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urban grown

urban growers participating in CKC's joint seed potato order



The Newsletter of Cultivate Kansas City

April 2012

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A Tractor for Kansas City

A new chapter for an urban farm and the classic tale of how urban ag is changing our city.



A "new" tractor for Stony Crest Urban Farm means more produce for Kansas City.

By Katherine Kelly

In my last article I told you about the Get Growing Mini-Grants (see [Mini-Grants Awarded for Local Food Projects](#), Urban Grown, February 2012); this month, I have to share this story. It is a story partly about one of our mini-grant recipients--Stony Crest Urban Farm--and partly about gifts that can change a community.

Diane Hershberger and her husband Roger Kube, owners of Stony Crest, have been farming for five years in the Marlborough neighborhood of Kansas City, MO. They wrote a grant asking for money to buy a used tractor they found on Craig's List, painting a strong picture of how that tractor would impact their farm and the food they grow for Kansas Citians.

I started Full Circle Farm in 1997 on the land that has now become Cultivate Kansas City and our Gibbs Road Farm. In the first three years of farming, I hired Don Nelson, whom I found in the Thrifty Nickel, to do custom tractor work. I still have a vivid image of standing at the edge of my future field in the spring of 1997, discussing whether the field was dry enough to plow. Don, with his lifetime of experience, agreed with me that the field was ready, and he jumped on his tractor and worked up the full two acres. (Don, by

the way, is now on Cultivate KC's Board of Directors. He has probably plowed and tilled more urban land and guided more newbie farmers on soil cultivation than anyone in town).

The upside of that situation was that I got to learn from and get to know Don and I got my field plowed. The downside was that, after that initial tillage, all the cultivation work from that point on was done with my walk-behind rototiller. I and my crew spent probably thousands of hours over the next three years following that tiller as it rototilled, furrowed, and hilled.

In 2000, a friend gave me a tractor-- a brand new bright orange Kubota, L2800 with a 48" path rototiller. It was given to me with no expectation of a tax-break (I wasn't a 501c3 at that point) but purely out of a commitment to help grow the local food community in Kansas City.

That tractor absolutely transformed my farm. I got more planted and more harvested. I made more sales and fed more people. The donation of that tractor was a pivotal event for me and, I'd like to offer, for our growing urban agriculture movement. Since that original gift, that tractor has:

- Helped grow an estimated 250,000 pounds of organic vegetables that fed Kansas Citizens,
- Been the learning tractor for every season's apprentices and crew members, some 40% of whom have gone on to start their own farms and bought their own tractors. They, in turn, have trained their own apprentices and field crew on how to use tractors.
- Tilled and plowed other urban farms such as Root Deep Urban Farm, Herr Family Farm, and the Juniper Gardens Training Farm. It helped start new farms and expand existing ones by opening up new ground for production.

So, what does that tractor have to do with the Get Growing Mini-Grants? Last week, one of the 15 Get Growing grants we made was to Stony Crest Urban Farm. For a tractor.

Their story is what I like to think of as a classic tale of how urban agriculture is changing our city.

Diane Hershberger and her husband Roger Kube, owners of Stony Crest, have been farming for five years in the Marlborough neighborhood of Kansas City, MO. Last year, they grew on 1¼ acres, hiring Don Nelson like I did, and then using a large lawn tractor for the rest of the season. With their newly purchased tractor, they plan to grown on three acres in 2012, significantly increasing their production and expanding their farm's role in Kansas City.



Diane Hershberger and Roger Kube of Stony Crest Urban Farm plan to expand production to three acres using their new tractor.

Like most urban farmers, as well as being farm business owners, Diane and Roger are very much change-agents for their neighborhood. In 2011 they hired youth and ex-offenders who were enrolled in the New Reflections program where the motto is "Each One Teach One." This year, they will work with them again, passing along their growing and small business knowledge to a new crew of program participants.

Diane is active in her community, she's on the board of the Marlborough Community Coalition, which, among other initiatives, is working to start community gardens and is a partner with the Beans&Greens Mobile Market. She's spent her life working in community-based efforts from the House of Menuha to Kansas City Harmony. Roger is equally as active; he's a Senior Minister at Hillside Christian Church and has a long history of interfaith and peace work. They are people who put their hands to good work that needs to be done.

