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PRACTICAL FARMERS
of Iowa

The Practical
**HORTI-
CULTURIST**

June 2023

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.

Meet a Co-Hort: Molly Schintler



Molly Schintler has been growing food, flowers and community in the Iowa City area since 2013. She is a partner at Echollective Farm near Mechanicsville, Iowa, where she and **Derek Roller** sell through CSAs, farmers markets, restaurants, cooperatives and grocery stores.

Why do you grow hort crops, in 5 words or less? Nourishing people and the planet (it's our tagline).

What is something you're excited about trying this year? We're back at the farmers market! We were there for 20 years before COVID, and it's been really good this year. So far, we've had great sales - our top five sales days of all time have been the first five markets of 2023! After the ebb-and-flow from 2020 to now, that is a great surprise. It's so nice to see people in that way. It's been busy the whole time (so the time flies!), and we have sold everything we brought, so that all feels great. That's the goal!

What is one thing you would change about your industry (no limits)? I wish that the primary model of agriculture was more like alternative farm models that center cooperation, collaboration and equity.

Favorite PFI memory? Meeting Derek Roller at the cheese table at the potluck 2015 PFI Conference! Today he is my farm partner and life partner.

What is your favorite crop and why? Herbs bring me joy time and time again. I feel so lucky! A normal person doesn't get to experience walking into a walk-in cooler of lavender or sage or thyme. Lavender is probably my favorite. Second runner up is chamomile. Third is tarragon. Also cilantro and dill.

"What I really love growing is community." - Molly Schintler

PROGRAM UPDATES

We can't steward our PFI community without you



"PFI is like a library that has come alive," says member **Jim Dillavou**. Just as a traditional library is a collection of books for study, inspiration and recreation, the PFI network shares a broad collection of knowledge via our diverse membership.

Our living collection is evolving as new ideas are generated, shared with other people in the network and tested on our farms.

It takes effort to curate and steward such a precious collection, and we need your help to continue. To meet our budget for the year and bring you the programming we're scripting, we have a **goal to raise \$55,000 with this spring fundraiser**.

If you have capacity to give, please consider making a donation today.

Help us meet our \$55,000 goal

IN THE FIELD

Research report: "Honeyberry Establishment with Shade Cloth"



Honeyberries are gaining popularity as an early-season offering on diverse fruit and vegetable farms. Could shade cloth reduce heat stress for this northern native perennial?

PFI cooperators **Eric Franzenburg, Alice McGary, Jeff Sindelar** and **Tom Wahl** initiated a multi-year project in 2022 to find out.

The project will continue in 2023 to determine if shade has any effect on fruit set. [Read their initial findings.](#)

Featured podcast: What in the Weather?



Are you interested in better understanding Iowa weather and its impact on your fruits and vegetables?

ISU Extension and Outreach's **Dan Fillius** teamed up with state climatologist **Justin Glisan** to launch [What in the Weather?](#), a podcast to interpret Iowa weather predictions and climate trends. [Listen now.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming PFI horticulture events:

All events listed in Central Time

Field day: Agritourism and Orcharding With an Ecological Focus at Wills Family Orchard



July 14 | 10 a.m.-Noon | Adel, IA

At Wills Family Orchard, **Maury Wills** and his family are growing organic apples, organic peaches and even a sorghum sudan grass maze.

Plan to attend their July 14 field day to hear from Maury and learn how

their farm has grown and evolved.
[Please RSVP online.](#)

Field day: Elevating Prairie Plants on a No-Till Flower Farm



July 16 | 2-4 p.m. | State Center, IA

Farmer **Hannah Scates Kettler** has been growing cut flowers for four seasons. She incorporates prairie plants into each of her bouquets that help encourage discussion about their value to the landscape.

Join us at her field day to see how she and her husband Kurtis are using natural methods to grow hundreds of cultivars for farmers markets, subscriptions and – new this year – U-pick. [Please RSVP here.](#)

June 22: Social - [Spanish Community Social](#)

Hosted by La Luz Centro Cultural
1-3 p.m. | Hampton, IA

July 8: Field Day - [Closing the Loop With Complementary Enterprises at Hundling Family Fresh Foods](#)

Hosted by Brice & Melanie Hundling
3-5 p.m. | Breda, IA

July 14: Field Day - [Agritourism and Orchardng With an Ecological Focus at Wills Family Orchard](#)

Hosted by Maury & Mary Wills
10 a.m.-Noon | Adel, IA

July 16: Field Day - [Elevating Prairie Plants on a No-Till Flower Farm at Minerva's Meadow](#)

Hosted by Hannah Scates Kettler & Kurtis Kettler
2-4 p.m. | State Center, IA

July 17: Social - [Spanish Community Social](#)

Hosted by Silvino Morelos
5:30-7:30 p.m. | Storm Lake, IA

July 23: Field Day - [Trying Out Tools and Talking About Farm Transition at Rolling Acres Farm](#)

Hosted by Denise O'Brien & Larry Harris and Kent Morris
2-5 p.m. | Atlantic, IA

July 24: Field Day - [Playing the GAP Game: Looking at On-Farm Food Safety at Morning Glory Farm](#)

Hosted by Donna Warhover
10 a.m.-Noon | Mt. Vernon, IA

Friends of PFI events

July 20: Field Day - [Humble Hands Agroforestry Field Day](#)

Hosted by: Sustainable Iowa Land Trust (SILT) and Savannah Institute

POLL

What is your biggest challenge so far this season?

Answer the poll question below:

Coping with drought

Select

Weed management

Select

Equipment issues

Select

Pests/disease

Select

Slow markets

Select

Finding labor

Select

Something else

Select

No challenges here – everything's perfect!

Select

Previous Poll Results:

How many horticulture field days will you try to attend this year?

- 3+ - 36.4%
- 2 - 27.3%
- 1 - 27.3%
- I can't attend any this year - 9.1%
- All of them - 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.

STAY CONNECTED



CONTACT US

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