



Bottom Land News



Onion Fever!

Planting onions is an annual rite of spring at the Intervale Community Farm. Onions are the first crop seeded in early March in the greenhouse, and the first crop planted in the fields. In Northern climates, onions form bulbs in response to increasing day length, so it is important to seed and transplant them early in the season in order to allow the plants adequate growing time before the bulbs form as the days lengthen. At left, Keri Latiolais, Abbie Harris, and Aly Martelle ride on the ICF waterwheel transplanter to plant onions into black plastic mulch. The mulch is used to warm the soil and also to control weeds.

Ensure Your Access to Delicious Food...

Join the ICF Co-op!

As the first crops of 2009 mature in the fields, our Co-op member ranks are swelling in number—over 100 farm members have joined the cooperative, which brings us half-way to our goal of 200 co-op members for 2009.

If you haven't already joined, please consider. Co-op membership is \$200, which is a one-time equity investment that may be paid in \$25 installments for as many as 8 years and is refundable at any time. Here are a few reminders of the benefits for yourself and the for farm when you join:

1. *As a co-op member, you receive first priority for CSA vegetable shares. Being first in line is useful, since each year we are filling up earlier and earlier.*
2. *As a co-op member, you may have us keep you indefinitely signed up for a CSA vegetable share and stop wondering, 'Did I turn in my membership form, or is it too late for this year?'*
3. *Your co-op membership makes the ICF a stronger organization, opening doors for future improvements and creating reserves for unplanned challenges.*
4. *As a co-op member, you are eligible to share in the profits of the ICF. While we aim to break even annually, the possibility exists that we may inadvertently make money some year.*
5. *As a co-op member, you can run for and vote for the Board of Directors of the ICF.*

For more information, call 658-2919 or visit <http://www.intervalecommunityfarm.com/documents/Co-opPDF.pdf>.

Pick-Ups Begin!

Join us Monday, June 8 or Thursday, June 11 to collect your first farm share! If you still need to choose a pickup day or switch days, please call 658-2919x2.

Pickups run from 3 pm until 6:30 pm at the ICF pole barn. We can't wait to share the harvest with you!



A Kindred CSA, One Time Zone Away

by Bonnie Acker, ICF Board Member

In middle Tennessee a few weeks ago, redbuds all bloom and cliff swallows on the breeze, some CSA farmers were thinkin' on this year's harvest just like Andy, Becky and Keri. Mulling over the weather and crop varieties, and what they'll be growing for their members. How do I know? Because I was visiting, to learn about the new farm and to share some stories about the ICF.

Bells Bend Neighborhood Farms is taking root near downtown Nashville, in a valley as beautiful as anywhere on earth. This first season, there will be thirty households sharing the harvest of four farmers and one apprentice and other helpers in the community. Joe's Redbud Farm meadow will be sown with sweet corn, Tom John's Sulphur Creek land will grow lettuces, tomatoes, peppers and squash, George will produce potatoes on his Whooping Crane Farm, and Ellen will harvest cantaloupes and watermelons and blackberries on her Ellen's Melons fields. A flower-growing friend, Diane, will put in a long row of orange and red and purple zinnias for member happiness, just like our PYO flowers. From Memorial Day through November, CSA members will share the harvest, \$450 for a half share, \$800 for a whole share. Pickup will be on one of the farms.

Joe and his wife Becca, visiting our Farm a few years back, were greatly inspired by the ICF's success; shortly afterwards, they got some neighbors together to start a CSA. Now being mentored by a nearby longstanding biodynamic farmer, the Bells Bend Farms farmers are as excited about farming as our ICF's farmers were in the beginning, and continue to be to this day.

On a Saturday afternoon, I joined a give-and-take about CSA farming. I first outlined sustainable agriculture in Vermont where – per capita – we are first in the country in organic agriculture, CSAs, farmers' markets, farm stands, food cooperatives, possibly community-garden plots, and perhaps Farm 2 School programs. "No matter where you start on the wheel of sustainable agriculture, every kind of program is equally important. Every crop locally shared furthers food security for all."

I then highlighted: (1) our year-round, secure employment for Andy, Becky and Keri; (2) our 200 varieties of fifty crops; (3) our use of 100-150 tons of compost producing over 100 tons of food; (4) our productivity where each of our 20 growing-acres provides food for roughly 50 people; (5) our cooperation with other food-producers who distribute apples, bread, cheese, meat and other products at our pickups; (6) our discounts for Supported-Share members, seniors and working-members; (7) our contributions to the Food Shelf, school-food improvement and other programs; (8) our commitment to teaching seasonal apprentices, students and visitors; (9) our growing use of alternative fuels in our tractors and greenhouse; and (10) the ICF's positive effect on our state's climate of sustainable agriculture. I was so proud relating all this!

The assembled folks asked many questions, and were especially relieved when I explained that mesclun is mixed young greens and not a hallucinogen!

