

The Practical Horticulturist - 2024 Field Day registration is live + Deep compost mulch at Sweet Season Farm

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet a CoHort: Beth McGeough

Beth McGeough raises red raspberries, black raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, tart cherries, gooseberries, currants and rhubarb as well as habitat on Edge of the Woods Raspberry Farm near Indianola, Iowa.

Why do you grow hort crops, in five words or less? What I grow tastes best.

What is something you're excited about this year? I started growing culinary lavender and I'm excited about how I can further develop the potential of that crop for my business.

What is one thing you would change about your industry? I'm concerned about farmland loss in my area, and it makes me question the purpose of all the growth and how farms fit into that.

Favorite PFI memory: One of the first PFI conferences I went to was held at the hotel near the airport. We went to a session on growing hazelnuts, and it was just amazing how many people were there and how much interest there was in the crops. The presenters were incredibly knowledgeable, and it was so impressive. I made so many great connections.

Your favorite crop and why: My favorite is whatever is growing at the time! I absolutely love them all – even the gooseberries!

*"Grow where you're planted. That's kind of my talisman for what I do."
- Beth McGeough*

PROGRAM UPDATES

Registration for PFI's 2024 field days is live



The **2024 PFI field day season** kicks off in less than a month! Join us for another season of on-farm, farmer-to-farmer learning. **Take a look at all the events planned for this season** and register for the ones that interest you most.

Field day guides should hit mailboxes by the end of May. Not sure if you're on the snail mail list? Reply to this email and we'll get you sorted.

We'll look for you on the farm this summer!

Introducing the updated PFI local foods directory



PFI recently updated our local foods directory with MarketMaker.

Use this powerful new tool to identify sources among PFI membership where you can buy local, searching by a range of criteria like location, business type, product, certification and more. The website also lists simple steps to update your farm's info in the directory.

[Explore these great new features and update your listing today.](#)

Deep compost mulch at Sweet Season Farm



Carly and Ethan Zierke of Sweet Season Farm grow certified organic vegetables in Calmar, Iowa. They have adapted a deep mulch system as an economical way to make their vegetable beds more weed- and drought-resilient and to improve the health of the soil.

[In this video](#), learn about where they get their compost, a step-by-step for timing and application, and benefits of a deep compost mulch system.

Favorite vegetable production tips to share over the garden gate



In our spring issue of "the Practical Farmer," vegetable farmers from across the state, and representing a range of farm sizes and enterprises, shared advice and musings in response to the question: "What are your favorite lessons gleaned from experiences on your vegetable farm?"

[Read them here.](#)

IN THE FIELD

Learn about the Heartland Regional Food Business Center



The [Heartland Regional Food Business Center](#), serving Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma, is dedicated to helping farm and food enterprises start up, grow and connect with local and regional markets. In late 2024, the Center will offer a [Business Builder Subaward Grant Program](#) with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000; no match required.

[Sign up for their newsletter](#) to stay up to date on this and other available opportunities.

How about sharing your two cents with USDA?



The USDA's Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, established in 2022, is seeking nominations for new members. This committee provides input for programs and policy related to supply chain, urban agriculture and innovative production.

Read about the **Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production** including how to submit nominations, which are due July 7.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Cultivating an experience at Rose Farm



Sunday, June 23, 3-5 p.m. | Norwalk, IA

Our horticulture-focused field days in 2024 will kick off with a visit to Rose Farm near Norwalk, Iowa, where owner and operator **Karri Rose** will lead us through her farm and her business planning process.

Join us for a very special afternoon!
RSVP to this free event.

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

June 30: Field Day – Hands-On Field Day at Garden Oasis Farm

Hosted by: T.D. & Sarah Holub
9 a.m.-Noon | Coggon, IA

Registration required

June 30: Field Day – Agriculture Supporting Community:

Cultivating Food, Habitat and Leaders at Mustard Seed Community Farm

Hosted by: Alice McGary

3-5 p.m. | Ames, IA

Friends of PFI events

June 12: Field Day – Cover Crop Termination and No-Till Vegetable Transplanting Field Day

Hosted by: UW-Madison and partners
9 a.m.-Noon | Verona, WI

June 20: Field Day – Cut Flower Production on an Amish Farm

Hosted by: Iowa Specialty Growers Association
9 a.m.-Noon | Sigourney, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

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