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**PRACTICAL FARMERS**  
*of Iowa*

The Practical  
**HORTI-  
CULTURIST**  
August 2023

*Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.*

## Meet a Co-Hort: Tricia Engelbrecht



**Tricia Engelbrecht** and her husband **Seth Engelbrecht** own and operate **Engelbrecht Farm** near Waverly, Iowa, where they raise flowers and some produce, including green beans, high tunnel tomatoes, peppers and potatoes that they sell through farmers market, a flower CSA, wholesale to florists and u-pick events.

**Why do you grow hort crops, in 5 or fewer words?** Sharing our farm + flowers = joy!

**What is something you're excited about trying this year?** Right now, late in the season, we're

looking forward to winter so we can have a break! But I'm super excited for next year. We've been visiting other people's farms this year to learn, evaluating what works for us to grow and what doesn't, and editing our plant list for next year. This was our first year using high tunnels, and we've learned a lot! Bugs and diseases really like the high tunnels, so we're learning how to manage that and have some different approaches for next year.

**What is one thing you would change about your industry (no limits)?** The bugs! We haven't honed in on pest control, so we're figuring that out. Beneficial insects were effective in the high tunnel, but outside, the Japanese beetles have been tough.

**Favorite PFI memory:** Going to the flower field days last year was so helpful! It was great to see what other people are doing and how they're doing it, and we came away feeling like we're doing pretty well.

**Your favorite crop and why:** I can think of a few – the zinnias are pretty great because they're easy. Also rudbeckia and sunflowers. My favorite is always kind of just whatever is blooming! And to be honest, our beans were a huge producer for us this year! We just had one 90-foot row in our high tunnel, but they produce so consistently, and people love to buy them at the flower market. We'll probably plant a lot more next year!

## PROGRAM UPDATES

### Tedesco Farm available for the 2024 growing season



The Tedesco Farm is a 13-acre farm located near Granger, Iowa. In 2016, **Angela Tedesco** gifted these acres to PFI. We are seeking a new tenant for the 2024 growing season, with potential for a longer-term lease in 2025.

We're looking for a tenant who:

- Is a member of PFI- with preference given to beginning and historically underserved farmers
- Has previous farming experience
- Can express clear goals and visions for their business, has a plan to achieve those goals and can show evidence they can carry out that vision
- Has the entrepreneurial ability to create a budget and cashflow their business

The initial application will be followed by a round of interviews. A committee of PFI members with diverse experiences in farming and farmland access will select which candidates move to the interview round. This committee will sit in on interviews and select the next tenant for this parcel of land by November 2023. [Learn more and apply.](#)

## IN THE FIELD

### Local collaboration leads to season extension innovation



At his June 2023 field day, **Steve Strasheim** highlighted the geothermal-heated high tunnel he devised with neighbor **Eric Jellum**.

This innovation makes year-round production more accessible by dramatically decreasing heating costs.

[Learn more about this SARE-funded project here.](#)

### Harping on tarping



Farmers **Emily Fagan** and **Hannah Breckbill** of Humble Hands Harvest were curious about tarping to expand no-till practices on their farm, so they designed a cooperators' trial to investigate.

[Explore their findings in this new research report.](#)

For more on tarping, watch the 2023 farminar, ["Magic Tarping Ride: Perspectives on a System for Soil](#)

[Quality, Weed Control and More on Vegetable Farms.”](#)

To really dig in, attend Humble Hands Harvest's upcoming field day, [Transition to No-till, Tarping and More, on Sept. 10.](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Upcoming PFI Horticulture Events:

*All events listed in Central Time*

#### A day for connection and curiosity at Sundog Farm



**Sunday, Aug. 20 | 9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Solon, Iowa**

At Sundog Farm, collaboration is their superpower. Sisters **Carmen and Maja Black** have teamed up with partners **Helaina Thompson and Carlos Williams** to not only operate the farm across a varied and increasing number of enterprises but also to be a hub at the center of their local food system.

Join us for a workshop (waitlist only for this portion), lunch, a field day, a landowner meetup - or all of the above - on Aug. 20! [Register online.](#)

### More upcoming events

**Aug. 19: Field Day – [Community Farm Tour at Matthew 25](#)**

*Hosted by: Matthew Ardent*  
1-3 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA

**Aug. 19: Social – [Beginning Farmer Social: Groundswell Cafe](#)**

*Hosted by: Matthew 25*  
3:30-5 p.m. | Cedar Rapids, IA

**Sept. 6: Field Day – [Microgreens and Marketing to Build a Food System in Northwest Iowa at Cherry Lane Farm](#)**

*Hosted by: Calvin & Krissy Thiessen*

**Sept. 10: Field Day – [Transitioning to No-Till, Tarping and More at Humble Hands Harvest](#)**

*Hosted by: Hannah Breckbill & Emily Fagan*  
3-5 p.m. | Decorah, IA

**Sept. 10: Celebration – [Farmland Owner Legacy Award Celebration at Humble Hands Harvest](#)**

5-8 p.m. | Decorah, IA

**Oct. 6: Field Day – [Mushroom Cultivation, Marketing and Tasting at Flavor Country Farm](#)**

## Friends of PFI Events

### Aug 22: Workshop – [Cider Fermentation and Packaging Workshop](#)

Hosted by: University of Wisconsin-Madison

10 a.m-3 pm. | Verona, WI

[View our events calendar](#)

## POLL

### When will you seed your latest fall and winter crops?

Answer the poll question below:

**Already done!**

Select

**Before Sept. 1.**

Select

**Before Sept. 20.**

Select

**Before frost.**

Select

**I won't! I grow year-round.**

Select

### Previous Poll Results:

**Though it's still high summer, planning for the 2024 PFI Annual Conference begins now! What session topics would you most like to see at the 2024 conference?**

- **Crop-specific production sessions - 44.4%**
- Time for discussion and networking with farmers - 11.1%
- Email newsletters & social media - 11.1%
- Social justice in farming - 11.1%
- Managing unpredictable weather - 11.1%
- Weed management - 11.1%
- Let's talk tools - 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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### STAY CONNECTED



## CONTACT US

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