

The Practical Horticulturist - Attend our last hort field day

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet a Co-Hort: Mike and Jodi Levine

Mike and Jodi Levine own and operate Fruit of Levine Farm in Omaha, Nebraska, where they raise a range of specialty crops as well as geese and ducks. They also sell eggs, keep bees and sell honey products to two ice cream shops, one restaurant and several individual customers.

Why do you grow hort crops, in 5 words or less? Growing unique things customers want.

What is something you're excited about trying this year? Flowers! We love them, and we tried a u-pick this year. They're also great for the bees to have different kind of flowers and nectar.

What is one thing you would change about your industry? We want more water! Our wells are so low. That's not really the industry, but it's an issue. We like what we do because we hone in on really specialty items that we know people want, so that has been helpful for us.

Favorite PFI memory: All of our visits to the Annual Conference! We absolutely love it and come home just bubbling with ideas.

Your favorite crop and why: Again, flowers! They're beautiful and people love them. Watermelon is also pretty great because we love to eat it, and it's fun to try different varieties. We also love to grow raspberries.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Hidden Falls LLC receives Farmland Owner Legacy Award



Members of Hidden Falls LLC were recently honored with PFI's 2023 Farmland Owner Legacy Award at a ceremony in Decorah, Iowa.

In 2014, over a dozen families joined together to purchase 22 acres of land outside of Decorah and preserve it for sustainable farming. Over the next several years, the members gradually transferred their acres to Humble Hands Harvest, which produces diversified vegetables, sheep and orchard fruit and is cooperatively owned by PFI members **Hannah Breckbill and Emily Fagan**.

[Read more about their story.](#)

Beginner tips for integrating cover crops



How can cover crops be incorporated into vegetable production systems?

Kate Edwards of Solon, Iowa, started using rye as a cover crop several years ago and, over time, has found many ways to fit various types of cover crops into her rotations to help build her soil. [Learn how in this video from our "Practical Cover Croppers" series.](#)

Finding a family through PFI



PFI member **Rebekah Ahrens** and her family were still learning how to run the family farm when they lost Rebekah's father. Suddenly, they were on their own.

They started identifying what was on the to-do list that her family didn't know how to do. Rebekah was thankful she could turn to the network she had built at PFI to fill in the gaps and provide support.

[Read her story on the blog.](#)

"Wherever you are in your farming journey, I encourage you to tap into this resource and join Practical Farmers of Iowa," she says.

[Join or renew today](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Field day: "Mushroom Cultivation, Marketing and Tasting"



Friday, Oct. 6 | 1-4 p.m.

At Flavor Country Farms, Kevin Novak produces 800 pounds of mushrooms each week and markets them to chefs in Omaha. The farm also includes microgreens, tomatoes and a handful of other vegetables.

Visit Kevin's lab and production facility, hear about what it takes to work with this unique system at this scale and learn from a chef-turned-farmer about his unique operation and marketing approach. [RSVP](#)

Friends of PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

Nov. 8: Short Course – ISU High Tunnel Short Course

Hosted by: Iowa State University Extension

TBD | Ames, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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