One of their farm's first sales outlets was what they called "Drive By Tomatoes" where they set up a stand at the local Shamrock Station, and sold tomatoes to people as they pulled up in their cars. They are now in the process of riffing on that idea; they've been studying Quick Trips and other fast food places, trying to figure out how to adapt what those stores do so well: selling snack food to busy people.

"We are thinking that we can grow cherry tomatoes, package them in a plastic cup with a lid and sell them just like they sell donut holes. We are going to talk to our locally owned corner stores, which is where a lot of people get food in Marlborough, about carrying them alongside their other snack foods." Diane offers.

Their new brand name? "Grown in the Hood, Good for the Hood."

Talking to Diane and Roger, I'm pretty convinced that, at some point in the not so far future, this gift of a tractor from the Get Growing KC program and the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City will multiply in all kinds of ways. More good food for the city. More hands-on inspiration for the people who work at and visit Stony Crest Urban Farm. More people deciding that they, too, can become growers, with the strong example of Diane and Roger. And more people driving in Kansas City, seeing an urban tractor on an urban farm and thinking "Oh, yeah, that reminds me, I've gotta pick up some cherry tomatoes to snack on!"

Reach Katherine at katherine@cultivatekc.org.

Lawrence Community Orchard Opens New Territory for Public Foodscapes

Project proposes a synthesis of food forest, community garden, orchard and city park.



Volunteers are cleaning planting holes of Bermuda grass rhizomes during a work party at the site of the new community orchard in Lawrence, KS.

By Skyler Adamson

This spring marks a turning point for farming and gardening in Lawrence, KS, as the city has initiated the Common Ground program which supports urban agriculture by leasing idle city-owned land to farmers and gardeners (see also [Common Ground Program Offers New Opportunities for Urban Agriculture](#), Urban Grown, December 2011).

The Lawrence Fruit Tree Project (LFTP), one of four successful applicants of the program's pilot year, is developing the Lawrence Community Orchard, a public orchard from which anyone can harvest its bounty.

LFTP was founded in 2008 with a vision of a cityscape abundant with productive plants, locally meeting the demand for fresh foods. The group works to educate, assist, and inspire the public to grow, steward,

and utilize fruit and nut trees and shrubs. As a Common Ground recipient, LFTP has signed a three-year rolling lease for a vacant city-owned lot neighboring Burroughs Creek Park and Trail. On that lot, the Lawrence Community Orchard will provide an ecological orchard with a park-like atmosphere that produces nutritious foods and serves as a perennial food gardening demonstration and educational space for the greater community. One goal of the orchard is to become a replicable model for edible landscaping to be applied to anything from backyards and city parks to school campuses and beyond. Organizers hope the orchard will also influence landscape architects, city planners, home owners and others to co-create a new land use paradigm for the City of Lawrence.

The orchard is an experiment in gift economy. Its yields—food, education and inspiration—are free to any visitor. Those neighbors and other community members who see and experience the benefits of the orchard are free to give back through participating in work days and contributing to orchard maintenance. LFTP will regularly teach the skills needed to successfully maintain the orchard with workshops on pruning, propagation and pest management. Growing stewards is as much a priority as growing trees.

LFTP has taken into consideration a number of factors when designing the orchard site plan. The leasehold is a third of an acre bordered by Burroughs Creek Park and Trail to the east and old East Lawrence to the north, west and south. Pedestrians can enter the orchard via the park or Garfield St. in the neighborhood. The site receives excellent sun exposure with some late afternoon shade, ample sun for fruit production. A channelized stream borders the northern property edge and adds value to the site as a water feature. One challenge is that Bermuda grass, the bane of urban gardeners everywhere, covers two thirds of the lot's lawn. The grass will be dealt with both through the laborious hand-digging of rhizomes as well as smothering it with multiple layers of cardboard and wood mulch.

