



*Newsletter of The Merrimack County
Conservation District distributed free to Merri-
mack County residents and others interested in
conservation of natural resources*

Merrimack County
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THE MISSION OF THE
MERRIMACK COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IS
TO PROMOTE AND ACHIEVE
CONSERVATION OF THE
LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE
OF MERRIMACK COUNTY.

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CONSERVATION NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MERRIMACK COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPOTLIGHT ON THE MERRIMACK COUNTY FARM

By: Chris Petersen, Merrimack
County Facilities Director

The History:

From the early 1900's to the early 1990's, the Merrimack County Farm had a rich history of producing quality livestock, dairy, vegetables and hay to support the dietary needs of the Merrimack County Nursing Home residents and the Merrimack County Corrections facility.

In early 1994 Merrimack County made the decision to cease farming operations and outsource the Nursing Home's food supply. The Farm's dairy herd, other livestock, greenhouse, and all farming equipment were sold at auction, with proceeds going back to the County.

From 1994 to 2019 farming activity consisted of a 50-square-foot vegetable garden with any food grown consumed by the Nursing Home residents.

Continued on page 2



*Merrimack County staff laying plastic on the new gardens using
MCCC's rentable plastics mulcher*

WILMOT MARKET ATTENDANT WINS VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP

If you've been to the Wilmot Farmers' Market in the summer, you have likely seen our Market Attendant, Franklin High School student Lily Johnson. As the market attendant, Lily managed the SNAP/ EBT and Veteran Market Dollars programs. The Veteran Market Dollar program, which gives Veterans \$20 at the market, is very popular in Wilmot. Lily wrote about meeting Veterans at the market and how much she learned from them for the VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship and won this year's 2nd prize.

We are all thankful for Lily's help at the market and happy of all of her accomplishments. She will be heading to Dartmouth College next year.



Congratulations Lily!

County Farm continued from page 1

Return to Farming:

In 2020, the County Facilities Director, Chris Peterson, and the County Administrator, Ross Cunningham, had several discussions regarding the increasing cost of food, mainly fresh produce, and made the decision to expand the small plot garden to a quarter acre to test the viability of a vegetable growing program.

The Farm's grounds team led by John Silver prepped the soil and planted and produced four varieties of squash, two varieties of cucumber, three varieties of tomatoes, bell peppers, green beans, and two varieties of cabbage—totaling 1,900 Lbs. Of that total the County Farm was able to contribute 772 lbs. to the MCCD Gleaning program in 2020.

The success of the 2020 garden expansion test brought about the concept of returning agriculture to the County Farm.

In 2021, County Facilities and the County Administrator asked the Merrimack County Board of Commissioners for permission to expand the agriculture program mainly for providing additional fresh produce to the Nursing Home, Corrections and increase support of the MCCD Gleaning Program, which was approved, with the caveat that the county has no intention of competing with local farming operations.

Further Expansion:

The year 2022 saw the garden plot expanded to one acre, where 17 varieties of vegetable were grown from seed and planted in ground beds. A new plastic laying machine obtained by MCCD was tested and used, cutting the bed preparation and planting schedule to one day, which normally would take a week by hand.

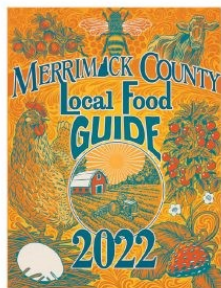
The grounds team led by John Silver tended the garden and learned how to work a larger plot with a small team. The results were impressive, with 17,607 lbs. of produce grown. The County Farm contributed 4,893 lbs. of produce to the MCCD Gleaning program in 2022.

Future Growth:

Future plans include the installation of a High Tunnel greenhouse, a permanent greenhouse with solar thermal heating, and increasing the variety of vegetables grown to 23.

The County Farm will plant 50-60 high bush blueberry bushes in the spring at the request of the Nursing Home residents who absolutely love them.

Orchard stock, including several apple varieties, peaches, and pears, will be introduced in the 2023 and 2024 growing season.



We are gearing up for the 2023 Local Food Guide and are looking for sponsors and advertisers.

PLEASE HELP THE GUIDE GROW

STANLEY GRIMES CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIP | REMINDER |

This year, the Merrimack County Conservation District is honored to give out one \$1,000 scholarships to Merrimack County residents who are enrolled in a two or four-year program of study in fields of Natural Resources such as Agriculture, Forestry, Environmental Science, Horticulture, Wetland Science, Environmental Engineering and Soil Science. One scholarship will go to a first year student, and the second to an upperclassman.

Visit merrimackccd.org for more information.

Applications are due May 5th!

