

# Rippling Waters Organic Farm

Promoting Community Food Security Through Education, Action and Service

## Julie's Ramblin' Reflections: "The Good, the Bad, & the Beautiful of the 2010 Season"

**The Good** - we harvested the most delicata squash ever! We had it available up to our last sale day, December 4.

**The Bad** - we didn't grow successfully as many potatoes as usual - due to the dry summer.

**The Beautiful** - "Kaylee's Garden", our permaculture plot was one of pure enchantment. It was the center of our tours, our education, our experimental varieties, and our meditations.



*Kaylee's garden prior planting.*

**The Good** - our soil is becoming so 'earth(worm) bound'. You can pick up handful of soil in certain plots and see and feel the worm castings!

**The Bad** - the hot dry summer lowered our lettuce production.

**The Beautiful** - Upper A Garden was a magnificent palette of purple shades. Joey had companion planted purple basil with eggplant, and pink cosmos with peppers. The plot was a magnificent example of interplanting of herbs, flowers, and nightshades.

**The Good** - our volunteers worked tirelessly this year helping us with large improvement projects. They helped us make four raised beds in the hoophouses and we had the best tomatoes in there in years; they helped us sheet mulch the permaculture plot and week after week spread leaves and hay to enrich our soil. Bill devoted his time to improving the wooden structures on the hoophouses which are now painted, solidly built and look fantastic!

**The Bad** - we still have a tremendous water and erosion problem, coming right from the road, washing out our

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Hollis School Garden Initiative

Thanks to financial support received from the Frances R. Dewing Foundation, Frances Hollis Brain Foundation, Maine Agriculture in the Classroom, the Maine Community Foundation, Annie's Homegrown and individual donations, we now plan to build a new school garden at the Hollis Elementary School and to deepen the work that we are already doing at four other school garden sites in Maine School Administrative District No. 6.

The new garden in Hollis will feature raised beds and agricultural curriculum that incorporates Maine Learning Results. The funds will be used for building materials, soil, fertilizer, soil amendments, garden tools, and to help subsidize the cost of programming.

This exciting farm to school garden project provides opportunities for over 1600 K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Buxton, Hollis, Limington, Frye Island, and Standish to learn about food production, participate in growing their own food, and educate others about food.

The food that students grow in the garden will be used for taste testings during lessons and will be integrated into school lunches to increase nutritious options available for students. Produce will also be set aside to donate to food pantries, which will help raise students' awareness of hunger issues in their community.

These gardens are outdoor learning labs where students apply what they have learned in the classroom and where a fragmented curriculum can become unified through hands-on experience. Research shows that project-based learning enhances student scores on standardized tests, improves student behaviors and increases student self esteem.

Student health is also correlated with academic success. Maine has a child food insecurity rate of 21.1%--the 8<sup>th</sup> highest rate in the nation. Children who eat well are more likely to perform well and have fewer behavior problems. With nearly 30% of school age children in Maine being overweight or obese, there is an urgent need to incorporate nutrition and health education more fully into the curriculum. With rising numbers of students participating in the free or subsidized lunch programs,

*(continued on page 3)*

## Saving our Popular High School Program - the Food Connection Corps

We are seeking financial support to maintain and strengthen the Food Connection Corps (FCC), a six week youth farm education program which has been offered for the past three summers. The FCC is a program of Rippling Waters Organic Farm that strives to build environmental stewardship through education, service and activism. The FCC provides life skills, employment



opportunities, and personal growth experiences for area youth. It offers ten high school students an exciting opportunity to be engaged in meaningful employment

while growing environmentally responsible foods for themselves and their communities.

Curricular activities and other experiences have been developed to provide students with informal lessons on organic gardening, basic soil science, backyard composting, ecology, horticulture, job readiness and leadership training. This program raises the developmental assets of teens who are at risk of poverty and empowers them to take on leadership roles in their

communities around the issues of food access, food security, and community self-sufficiency. Corps

members receive an \$800 stipend for their commitment to the program.