The design of the Lawrence Community Orchard is a synthesis of food forest, community garden, orchard and city park. The plan includes the planting of privacy hedges to mark property boundaries. Juneberries and goumi berries will be used for that purpose. Open space will be reserved for recreational activity and to facilitate the movement of people through the orchard, as well as to create places for sitting and shade. When it came to plant selections, balancing good productivity with good disease and pest resistance was a priority. For example, many of the more common rose family fruit trees, such as plums and apples, have been excluded due to high disease and pest pressure. Instead, the orchard includes less common productive species such as elderberries, persimmons, jujubes, paw paws, hazelnuts, mulberry and kousa dogwood that have minimal disease and pest pressure. Maintenance of good sunlight on the east-west axis will be attained by placing the largest trees, persimmon and mulberry, on the northern property edge. Fertility will be "home-grown" with nitrogen-fixing plants like Siberian pea shrub and false indigo as well as dynamic accumulators like comfrey, yarrow and horsetail.

In future years, the community orchard is expected to have low annual costs because it is people-powered and not capital intensive. Start-up costs also are being kept at a minimum. Fortunately, the city was generous enough to install a water meter on-site. The largest remaining expenses are for purchasing plants and constructing a kiosk, benches and a small storage shed. So far, most plants have been purchased by LFTP members and the group has received some cash donations. LFTP will continue searching for funding for the orchard.

The benefits of a public orchard can be many. Consider the ripe fruit from a tree. It can be had with very little effort at all, perhaps only the will to pick it. When our lives are filled with abundant gifts from nature, the way we perceive place and economy are transformed. As the source from which we eat becomes us, our identity and skill as stewards grow to meet the challenge of creating a sustainable food system and culture.

To learn more about the Common Ground Program of the City of Lawrence visit http://lawrenceks.org/common_ground. To learn more about Lawrence Fruit Tree Project and Lawrence Community Orchard visit www.lawrencefruittreeproject.wordpress.com.

Reach Skyler at lawrencefruittreeproject@gmail.com.

Urban Agriculture Zones Considered by Missouri Lawmakers

Some hope bill would give cities a tool for improving physical and economic health of communities.

By Mike Strauss

In Missouri, efforts to establish urban agriculture zones are moving forward with House Bill 1660 being presented in the legislature's House Committee on Agriculture Policy in February. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Jason Holsman and was filed in response to the findings of last year's Joint Interim Committee on Urban Agriculture. The bill's purpose is to create three types of urban agriculture zones, for growers, vendors and processors.

Five different public hearings were held by the Joint Interim Committee on Urban Agriculture starting in Kansas City in July, 2011. Subsequent hearings took place in Springfield, Columbia, St. Louis and Jefferson City. The Committee's final report was released at the Jefferson City hearing in January 2012, and included summary reports of the testimony collected, as well as chapters written by organizations such as the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition and Cultivate Kansas City. Copies of the final report are available from Rep. Jason Holsman, who chaired the Interim Committee. Rep. Holsman can be contacted at jason.holsman@house.mo.gov.

HB 1660 would allow municipalities to designate blighted areas of a community as Urban Agriculture Zones (UAZs) within which various benefits and incentives would promote agricultural activity by individuals and organizations. The bill defines a UAZ as a zone which contains an organization or person who grows produce or other agricultural products, raises or processes livestock or poultry or sells at a minimum 75% locally grown or raised food. According to the bill, activities in the grower UAZ include growing produce, raising livestock or producing other value-added agricultural products. Activities in the processor UAZ include processing livestock or poultry for human consumption. Activities in the vendor UAZ include selling produce, meat or value-added agricultural products produced in the UAZ's county or an adjoining county.

Among the stipulations of HB 1660 are provisions that (1) require the applicant for a UAZ to provide a plan for at least one educational opportunity per month to local school districts, (2) remove the tax assessment of any UAZ for 10 years once the application requirements have been met, and (3) provides that a grower UAZ will pay wholesale cost for water consumed and pay 50 percent of the standard cost to hook into the water source, among others.

Originally the distinction and approval of a UAZ was available only to municipalities with at least 5,000 residents. However, a revision was suggested at the public hearing to the Agriculture Policy Committee to include smaller municipalities and there was support for that revision.

HB 1660 is important as we look for better ways to provide healthy food to our citizens safely and affordably while reducing our carbon footprint and keeping money in our communities. We already have urban areas experiencing extremely limited access to healthy, affordable food, with severe consequences for residents' health and for the local economy.

