

The Practical Horticulturist - Register today for the Commercial Apple Growers Workshop

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet a Co-Hort: Dirk & Kjirsten Oudman

Dirk and Kjirsten Oudman operate Blue Sky Vegetable Co. near Worthing, South Dakota, where they raise mixed vegetable crops they sell through CSA and an online farmers market. They have been PFI members since 2023.

Why do you grow hort crops, in five words or less?: That's what directly feeds people.

What is something you're excited about this year?: I am going to try to have an all-purple vegetable share for one week this summer. Probably late August or

early September, including eggplant, purple beans, purple cabbage, mizuna, purple carrots and beets.

What is one thing you would change about your industry?: The obvious one is to get more people to eat vegetables. It would be great to have more growers and more markets for those growers to fill.

Favorite PFI memory: This year's conference! We presented a session on living mulches this year, and this was our first PFI conference. It was welcoming and technical and there was a good mix of different growers. And good food!

Your favorite crop and why: Peppers! I love eating them and I love the varieties – sweet, shishitos, hot peppers, so many kinds! I don't feel like I'm working when I'm harvesting peppers; I could just do that all day long.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Thank you for being part of another successful annual conference



We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended PFI's 2024 Annual Conference last week in Des Moines.

The annual conference has been a keystone event for sharing knowledge since our founding in 1985. This year's conference boasted **over 1,000 attendees, 80 sessions and 90 exhibitors.**

Meet up with horticulture farmers near and far



Plan to attend one of PFI's horticulture meet-ups in 2024! Join horticulture farmers from Iowa and beyond for the **first (and only) online meet-up on Feb. 15.**

After that, find an in-person meet-up near you. This year, we're hosting meet-ups in Algona, West Branch, Harlan, Waverly and in the Iowa Great Lakes area. [View the schedule.](#)

Hope to see you there!

IN THE FIELD

A tradition of diversification



Meredith Nunnikhoven owns and operates Barnswallow Farm & Flowers, where she raises flowers and offers various related products and programs.

Thanks to Meredith's commitment to supporting pollinators, this farm is also home to 100 acres of pollinator habitat. Today, Barnswallow Farm has seen a return of not only varied prairie plants, but of wildlife as well.

[Read about this journey.](#)

Kim's Famous Blueberry Pie Bars



For years, farmer **Kim Andersen** brought Blueberry Pie Bars featuring organic blueberries from her Blueberry Bottom Farm to the PFI Annual Conference potluck. They were so delicious that other attendees reported reminiscing on them all year long.

Even without the potluck at this year's conference, Kim found a way to share bars during her session, "Establishing and Managing Organic Blueberries." Now, she wants to spread the love further by sharing her recipe.

[Get the recipe for Kim's Blueberry Pie Bars.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Last day to register for our commercial apple production workshop!



Tuesday, Feb. 6 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Ames, IA

At PFI's Commercial Apple Growers Workshop, you'll hear from industry experts, join a farmer-led discussion about the challenges of sustainable production, and tour Iowa State University's new orchard featuring a diverse selection of apple varieties from the Midwest Apple Improvement Association.

In addition, you'll take part in a pruning workshop for all experience levels to learn or refresh essential orcharding skills. **[Register by Jan. 30.](#)**

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

Feb. 6: Workshop – Commercial Apple Growers Workshop

8 a.m.-4 p.m. | Ames, IA

Feb 6: Webinar – Turning Point: Key Moments for Two Farms Over Two Decades

Hosted by: Jill Beebout & Rob Faux
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb 13: Webinar – Figuring Out Funding: Conventional and Unconventional Sources to Grow a Farm

Hosted by: Anna Hankins & Shae Pesek
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 15: Meet-Up – Virtual Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up

9-11 a.m. | [Online](#)

Feb. 16: Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up

Hosts: Joanne Roepke Bode & Mary Beyerhelm Huey
9-11 a.m. | Algona, IA

Feb 20: Webinar – Allies and Adversaries: Balancing Pollinator Habitat and Wild Spaces with a Diversified Small-Scale Farm

Hosted by: Jill Beebout & Rob Faux
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

Friends of PFI events

Feb. 2-3: Conference – Organic Vegetable Production Conference

Co-hosted by: FairShare CSA Coalition and ISU Extension and Outreach
All Day | Madison, WI

Feb. 10: Conference – Sharing the Wisdom of the Community

Hosted by: Sustainable Farming Association
8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. | St. Joseph, MN

Feb. 11-14: Conference – Annual Conference

Hosted by: International Fruit Tree Association
All Day | Yakima, WA

Feb. 22-24: Conference – Organic Farming Conference

Hosted by: Marbleseed
All Day | LaCrosse, WI

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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