly on a baking sheet. When oven is to temperature put sheet in the oven and roast vegetables, stirring occasionally, for 25-30 minutes. Meanwhile, wash and chop the lettuce. Mix all dressing ingredients in a separate bowl. When potatoes and beets are done, toss them in a large bowl with the lettuce. You can serve the salad warm with the potatoes and beets warm, or set these aside to cool for a cold salad. Pour dressing over the salad, and toss immediately before serving.

MISCELLANEOUS

PFP in the Media
Poughkeepsie Pride, the newsletter of the Poughkeepsie City School District, recently included an article (see pages 6 and 7) on the PFP's City Seeds program, that develops urban youth leadership potential and provides positive fresh food learning experiences through hands-on school gardening and cooking with produce, connecting students to natural environments and learning through food production and preparation.

A press release, picked up by Mid-Hudson News Network, was issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to announce the Environmental Justice Community Impact grant awarded to the PFP's Growing City Seeds project. The grant program is designed to help local organizations with projects to address environmental or public health concerns. 123 groups from around the state applied for funding from the Environmental Justice Community Impact Grant program, which resulted in 24 grant awards totaling $1 million. Growing City Seeds was awarded $49,942 for a three year project involving partners.

The PFP was featured in the winter issue of Edible Hudson Valley, focusing on Poughkeepsie Plenty along with an overview of the PFP's education and food justice programs and photos. In case you didn't see it, this article is now available online.

**Announcing Growing City Seeds**

The PFP will begin a new project in 2012 entitled Growing City Seeds. The three year project is supported by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and will be implemented in collaboration with project partners, including the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County and the Fall Kill Partnership Garden.

The goals of Growing City Seeds are to

- Encourage connections to nature and increase understanding of how humans are connected to the environment of the City of Poughkeepsie by developing gardens as centers of learning
- Document and share information about open space and attendant soil contamination in the City that can lay the groundwork for future development of urban community gardens

As a result of the project, more City residents, youth and youth educators will be engaged with an existing community garden (years one and two) and a newly formed community garden (year three). The project will also compile a map on vacant space, lead contamination and land ownership as a resource for future urban garden development.

**Seeking Technology Volunteers**
Are you a techie who likes to learn new things?

Two years ago we launched the new Poughkeepsie Farm Project website, making it the starting point for communication at the PFP. We started last year's work by making the newsletter digital, and then brought recipes into our communications. This year the technology focus is inward, as we look at consolidating all PFP relationship management with the open source CiviCRM software stack.

CiviCRM is a customer relationship management tool that's specifically designed for nonprofits. It's a way to better track interactions with members, volunteers, visitors and organizations. It will streamline PFP office operations, which will enable staff to focus more on programs, and less on paperwork. It will be an exciting and transformative year for the PFP.

It's also a big task, and one we could use additional help with to ensure a smooth transition. On the technology side, the project will be led by Sean Dague, who was the driver behind the current website. But as this becomes an essential part of the PFP daily operations, we'd really like to have one or two other technology volunteers that also understand the system, and can help with setup and administration. The volunteers would not need to be familiar with CiviCRM already (we're all learning that one), but would need to be familiar with Drupal and PHP. If you'd be interested in volunteering, or would just like to learn more about this volunteer opportunity, please contact Sean Dague.