The state of Missouri has the fifth-highest rate of child food insecurity and is eighth in adult food insecurity in the United States. That means we have a large number of families and individuals who do not have enough food to eat and are limiting their portions, skipping meals or not knowing when they will next eat. For those living in food deserts or struggling with food insecurity, the development of community gardens, urban farms, and farmers markets in their neighborhoods creates a critical improvement in access to healthy affordable foods.

HB 1660 is particularly relevant in light of the vacant land crisis many urban areas are experiencing as a result of population decline. Vacant lots are a financial burden to local governments, which need to mow

them, remove trash and provide other maintenance. These lots are also eyesores in a neighborhood and provide space for illegal activities. Turning vacant lots into farms or community gardens not only addresses problems of food access and food insecurity, but also helps clean up the neighborhood, relieves maintenance by local government, increases property tax revenue, and produces economic returns to the neighborhood.

Urban Agriculture Zones, as defined in HB 1660, would encourage the growing, processing and sale of local foods. In turn, the zones would provide residents with access to healthier food options, create jobs and keep food dollars in the local economy. In so doing, HB1660 would provide cities with a tool for improving the physical and economic health of their communities. However, the bill will first need to pass both the House and Senate by mid-May, when the 2012 legislative session ends. At the time of publication, the bill was still awaiting a vote in the House's Agriculture Policy Committee. The bill's status can be tracked at www.house.mo.gov

For more information on this and other local food policy initiatives visit the Greater Kansas City Food Policy Coalition at www.kcfoodpolicy.org.

Mike Strauss is the communications manager with KC Healthy Kids a non-profit organization with a mission to reduce childhood obesity. Reach Mike at mstrauss@kchealthykids.org.

Farm Conference Targets Minority and Limited Resource Farmers

Farmers network, strategize and share information during two days at Lincoln University's Carver Farm.



Pov Huns of Huns Garden in Kansas City, KS, presents at the first annual Missouri Minority and Limited Resource Farmers Conference held at Lincoln University's Carver Farm last March.

By Katie Nixon

The first weekend in March marked the first annual Missouri Minority and Limited Resource Farmers Conference (MMLRFC) organized by Lincoln University (LU) and held at LU's Carver Farm in Jefferson City, MO.

Missouri is second only to Texas in the number of small farms in the nation. Of these small farms, less than one percent are considered minority-operated, totaling a little over 800 (USDA 2007 Agriculture Census). LU had the pleasure of hosting 75 of these farmers at the two-day conference.

Innovative Small Farmers Outreach Program, the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers & Ranchers Program, and other state-wide programs--a clear need has emerged to bring minority farmers together so that information and resources can be shared, and networking can happen among them.

Through LU's community-based farmer education programs--the

Any conference is a lot of work to put on, and this was no exception. LU had wonderful partners to pull it together, including the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA), the University of Missouri (MU), Minority Landowner Magazine, and Rural Development (RD).

The conference kicked off with a welcome from Dr. Steven Meredith, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences at LU. It was followed by an inspiring speech by Dr. John Hagler, Director of Agriculture for Missouri, who spoke of one of his great inspirations, George Washington Carver. Dr. Hagler encouraged everyone to be an agriculture evangelist, spreading the good word of producing food and being connected to the land and each other. The final presenter of the morning was Jerry Pennick who spoke about the future of minority farmers in America's production agriculture systems. Pennick focused on the benefits of farmer cooperatives and stressed the importance of being involved in decisions leading up to the 2012 Farm Bill.

There were many more speakers and break-out sessions during the two-day conference. Participants heard from farmers, educators, and supporting organizations (like MDA and FSA). Among the topics covered by these speakers were types of farm enterprises, transitioning the farm, agricultural financing, vegetable and fruit production, integrated pest management, livestock management, funding opportunities, soil health, and native pollinators.

A number of conference participants came from the Kansas City area, including several urban farmers such as Pov Huns of Huns Garden in Kansas City, KS, and John Kaiahua of JJ Farms in Raytown, MO. Huns and Kaiahua both presented at the conference, where interest in urban agriculture was strong--urban agriculture both as a means to producing healthy food and to building healthy minority communities.