We plan to strengthen the program by adding an after school component which will enable the program to become more sustainable in the long run. Students will be recruited to participate in an entrepreneurship project through which they will learn how to make bread, pastries, and other value added products from produce grown at the farm. Students will not only have an opportunity to participate in baking and preserving, but will also help sell these products as well as vegetables and fruit grown at the farm at the local farmers' market. Students will keep track of expenditures / sales and the income derived from this endeavor will be used to help underwrite the cost of the FCC program in future years. While few students may chose farming or baking as a career path, all will benefit from the skill sets they acquire by participating in the program. There is extensive research indicating that entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on the academic performance of at-risk-students, in addition to affecting their attitudes and behaviors. Even if these young entrepreneurs don't launch their own company right away, they will walk away with skills, values and experiences that can help them in other ways for the rest of their lives.

With your financial support we will be able to deepen our work in promoting local food security in the greater Portland area. Please consider donating to this worthwhile cause. Together, we have the opportunity to make a difference.

Thanks, Richard Rudolph, Executive Director

### Staff

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### Board of Directors

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### *(The Good... Continued from page 1)*

path, and flooding our hoophouse and field C area.

**The Beautiful** – seeing our wet, heavy soil Field D produce! We are creating cover crop paths between our beds, which certainly paid off this year. Usually Field D is a washout, but produced beautiful cucumbers, eggplant, mustard, Chinese cabbage, beans, and pac choi this year.

**The Good** – our Food Connection Corps program, was the best yet. The students worked hard, took pride in their work, and learn a lot about organic gardening, which they proved in their last matching game of the year.

**The Bad** – seem to have more than our share of Mexican bean beetles. Ah – just a challenge for next year.

**The Beautiful** – the Rippling Waters Staff. They work tirelessly, have tremendous spirit, enjoy the farm and each other. Thank you so much, Jen, Joey, Livy, Chris, Mary, Phil, Karla, Karen, and Mike!!!

## DONATE

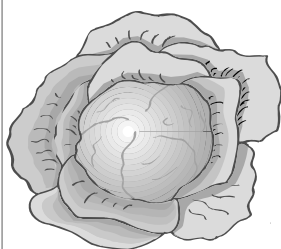
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Educational Programs!  
Check out our website  
www.ripplingwaters.org  
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Annual Appeal and  
to Donate with Paypal  
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## The Recipe Exchange

The Recipe Exchange is a column we publish in each issue of our newsletter. We highlight one or two of your favorite recipes and provide some background on the main vegetable used, so please send in your favorites!

### Cabbage

Cabbage is one of the most globally cultivated plants in the brassica family. It is eaten in almost every country around the world. With many different varieties available, cabbage adapts to many climates and altitudes. Most farms cultivate their cabbages in the early spring and fall with harvests coming in the early summer and late fall. Fall varieties will grow into a tight dense head enabling this vegetable to have remarkable storage capabilities.



Cabbage is great calorie-wise - only 15 per one cup serving, cooked. Though composed of 90% water, cabbage still holds a significant quantity of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, C, calcium, potassium and magnesium. Cabbage, like other brassicas, have been used medicinally for centuries. It is still considered a beneficial digestive aid and

### Cooking & Storage Tips:

\* Eat cabbage raw or lightly cooked. Overcooked cabbage may produce a strong odor and flavor.

\*Cabbage sautés and stir-fries very well with other vegetables.

\* Refrigerate cabbage in a hydrator draw leaving the outer leaves on while storing. Properly stored cabbage can last 3 weeks to 2 months in a refrigerator.

### Crunchy Cabbage Salad

Time: 30 minutes; 6 servings

Combine 2 tablespoons -white or red vinegar, 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, 1/4 teaspoon minced garlic, pinch of salt and black pepper in a salad bowl. Beat with a fork until combined. Add 2 chopped celery stalks (preferably from the heart), 2 chopped carrots, 1 small minced red onion, 3 or 4 chopped radishes, 1 red or yellow pepper that is cored, seeded and chopped and 1 small cabbage that is cored and shredded. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper, and toss. Add 1/2 cup of chopped nuts or dried fruit to enhance taste. (from New York Times, December 3, 2010)

## Farm Classes

**“Grow Your Own Organic Garden”.** April 6, 6 - 9 pm , Bonny Eagle High School. Are you concerned about the rising cost of food? Unsure what the term “certified organic” means? Interested in learning how to grow your own vegetables in a sustainable manner? Join Richard Rudolph for an evening long workshop on how to grow your own garden. He’ll talk about the basics of soil science, how to enrich your soil to produce healthy, high-yielding plants, making and using compost,, crop rotation, green manures and managing nutrients in the garden. Other topics will include how to tell the difference between cultivated plants and weeds, basic weed control strategies and common insect pests and control. The class is offered through the MSAD 6 adult education program. Please contact them to register either online at [www.sad6.maineadulted.org](http://www.sad6.maineadulted.org) or call 929-9185. There is a \$5 fee for reading materials.

