
Beginning Farmer News - Check out PFI's summer magazine + Why chestnuts?

From Rachel Burke <rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org>

Date Thu 8/15/2024 12:02 PM

To Emily Yaddof <emily.yaddof@practicalfarmers.org>



August 2024

Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet beginning farmer, Elana Gingerich

Elana Gingerich owns and operates **Olivia's Orchard**, a 40-acre farm with over 10-acres of chestnut trees, a few acres of pawpaw trees and a handful of other fruit and nut trees. Grass-finished beef cattle play a crucial role on the farm where they are rotationally grazed to manage pasture and timber. Elana also operates a nursery supplying chestnut and pawpaw trees for other growers who want to get started in agroforestry.

Join us at Elana's field day, "[Getting Started With Chestnuts](#)" on Aug. 27 from 9-11 a.m. to learn from Elana how you, too, can get started with chestnuts.

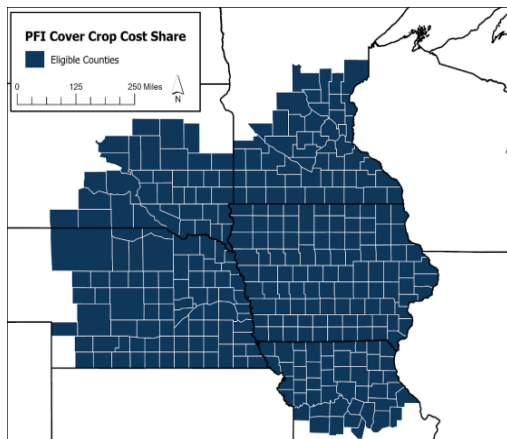
PFI asks: Why chestnuts?

Elana: Chestnut trees are the perfect crop. They are nutrient dense carbohydrates that don't require you to plow the topsoil, don't require chemical inputs and last at least 40 years if maintained properly. We think of chestnuts as a niche crop in Iowa, but they aren't a fad or a new superfood. Chestnuts have been an essential part of cuisines across the globe. American chestnuts were a staple in the diets of Appalachians until wiped out by a blight 100 years ago. Chestnuts are versatile too. They can be dried, ground into a gluten free flour, brewed into beer, used as livestock feed and more.

[Register for Elana's field day today!](#)

PROGRAM UPDATES

Enrollment is open for PFI's cover crop cost-share program



Enroll in PFI's [cover crop cost-share program](#). Farmers seeding cover crops can get \$10 or \$15 per acre on an unlimited number of acres, along with personalized agronomic support.

"Cover crops are a great entry point for farmers interested in conservation. Beyond the soil, water and ecological benefits, we see reduced chemical input costs, boosted yields and increased forage availability," says Morgan Jennings, PFI's field crops viability coordinator.

[Learn more and enroll today.](#)

Enjoy PFI's 2024 Summer Magazine: "The Practical Farmer"



"The Practical Farmer" is published quarterly and keeps farmers in touch with one another through informative articles on relevant farming topics, current on-farm research, upcoming events and other news of interest.

On the cover of the 2024 summer issue: A snapshot of a field day from July 16, 2023, at Hannah Scates Kettler and Kurtis Kettler's farm, Minerva Meadows, near State Center.

[Read this issue](#) or [archived issues](#) of "The Practical Farmer."

Minnesota Down Payment Assistance Grant open through Sept. 15



Are you starting a farm in Minnesota? The [Minnesota Down Payment Assistance Grant](#) offers up to \$15,000 for qualified farmers purchasing their first farm.

The MDA will award these grants using a random lottery process. Eligible purchases include farmland or other agricultural real estate within the borders of Minnesota purchased after application approval.

Applications close September 15. [Learn more or apply now!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for the "Mindful Growth at Sweet Season Farm" field day



Sunday, Sept. 1 | 4-6 p.m. | Calmar, IA

Hosts: Carly & Ethan Zierke

Carly & Ethan Zierke own and operate Sweet Season Farm, a 2-acre certified organic veggie farm.

They're on a new farm, scaling up mindfully, purchasing equipment and building infrastructure with versatility in mind to fit their current and future farm vision.

[Register for this field day.](#)

****Field days are free and open to the public****

Go to the "Fitting Farming into Life at Mogo Farms" field day



Wednesday, Sept. 4 | 3-5 p.m. | Mount Pleasant, IA

Host: Morgan Hoenic

Morgan Hoenic owns and operates Mogo Farms, a 1.5-acre veggie and flower farm. Her farm has the boundaries and flexibility she needs to accommodate an off-farm job.

Morgan's farm supports – but does not dominate – her life. Join us at Mogo Farms to learn from Morgan about how she right-sizes her marketing and her vision for future farm evolution.

[Register for this field day.](#)

Attend the "Transitioning Ground and Changing Generations" field day



Tuesday, Sept. 3 | 10 a.m.-Noon | Red Oak, IA

Hosts: Matt & Jocelyn Vermeersch

Matt & Jocelyn Vermeersch are first-generation farmers now in their second year collaborating on a farm transition with Maggie McQuown.

Matt is striving to raise healthy animals on year-round grazing and minimal inputs. Come learn how Matt, Jocelyn and Maggie are making these transitions work and about their vision for a regenerative, grass-based system.

[Register for this field day.](#)

[View our events calendar](#)

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed are in Central time.

Aug. 21: Field Day – [Make Way for Pheasants](#)

Hosted by: Jerry & Nancy Ackermann

9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Lakefield, MN

Aug. 23: Field Day – [Scaling Up Custom Cover Crop Application](#)

Hosted by: Mike & Kara Dickinson and Mark Unruh

10 a.m.-Noon | Logan, IA

Aug. 29: Field Day – [Adding Produce to the Mix](#)

Hosted by: Tate Carlson

10 a.m.-Noon | Storm Lake, IA

Sept. 7: Field Day – [Cattle Handling and Grass-Based Genetics](#)

Hosted by: Jake & Crystal Bigelow

9 a.m.-Noon | Winterset, IA

Friends of PFI events

Aug. 29: Field Day – [Seed Savers Exchange Facility and Farm Tour](#)

Hosted by: Seed Savers

9 a.m.-Noon | Decorah, IA

Sept. 4: Webinar – [Know Your Numbers: Applying for Financing](#)

Hosted by: Penn State

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

Sep. 9-13: Workshop – [Grazing School](#)

Hosted by: Regenerative Wisdom

9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Garnett, KS

Sept. 25-26: Conference – [Food Finance Forum and Expo](#)

Hosted by: Food and Finance Institute

9 a.m.-5 p.m. | Madison, WI

Oct. 6: Workshop – Season Extension Up Close

Hosted by: McHenry County College
1-4 p.m. | Crystal Lake, IL

Nov. 8: Conference – Southwest Iowa Local Foods Summit

Hosted by: Center for Rural Affairs
9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Malvern, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

Contact our team

Rachel Burke

*Beginning Farmer Engagement
Coordinator*

rachel.burke@practicalfarmers.org

(612) 741-2492

Martha McFarland

*Senior Farmland Viability
Coordinator*

martha.mcfarland@practicalfarmers.org

(641) 229-6701

Savanah Laur

Business Viability Manager

savanah.laur@practicalfarmers.org

(515) 232-5661

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1615 Golden Aspen Dr Suite 101

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