Timothy Shipley, an urban grower from Kansas City's Washington Wheatley neighborhood summed it up this way: "I learned a lot of great information, and was able to connect with new and old friends. Now, because of the conference, there is a network of people with like interest that is stronger."



Tours of Carver Farm's Animal and Plant Sciences facilities concluded the conference.

The conference concluded with a tour of Carver Farm. Participants had a choice of exploring the animal sciences, which included aquaculture and small ruminant management, or the plant science track, which included the vegetable trials and high tunnels.

By the end of the conference there was a good sense of community and several farmers had taken the first steps to forming a farmer cooperative. "It was uplifting and motivating being around other minority farmers," said Diane Spight, a new urban grower also from the Kansas City area, "I felt a sense of camaraderie in understanding historical barriers as well as the effect of current events on minorities in agriculture."

LU hopes this conference will become an annual event, helping to strengthen the minority farming community, both urban and rural. LU wants to help farmers and other agricultural professionals form relationships that are not only emotionally supporting but also lead to increased economic strength and resilience in the small farm sector.

Katie Nixon is a Small Farm Specialist at Lincoln University Cooperative Extension. Reach her at NixonK@lincolnu.edu.



Field News from Gibbs Road Farm

By Alicia Ellingsworth

The Gibbs Road Farm welcomes a new crew, a slew of volunteers and other market farmers back to the farm and greenhouse this spring. The place is alive again. Each day brings more people. Some come to learn, some come to collect pre-ordered organic fertilizer or seed potatoes, some come to share their time and energy, some come to tend their greenhouse plants--each comes with a mission to participate in life and in growing, together we grow food for the city and in doing that we grow community.

The winter, although not harsh in temperature or snowfall, was like most winters--pretty lonely on these two acres. When our main markets and the CSA are over in the fall, people disappear like the vegetables of summer. Time is taken to grow inside the high tunnels and to seed winter cover crops, to clean up from the summer's work, to clear the greenhouse for a rest and to lay plans for the future. While this winter was a good one for growing, it was like all winters--lacking in the light of the sun and the light that faces bring.

Field crew picking spinach for KC Foodcircle Farmers Expo. From left: Justin Mitchell, Ryan Tenney and Cara Lawrence. Not shown is returning crew member Sarah Dehart.

In the faces of our field crew I see the light of possibility.

They promise to work hard and yearn to learn. One comes planning to return to her family's farmland in Nebraska. She shares the story of her ninety-three year-old grandmother's steadfastness to that land. The farming spirit lives within this grand-daughter of a farmer. Another is an artist with a desire to grow good food for the people of our city and share with others how what happens at Gibbs Road can happen in other parts of the city. I am eager to see how the farm will show up in his paintings. Another crew member comes from the country and was surprised to know we are farming in town. Spurred by that realization, a desire to work meaningfully and to understand the interconnectedness of health and food, he comes early and stays late willing to do whatever is asked. Our one returning crew member found us as she searched beyond corporate life. She carries note-cards and records everything. She pushes me to become a better farmer and she helps me remember how fun it can be. The volunteers bring their stories and questions, get dirty and join in the activity. I am grateful for each one of them and the light they share.

The Quell-Davis Community Greenhouse at the farm hosts more than twenty market farmers who have found Gibbs Road, including the New Roots for Refugee farmers and graduate farmers. Ideas are shared while plants and farmers are nurtured under the protective roof. The year's plants grow and we grow our vision for a more sustainable food network as we grow the network itself.

While we do what we do at Gibbs Road Farm and plan what we plan, we are acutely aware that much of what happens is beyond ourselves. Rainfall so far this year is below average. Temperatures are setting record highs. Crops are out in the field early. Weeds are ahead of the game. Pests are out and multiplying. We are challenged. As we return to the work, we begin to meet the challenge. As a community we search for solutions. If you think you might like to search along with us or if you think you have the seed of solution within yourself, then come out to the farm and let us work together.

Reach Alicia at alicia@cultivatekc.org.

Workshop Teaches Economical High Tunnel Design

Compared to off-the-shelf units, this DIY design can lower cost and increase flexibility.