**Cultivate Learning Through School Gardening.** This course is designed for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade educators seeking guidance, resources, funding and support to start and maintain school / community garden projects. We will look at how the school garden movement has a positive impact on children’s cognitive, emotional, social and physical growth as well as enhancing scores on standardized tests. Teachers will learn gardening basics, which seasonal crops to grow, how to raise

funds for projects and how taste testings and cooking demonstrations can enhance nutrition and health education. They will reflect on how they can integrate the garden into their curriculum as well as develop a garden plan for their school. Field trips will be taken to several school gardens in the greater Portland area.

Richard Rudolph is the lead faculty member. Several guest speakers will also be on hand to share their knowledge and expertise. Held at Saint Joseph College, M-F between July 11 and July 28, 8-11:30 am. It is a 3 credit graduate level course, usable toward recertification. The cost is \$990 plus \$40 summer & registration fees.

*(Hollis School cont. from page 1)*

this is crucial time to make sure that students have a good knowledge of nutritional concepts so that they may make informed food choices. While poor nutrition contributes to obesity within families, many parents are aware of the benefits of healthy food choices, but can't afford to buy produce on a regular basis. This program will help students who aren't normally exposed to fruits and vegetables at home to learn about nutritional differences between whole foods and highly processed foods and how to grow and prepare fresh produce.

## 'Sustaining the Soul of Organics' - Making a Sustainable Garden Bed

We get a lot of questions about how to make raised beds, since most of our customers have backyard lawns that they want to turn some of the space into a garden. Also I find that most people have extremely busy lives and don't have much time to devote to their garden, especially when it comes to weeding. So here is a great way to help – you'll just have to invest most of your time in the beginning to create a raised bed.



materials like leaves and hay. Your carbon layers should be thicker than the nitrogen layers, as high as 10-1. Other nitrogen rich amendments you can buy are blood meal, fish meal, soy meal, cottonseed meal, general fertilizer and greensand. Adding bonemeal is also great because plant roots love the calcium and your soil organisms love the silica found in it. WATER thoroughly each layer. Finally finish layering the bed with compost (nitrogen layer), peat moss or some chopped leaves or hay, and finally topsoil.

The method I like best is using resources you already have around your home. I use a layering technique of organic matter often called Lasagne Gardening (you can buy books about it from us). In essence you are creating a compost pile. Although making the bed in the fall from saved organic matter will give it more time to breakdown, a spring raised bed works just fine.

You want to top off your raised bed with a nice thick 4-6" layer of mulch. I almost always use mulch hay for this because it is porous for water seepage, decomposes well, and isn't too acidic.

Start by laying out your raised bed area with 4-5 layers of newspaper or flattened cardboard boxes. Water it to hold it down. Then put your bed frame on top if you're going to use one. Simple scrap boards can be used for sides. Next put down a layer of larger pieces of cut shrubs if you have any. If you have any sand add about an inch of that next. Then start layering other organic materials you have compiled like unfinished compost, leaves, hay, grass clippings, or animal shavings/manure. Layer the greener, nitrogen-rich and animal residue materials between the carbon brown

Now you have a weed-free, highly fertile garden bed! Soon your layers will decompose until you have a wonderfully dark colored, earthworm filled soil. Then to replace the volume of your bed as it decomposes, each year add a little more compost and yard waste or leaves that you now know to stockpile.

If you want to make a quicker bed and don't have the compost materials stockpiled, we have all the ingredients for sale to make the Square Foot Garden bed mix as well as the amendments listed above. Come on out to the farm and stock up – we'll help you make the best garden bed ever!