Joe of Bells Bend Farms reflected, "Our hope is to renew a whole way of farming for sustainable, good and safe food production for middle Tennessee. We want to recreate the breadbasket of thriving farms which lasted into the 1950s." And there's more at stake than just getting some great-tasting melons to the Farms' first-season members. Just up the road, a developer wants to turn 1500 acres into housing and hotels and stores for 44,000 people. The new CSA will be showing an alternative vision, how food could be produced for thousands of Nashville's 600,000 residents.

Let's send our hopes that this new and brave farm can thrive and grow as our Intervale Community Farm has been able to do for nearly a generation. One CSA at a time, every one a treasure on this earth.



Fence Building at Bells Bend Neighborhood Farms.

Digging Into Vermont:

Immigrant Farmers Till the Soil in Burlington

by Becky Maden and Mandy Davis, Intervale Center

On a warm day late last September, four cars bumped over the grassy hummocks and parked haphazardly in the ICF Tower field. The doors opened and out poured Bhutanese immigrants who have recently settled here in Burlington. The Bhutanese, primarily women, toured the fields with ICF farmer Becky Maden, and an interpreter. The group knew most of the vegetables, although a few were baffling to them—particularly the gourds grown on teepees in the kids garden, which Becky proudly told them made great birdhouses. Amid a babble of confusion, it quickly became clear that these gourds are highly prized in their culture, both as a nutritious food and as a vessel for carrying water.

The Bhutanese are part of a larger settlement of refugees in the Burlington area who are participating in the New Farms for New Americans program (NFNA). NFNA is a farm-based job skills and entrepreneurship training program in its second year in Burlington. It is a project of the Association of Africans Living in Vermont in conjunction with the Intervale Center. Together, the two organizations work to support the development of farm- and food-based micro-enterprises by African and Bhutanese refugee women and their families. The goal is to empower women to contribute to their household incomes and engage with their communities while caring for their children.

As a workforce training and microenterprise development program, NFNA provides business development, financial, English language, production, marketing and cultural training; access to land, water and other infrastructure; and marketing support to women who are developing farm- and food-based microenterprises. In 2008, 27 farmers cultivated two acres of bottomland on the Winooski

River near the Ethan Allen Homestead, sold produce and prepared foods at area farmers' markets, increased their production, marketing and English language skills and provided substantial quantities of fresh, organic food for themselves, their families and their communities. In 2009, the program is expanding to accommodate over 50 farmers on 3 acres and to provide more on-farm capacity building opportunities for participants.

ICF supports NFNA by offering training, workshops, field trips, donated seeds and transplants, and visits to the farm site, which is located at the Ethan Allen Homestead. **The program is always looking for donations and volunteers; in particular, the program seeks donations of wheelbarrows, hoes, car seats, hose nozzles, stakes and other gardening supplies; and cash donations to support transportation to and from the farm. They also have many opportunities for experienced gardeners and non-experienced but enthusiastic and reliable volunteers. You can even get City Market member worker credit for volunteering! Contact Mandy Davis at mandy@intervale.org or 660-0440 x 108 for more information or if you'd like to make a donation or volunteer.**



Immigrant farmers are the fastest growing segment of farmers in the United States. In the photo above, Fatuma Hussein, a farmer with the New Farms for New Americans program, displays her produce at the Old North End Farmers' Market. You can find produce grown by the immigrant farmers at area restaurants, at the Old North End Farmers' Market (H.O. Wheeler School, Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30 pm), and at the Winooski Farmers' Market (Thursdays, 3:30-6:30 pm).

City Chicks Organic Chickens Meat Shares Available at ICF

City Chicks raises certified organic, free-range broiler chickens in the Intervale. Chickens will be available at two pick-ups at the Intervale Community Farm (one in mid-July and the second at the end of August). You may order as many birds as you like for each drop-off date.

Whole birds (3-5 lbs)-\$20 each

Mmm, mmm good! Place your order today!

Contact Nicole @ 864-3271 or nicdehne@hotmail.com



WANTED:

- **BAGS!** Help us save resources by recycling your shopping bags with us. We need them all year long. **PLEASE**, clean, full-size bags only (no newspaper, produce, laundry, or drug store bags).
- **Trucks.** If you have a truck that isn't quite town quality, let us know. We are especially interested in 4WD trucks.
- **Clippers.** We are in constant need of clippers for our cut flowers—donate your extra scissors or shears!
- **Tools.** Your unused carpentry, gardening, and mechanics tools can keep us fixed up and greened up.

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Bottom Land News is published periodically. We are always grateful for your feedback, favorite Farm photos, poems, letters, and ideas for articles. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to reprint. Contact the Intervale Community Farm for information on subscriptions.
The Intervale Community Farm is a member-owned consumer cooperative, growing organic produce for over 500 households in the greater Burlington area. Our land is located in the Intervale, a place "between the hills" where people have farmed for many years. We are part of the global Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement, linking farmers and consumers together to build a sustainable food system. We are now in our 20th season.



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