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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

The Practical

**HORTI-
CULTURIST**

April 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Meet a Co-Hort: Jennie Erwin



Jennie Erwin owns and operates [Daystar Harvest](#). The farm operates on 2 acres in Boone County plus a half-acre in Des Moines. Jennie direct markets to customers through online sales.

In five words or fewer, why do you grow horticulture crops? I like the challenge.

What is something you're excited about trying this year? I'm excited to try cut flowers this year! I'm adding a cooler to our farm, so now I finally have cold storage to properly grow and store them to sell.



What is one thing you would change about your industry? Specifically here in Iowa, it would be cool to have more processing places for smaller producers - both meat and vegetables - and I would love to see farmers getting a bigger share of profits across the industry.

What's your favorite PFI memory? The dinners at the PFI conference pre-pandemic were so wonderful with all the food and everyone's kids running around; they were pretty special (though the Storytelling sessions have become a new favorite).

Your favorite crop and why? My favorite crop has always been hardneck garlic because it was such a discovery the first time I was introduced to that crop. I love to eat garlic, but I also love the timing of that crop, going in the ground in October and harvesting in July. And I love that it multiplies.

PROGRAM UPDATES

PFI is hiring more horticulture staff!

Practical Farmers of Iowa is now hiring a senior horticulture and local foods coordinator.

If you're passionate about building a resilient food system, helping small farmers thrive and developing robust fruit and vegetable production in Iowa, this role is for you.

[Learn more and apply here.](#)



IN THE FIELD

New research report: "Fall Cauliflower Variety Trial"

Iowa's hot and humid summers bring many challenges to fall cauliflower production. But choosing early-maturing varieties may give growers the upper hand.



Last season, our PFI cooperators put five different varieties to the test.

[Read our latest research report](#) to see which variety produced larger heads and higher marketable weights among most cooperator farms.

Don't miss your chance to get paid farm experience with Labor4Learning

Are you looking for experience growing flowers, raising organic row crops or managing cattle and hogs?

Apply to one of 15 Labor4Learning jobs across Iowa and **get paid, on-the-job training** with experienced farmers this summer!

You'll receive personal guidance in the business and production skills you need to run a successful farm.

[Browse open positions and apply today.](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Coming in May: Field day season announcement

Coming in May ...Field Day Season!

Stay tuned as we announce 40+ farmer-led field days!

Want to make sure a field day guide is mailed to you? Email Debra at info@practicalfarmers.org or call (515) 232-5661.



Apr. 29: Festival- Farm Fresh Food Fest (formerly The Gathering)

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. | Mason City, IA

May 6: PFI Social – Devine-Johnson Family Farm

1-3 p.m. | Belle Plaine, MN

April 29: PFI Social – Whiterock Conservancy

1-4 p.m. | Coon Rapids, IA

POLL

How is your spring planting going?

Answer the poll question below:

100% done!

Select

75% done

Select

50% done

Select

25% done

Select

Not started

Select

I don't plant in the spring

Select

Previous Poll Results:

Have you started any seeds this year?

- **Yes! - 66.7%**
- Not yet - 22.2%
- I only use plugs - 5.6%
- I only grow perennials - 5.6%
- Never stopped - 0%

Send us your poll ideas! We want to know what YOU want to know. Reply to this email with your ideas for the next poll.

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CONTACT US

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