## Annual Meeting: Thursday, February 10, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

Come join farm staff and board of directors in celebrating the start of our 5<sup>th</sup> year as a non-profit farm. It's a great opportunity to meet fellow CSA members, farm volunteers, staff and board members and to learn about our goals for the future, help us recognize our outstanding volunteers, and hear a brief talk on healthy communities.

Lisa Letourneau, MD, MPH will give the address entitled "Making the Case for Change: The Essential Role of Community Partners in Creating a Healthier Maine," then she will lead a discussion on the importance of collaborative efforts to create healthier communities in Maine, and how all stake holders need to take action and be accountable for achieving the goal of building a vibrant and thriving state. She serves as the Executive Director of Quality Counts, a regional healthcare improvement collaborative, and as a physician champion for the Aligning Forces for Quality initiative's quality improvement efforts. Dr. Letourneau is a board-certified internist and practiced emergency medicine for seven years before beginning her work in clinical quality improvement. She currently helps to support several statewide quality initiatives in Maine including the Maine Patient Centered Medical Home Pilot. Dr. Letourneau has a particular interest in helping to build connections between public health and clinical care, and the role of physicians in helping to develop and lead health

improvement efforts.

The meeting is being held at the new Urban Farm Fermentory located in the Bayside area of Portland, 200 Anderson Street - Bay 4. UFF staff members will be on hand to provide a tour of the facility which is a fermentation center for food (sauerkraut and pickles) and beverages (cider and wine) and a micro apiary for honey production. Refreshments will be served.

## SNAP Program Grant

Rippling Waters has recently received a small grant which will enable us to provide a financial incentive to SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or WIC recipients to join our CSA.

MOFGA received the grant through the Wholesome Wave foundation to subgrant to Maine CSA farms who are vendors of either the SNAP or WIC program with the intent of encouraging participation by reducing the cost of the share for these members.

SNAP or WIC program recipients will be able to pay as they buy our fresh vegetables and fruit and will receive a 50% discount as an incentive to participate in the program. As we only have enough funds to provide discounts for 14 SNAP or WIC participants please be sure to apply early. by calling the farm at 642-5161.

## Meet our New Education Coordinator - Marielle Matthews

Idyllic Maine has a special kind of draw for outsiders. I am not even from very far away, but I still idealize Maine. Rolling hills approaching mountains, friendly faces nearly everywhere (truly exceptional in New England), rocky coastline, and celebrated agricultural living.

A few months ago, I found myself in the Colorado Rockies, surrounded by beautiful scenery, but longing for that indescribable something that New England embodies. Like many other small town East-coasters, I grew up imagining what life was like out West. From what friends told me and the few short visits I made, the West was like the East, but on growth hormones. The states were giant, the mountains were huge, the desert was expansive. All I wanted was to live there and to experience life in those epic surroundings. I drove out to Colorado with the intention of staying, but after only two and half months working as a Wilderness Ranger in an awe-inspiring setting, I hopped back in the car to return to familiar territory. Key to my decision to make the long

drive: I couldn't get any fresh food in the mountains!

My interests are varied – health, agriculture, art, the outdoors – but Maine has a place for it all. I believe that in order to be healthy and happy, one has to start at the table, or rather, in the soil. I was drawn to Rippling Waters because of the farm's mission: To increase food security through education, action, and service. Before going to Colorado, I spent time on farms in Massachusetts and central New York and grew to understand the importance of not only fresh local produce, but also the communal sharing of agricultural knowledge. Good farms bring people together and offer community. The mission of RWF is something that I want to uphold during my time as the farm's education coordinator, and carry with me in whatever new community I find myself. Good food means good community and even though New England is rarely recognized for its hospitality, the special community that exists here is what keeps wanderers coming back.

Marielle Matthews, RWOFF Education Coordinator

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## WWOOF'ers become Journeypeople at the Farm

Hello and hope you are having a productive and happy winter, we are Stowell and Marina- the brand spanking new farm interns at Rippling Waters Organic Farm! We both grew up a few miles from the farm and have watched it grow and expand as a part of our Maine landscape- the fields reaching ever closer to the Saco, the new concrete compost bins springing up, tractors pattering between olive skinned farm hands- but never had the impetus to become involved, until now.