Marty Kraft is a long-time Kansas City gardener, farmer and environmentalist, currently growing food on two main sites associated with Niles' Home for Children. In early March he teamed up with no-till vegetable farmer Patrice Gros to conduct a high tunnel construction workshop here in Kansas City. Patrice has developed a practical, easy-to-replicate tunnel design for use on his Foundation Farm (www.foundationfarm.com) near Eureka Springs, AR. Patrice has been a contributor to Urban Grown and we thank him for sharing his expertise with us through articles and workshops. Many thanks also to Marty Kraft for bringing Patrice to Kansas City again and for generously contributing this report. To learn more about Marty's no-till and ecological gardening techniques see his website at www.organotill.org.



Farmer Patrice Gros (1) instructs workshop participants on how to bend the hoops.

By Marty Kraft

In early March, Patrice Gros was in Kansas City to offer a workshop while putting up our high tunnel. Niles Home for Children received a Get Growing KC grant for the materials and Lincoln University Cooperative Extension helped cover Patrice's expenses. I was surprised at how easy building our high tunnel was. The most difficult part is to create the tube bender. That requires a template and cutting, bending and welding some steel tubing. It might be possible to borrow the bender if you contact me. Also, once you've read the article you can go to www.organotill.org and see a short film about this construction project.

Orientation: Pick a level site to locate your high tunnel. Decide whether you are going to orient it east-west or north-south. I searched for orientation information and it seems that our latitude is on the border between the generally recommended east-west orientation (in northern latitudes) and the generally recommended north-south orientation (in southern latitudes). We positioned ours east-west because it allowed us to easily cover our existing beds and will give all PLANTS the most sun.

Layout: Our high tunnel is 50'x16 1/2'. We marked our rectangle out on the ground with four pieces of rebar. Then we ran a tape measure diagonally from corner to corner. When the two corner-to-corner diagonals are the same length the rectangle is square.

Hoop Spacing: We wanted the spacing to be 6 feet or less. Our hoop spacing came out to be 5' 6". We drove 24" pieces of 1/2" rebar into the ground at the location of each hoop. The hoops will later be slid over and held in place by the rebar.

Hoop Bending: Hoops are made from 1"x1" 24-foot long, 16 gauge, galvanized square tubing. The tubing was bent using a home-made tube bender. The diagram for making the bender can be found on page 2 of the Kerr Center's [How to Build a Low Cost Hoop House](#).

Three people are ideal for



Nearly finished: the new hoophouse at Niles Home for Children.

the job of bending hoops, two persons bending and one stabilizing the curved tubing as it extends up into the air. The bender is moved along the tube making a bend every four inches.

Placing Hoops: The bent hoops are then shoved down over the rebar on opposite sides of the house.

Anchoring Sides to Ground: Along each side of the house at ground level runs a long stretch of 1" EMT conduit. The pieces of conduit are coupled together by metal connectors. The conduit is attached to the bottom of each hoop by a metal strap held in place by a 3/4" #8 self-tapping screw. Five 1-foot soil augers with their "eyes" bent slightly open to accommodate the conduit were screwed into the ground along each side to keep the house from going to Oz in a wind.

Hip Boards: When the sides are anchored to the ground one end hoop is held plumb by tying it to a T-post. The hip boards of 1"x3" lumber are bolted to the hoops with 2"x1/4" carriage bolts at a height of 3 feet along the curve of each hoop. Make sure that each hoop is plumb before drilling holes. Drill holes with the best quality 5/16" bit. The sheet of poly covering the hoop house will be attached to these hip boards using a "U" channel and wiggle wire. After the hip board is in place, attach the "U" channel down the center of the side board from end to end.

End Wall Channel: Screw "U" channel onto the top of the end wall hoops from the ground over the top to the ground on the other side. For this we used #8 3/4" self-tapping screws spaced approximately one foot apart.

Putting On Clear Greenhouse Plastic: It took about eight people to put on the clear Tufflite covering. Fortunately the wind was not a big problem. We adjusted the sheet so that the same amount overlapped at the ground on both sides and over both ends. Starting at one end, keeping it stretched evenly, the wiggle wire was then pressed with the plastic into the channel. It looked great.