NRCS Offers Funding to Assist Producers with Climate Smart Agriculture

Thanks to funding provided under the Inflation Reduction Act, the NRCS has opened an application period for NRCS conservation programs offered by the agency that impact climate resiliency. The funding aims to provide direct climate mitigation benefits and expand access to financial and technical assistance for producers to advance conservation on their farm, ranch, or forest land through practices like cover cropping, conservation tillage, wetland restoration, prescribed grazing, nutrient management, tree planting and more. Any questions or interest in getting started, please contact your local USDA Service Center at 603.223.6023. General program information is available on the NRCS New Hampshire website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/NewHampshire>.

INTERESTED NEW HAMPSHIRE FARM AND NON-INDUSTRIAL PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS MUST APPLY BY MARCH 17, 2023.

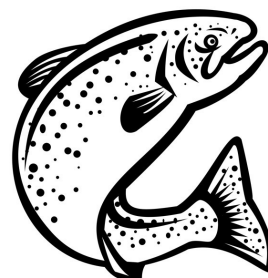
Is it after the March 17th deadline? Still contact the NRCS office and apply for future programs. Applications accepted year-round.

ANNUAL TROUT SALE

Have a backyard pond? Looking to stock trout? Check out our Backyard Trout Program info on our website:

merrimackccd.org

Orders due by **MAY 12th** for a May 21st pick-up (6-8" fish) or delivery (10-12" fish).



2022 GLEANING WRAP-UP

In 2022 we gleaned 40,443 lbs. of fresh food from local farms, farmers' markets & gardens

A HUGE THANKS TO THE FARMS WHO DONATED:

Abigail's Bakery, Weare
 Blakeney's Fine Baked Good, Contoocook
 Blue Moon Berry Farm, Warner
 Brookford Farm, Canterbury
 Carter Hill Orchard, Concord
 Dimond Hill Farm, Concord
 Grounding Stone Farm, Hopkinton
 Hackleboro Orchards, Canterbury
 Highway View Farm, Boscawen
 Hip Peas Farm, Hooksett
 Hop N Hen Farm, Henniker
 Lavalley Farm, Hooksett
 Jacques Flower Shop, Manchester
 Nalla Farm, Wilmot
 Pearl & Sons, Loudon
 Pete and Gerry's Eggs, Monroe
 Rossvie Farm, Concord
 Shaker Organic Garden, Canterbury
 Spring Ledge Farm, New London
 Stark Farm, Dunbarton
 Sweet Beet Market, Bradford



Terra Basics, Chichester
 Terra Organics NH, Contoocook
 Windswept Farm, Andover
 Work Song Farm, Hopkinton

A huge thanks to the community gardens that grew for the community:

Colby-Sawyer College Main Street Garden
 Concord Head Start Garden
 Franklin Parks and Recreation Garden
 Ken Marshall Community Garden
 Salisbury Elementary School Garden
 Merrimack County Farm, Boscawen

Plus, a massive thanks to the several home gardens and orchards that contributed last year.

MCCD PLANT SALES:

What happens to the extras?

After every plant and bulb sale, MCCD has extras. After we've exhausted every attempt at selling them, extras are donated non-profits throughout Merrimack County. This Fall, extra flowering bulbs were donated to the NH Veterans Cemetery. With the help of Hopkinton Middle High School students involved in the Interact Student Club, over 300 bulbs were planted around the main entrance of the NH Veterans Cemetery. We look forward to seeing the fruits of their labor in the spring. Other extra plants beautify the area around the Merrimack County nursing home, historical societies, and other public areas.

Would your Merrimack County non-profit like to be on the list for our remaining trees, shrubs, and bulbs this year? Please email us at info@merrimackccd.org in order to get on the list. We never know what extras we'll have available, but we'll be happy to help spread native plants and pollinator promoters around the county.



Students from the Hopkinton High School Interact Student Club volunteered to plant the leftover bulbs and plants at the NH Veterans Cemetery.



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Return Service Requested

MERRIMACK COUNTY WINTER FARMERS' MARKETS

Downtown Concord Winter Farmers' Market at Eagle Square

November-April, Saturday, 9-noon
7 Eagle Square, Concord, NH

Contoocook Farmers' Market

November-April, Saturday, 9-noon,
Maple Street School, 194 Maple St,
Hopkinton, NH

Danbury Blazing Star Grange Winter Market

November-May, 1st Saturdays, 9-noon
Blazing Star Grange, 15 North Road,
Danbury, NH

Penacook Winter Farmers' Market

Oct—May, Wednesdays, 3-6 pm
Riverhill Grange, 32 Horsehill Rd,
Penacook, NH



SPRING CONSERVATION FUNDRAISER



Order Form Inside

*Barefoot Trees and Shrubs | Perennials | Small Fruit Trees
Raised Beds | Composters | Rain Barrels | and More!*

*Additional information and color sheets for the
Spring Conservation Fundraiser available on
merrimackccd.org.*

*Please call for more information at
603-223-6020*