Early last January we embarked on a life-changing odyssey across the country. From snowy Pennsylvania to the arid Mojave Desert we lived out of the back of Marina's Toyota Tacoma, working for our room and board through the World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms program (WWOOF). Every few weeks we'd open the WWOOFer's guide-book to feast our eyes upon a host of unique organic farms and, pulling out our dog-eared atlas, move west into unexplored territories, well-springs of new ideas, radical methods of subsistence, fresh vegetables, soils of all make and kind, and ultimately - our future.

In Colorado we found one of the most hip farming towns we've seen, Paonia, nestled at the foot of the towering Land's End and Lamborn Mountains. There we worked on a large organic CSA vegetable and flower farm and earned the collective nickname of "The Mighty Mainahs." In New Mexico we tended a massive herd of goats 7,000ft up in a Native American territory speckled

with striped pottery, tribal bunk houses, and other relics of the civilization once so powerful there. We put our fingers into the earth at a farm that supplied the produce for a Buddhist restaurant deep in the Zion area of Utah, and in Pennsylvania we made hundreds of bars of herbal soap and teas and received daily instruction from a wise farmer by the name of Rusty.

Through these experiences and more along the way we quickly realized our passion for farming, for growing things without the use of chemicals, and for upholding a way of life lost to those in highly urbanized areas of the world and lost to many of our twenty-something generation. We saw people thriving without money, we saw sunsets as we cooked on our travel stove, we saw our hands grow dirtier and our hair grow longer, we saw food from field to plate and we saw, above all things, the importance of work and how fulfilling it can be to sit beside a friend and pull weeds.

It is this tremendous energy we will employ in the fields by the Saco River, helping as others have before us to turn out nutritious produce from the soil there. Our hopes are to learn everything we possibly can from Julee, Richard and everyone else associated so that one day we can start our own small farm on Stowell's family land in Limington. So if you are driving by the farm some sunny day make sure to stop by, we would love to meet you and shake your hand among the swooping plovers and the wonderful things growing all around.



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**2011 CSA  
Brochure &  
Sign-up Form  
enclosed.**

*Providing Certified Organic Vegetables, Herbs, Fruit, Flowers, Annuals and Hardy Perennials*

## Share in the Harvest

CSA shares are now available for the 2010 growing season. Our Community Supported Agricultural Project allows members the flexibility to choose when, what and how much they want of any of our products. We offer a wide variety of certified organic fruits & vegetables, herbs, baked goods, organic eggs, annuals, vegetable seedlings, hardy perennials and many garden supplies including organic certified compost and potting soil. You can pick up your goods at the Portland and Bridgton Farmers' markets or at the Farm.

Each market share costs \$100 and provides \$110 worth of goods. If you love to buy local organic produce, a family of two will want to purchase 2 shares. We take care of the bookkeeping and let you know when your account is up. Additional shares can be purchased throughout the season. Any balance leftover at the end of the season will be considered a donation in support of the farm's community food security work. You can pay through PayPal at our website or mail the enclosed form with a check. See the enclosed brochure for more information. (Not enclosed for our Senior Farmshare folks.)

Today we hope you will join our collaboration enabling us to grow organic food for those who can afford it as well as those served by the local emergency food system.

## We Love Volunteers!!!

"Volunteers Make the Farm Go 'Round"! We depend on them immensely - without their support, we wouldn't be able to proceed with our non-profit projects.

### How can you volunteer?

- In the greenhouse from March 15 - June 15: sowing seeds, planting plugs, transplanting, making soil, organizing plant displays, deadheading, and loading trucks.
  - Working in the fields from April 30 - October 30. Learn first hands how to grow sustainable, organic vegetables employing permaculture, companion planting, mulching, and bed making methods.
  - Be a workshare member. We have 12 during the year, work forty (hours) and get 140 (\$ of produce).
  - Join us on potato planting day - the last Sat. of April.
  - Join us on Permaculture day in May or our Weed 'n Feed Day in July.
- Our goal is to have all our volunteers go away saying:  
"I can do this - I can have a garden".

Interested? call 642-5161 or better yet email Julee at greengrower@ripplingwaters.org.