Roll Up Sides: Where the Tufflite plastic film draped onto the ground along each side of the hoop house, we now placed a 50' piece of 3/4" EMT conduit, the pieces held together with metal connectors. On a table saw we had also ripped 50 feet of 1 inch PVC into equal halves. The conduit nestles nicely into the PVC halves with the Tufflite in between. Self tapping screws were then drilled through the PVC and Tufflite into the conduit, fastening the Tufflite onto our 50 foot roller. A crank was then fashioned out of the one inch PVC and attached to the roller with a coupler and screws. The whole side could then be rolled up leaving a 3-foot space for ventilation between the ground and the hip boards.

End Walls: These are not finished yet. We are considering two options at the moment. First, we could run 2"x4" lumber across the bottom ends and attach wiggle wire channel to hold down the endwall plastic at ground level. Alternatively, we are thinking about attaching the endwall plastic only to the hoop itself (using the channel we fastened to it), leaving some plastic overlapping at ground level but not attaching it to anything. I'm sure a wonderful solution will arise.

The workshop was a great success and several participants are considering installing their own high tunnels. Two area police officers came by also. They are involved with three gardens serving youth. As for our new tunnel, we're planning to plant tomatoes we have grafted, eggplant and peppers into it this summer. In the fall we will plant greens, carrots and other cool season plants.

Patrice is always a joy to work with. He fed our minds and gardening hearts with knowledge and enthusiasm and our stomachs with a great salad he made. Thank you.

Reach Marty via <http://organotill.org/contact/>.

"I Want to Feel That Way Again Here."

Bhutanese refugee farmer recalls feeling excited and satisfied after a good season.



By John Vanderheide

Meet Mr. Upendra Regmi. He is one of five new participants in the New Roots for Refugees program at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm. Upendra comes from the Dagana region of Bhutan. Dagana is an agricultural region in south-central Bhutan near the border with India. While living there Upendra farmed a number of cash crops, oranges, apples, and cardamom. He sold these products to a produce broker for export to India. On the side he grew a number of grains and vegetables to feed his family and to sell at the local farmers market. Among the vegetables he grew in Bhutan were potatoes, tomatoes, squash, and soybeans, all of which are also important crops in the United States. Furthermore, his list of favorite crops also contained a green called saag and a tuber called taro, or potato of the tropics, but he laments that he is unable to find seed for those plants here in the US.

Upendra Regmi is a first-year participant in the New Roots for Refugees program at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm.

When asked why he wants to farm in Kansas he says, "I have a lot of experience growing in Bhutan. When I would have a good season there I would be very excited and very satisfied. I want to feel that way again here." Upendra is clearly very excited about his first growing season here in the US, yet he does have some worries. Weather patterns here are still confusing to him

(unfortunately, here in Kansas, they are confusing to most people), and he is just "getting to know the soil" which makes him nervous as well. Another area of concern to Upendra is the language. He is worried that his English proficiency will make selling his produce difficult. In order to remedy that he has been attending weekly ESL classes focused on vegetable names and market terms. Yet despite those nerves Upendra is having an incredible start to his first growing season in Kansas. His transplant production at the greenhouse has been deliberate and efficient. He has started cabbage, pac choi, broccoli, kale, onions, scallions, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant. He has also been hard at work prepping the soil in his ¼ acre plot at the Juniper Gardens Training Farm. It has been amazing watching him form raised beds and work compost into the soil so that it will be ready for his transplants.

This is a year of firsts for our program as well. Upendra will be the first New Roots farmer to sell at the Illus Davis market held on Thursdays at 11th and Oak in downtown Kansas City, MO. He will also be selling at the KCK Greenmarket at Catholic Charities on Tuesdays (2220 Central Ave., KCK) during its inaugural season. We are very excited about these market opportunities, and there has been a great deal of interest in both of these markets and Upendra's CSA has already sold out at both locations. This season, stop by his market stall and purchase some of his vegetables. Highlights that I am looking forward to are the tomatoes, potatoes, long beans, and bitter melon (it is very bitter but also very good for you and it is an interesting flavor like nothing you have ever had before).

And finally, here's a NSL (Nepali as a Second Language) lesson: "Namaste" is the traditional greeting. It is said with the hands held palms together in front of your chest. Try using it to greet Upendra or Maku (another Bhutanese farmer) next time you see them at the market.

Reach John at john.d.vanderheide@gmail.com.

Calendar Of Events

14TH Annual Exhibition of Farmers - EAT LOCAL! (& Organic) Expos 2012. Saturday, April 7. 9:30AM to 2:30PM. Penn Valley Community College Gym, 3201 Southwest Trafficway, Kansas City, MO. Hungry for the green of spring? Kick off the farmers market season at the Eat Local! (& Organic) expos. Meet and buy direct from local, organic farmers and vendors. Learn how to buy, preserve, and dish up seasonal food in our free workshops. Snatch up early seedlings, fresh greens, free-range meat and eggs and get our free local, organic Producers Directory. Get farmers market and CSA information. There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available at the Expos. Admission and parking are free. More info at www.kcfoodcircle.org.

Movable High Tunnel Workshop. Saturday, April 7, 9AM to 4PM at David and Lena Misener's farm, 20822 S. Dean Rd, Belton, MO, 64012. Facilitated by Greg Garbos, mechanical engineer and founder of Four Season Tools. Help construct a movable "Pipe Skid" high tunnel and learn benefits of using movable tunnels and season extension. Workshop is free and lunch is provided in appreciation for help with construction. Contact the Four Season Tools office at (816) 444-7330, Randy Metzler at (816) 444-7479 or randy@smallfarmtools.com and David Misener at (941) 313-0041 if more information is needed.

Transplant Sale. Saturday, April 14, 9AM to 1PM. Gibbs Road Farm, 4223 Gibbs Road, Kansas City, KS. Come visit us to get your certified organic transplants straight from our community greenhouse. We will have farm fresh veggies for sale as well. Plus, talk to your local urban farmers for expert tips on planting your own garden! Email Alicia at alicia@cultivatekc.org with questions.

Opening Day at the Brookside Farmers Market. Saturday, April 21, 8AM to 1PM. 63rd & Wornall, Kansas City, MO in the parking lot of Border Star Elementary School. Join us to celebrate the first market of 2012 at the Brookside Farmers Market, Kansas City's original organic market. We are celebrating our 10th market season satisfying Kansas City's appetite for local and organic. Shop for the freshest local and organic vegetables, transplants, meat, baked goods, household products and more. Enjoy live music, cooking demonstrations, children's activities and educational events. Visit the website at www.brooksidefarmersmarket.com or email info@brooksidefarmersmarket.com. Connect with the market through its [Facebook page](#) and Twitter [@BrksideFarmMkt](#).

Earth Day Crop Mob. Saturday, April 28, 9AM to 12PM. At urban farms and gardens around the metro area. Celebrate Earth Day by getting outside to lend a hand to an urban farmer. Learn about your local, sustainable food system first-hand and connect with our urban farming community. Email Ami at ami@cultivatekc.org to find out where you can help.

Sowing and Reaping: Christian Perspectives on Food and Agriculture. Saturday, April 28, 9AM to 6PM. Ecumenical Campus Ministries, 1204 Oread Ave., Lawrence, KS. This day-long conference is focused around the intersection of food and faith. There will be discussions on farming as ministry, religious and ethical responses to hunger, the sanctity of seeds and soil, farmworkers' rights, and more. Please visit the [Facebook event page](#) for the full list of speakers and to RSVP. The conference is free, though there will be a local, mainly organic lunch available on a sliding scale of \$5-15. Register for a meal by emailing ecmku@ku.edu or calling (785) 843-4933. The event will be liveblogged on Twitter under the hashtag #kufood.

...and mark your calendars:

Dig In, KC! A Dinner with Farmers & Friends. Sunday, September 23, 2012 6:30PM to 9PM. City Market, Kansas City, MO. This community dinner will feature locally grown produce, live music and a farmers market under the stars. Dinner will be prepared by Michael Foust of the Farmhouse along with four other local chefs. To volunteer or for more information, email Jill Erickson at jill@cultivatekc.org. Tickets \$75.00 per person.

To subscribe or unsubscribe please send an email to info@cultivatekc.org.
For editorial comments please contact *Urban Grown* editor Daniel Dermitzel at daniel@cultivatekc.org.
Cultivate Kansas City is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.
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