



## WINTER 2020

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## The Quarterly Newsletter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont

# Winter Conference: Bringing us Together, Despite the Pandemic

Each year, the NOFA-VT Winter Conference provides a joyful, rejuvenating opportunity for farmers, homesteaders, gardeners, land managers, activists, educators, producers, and other food-system change-makers to participate in building vibrant community through ideas, resources, skills and connection.

This year will be different, but we promise it will still inspire and educate, as we nurture, grow, and celebrate the food system we all need for our shared future. Starting in February, in lieu of our in-person conference, we will offer an incredible month-long series of events with many different opportunities for community building and connection through workshops, roundtables, speakers, film and community art. Workshops and speakers will take place over the course of the month from Sunday, February 7th through Thursday, March 4th.

2021 also marks a celebration of 50 years of NOFA-VT! Our conference's theme this year is, "50 Years of NOFA-VT: Honor, Energize, Imagine." We will HONOR our elders & our roots. We will ENERGIZE our community for a movement grounded in equity and ecology.

And together, we will IMAGINE a thriving future for our land and people.

It was in 1971 that this scrappy and determined little organization was created by

a group of farmers who wanted to do things differently. We still seek to do things differently, and a part of that means that we are still learning and growing into the fullness of our mission, calling us to an agricultural system that is just, ecological, and thriving—for all people and the land. We think the conference we have designed will invite all of you into that exploration and learning with us.

We are thrilled to listen to Sherri Mitchell as our keynote speaker, who will start the conversation on February 7th at 3pm. Mitchell, Weh'na Ha'mu Kwasset, is a Native American attorney, teacher, activist and changemaker who grew up on the Penobscot Indian Reservation. She works at the intersection of Indigenous rights, climate change and conscious evolution. She is the author of Sacred Instructions; Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change. See page 3 for details on our new NOFA-VT Member Book Club, and join us in reading and discussing Sherri's book next month! Sherri is the convener of the global

healing ceremony Healing the Wounds of Turtle Island and also the founding director of the Land Peace Foundation, an organization dedicated to the protection of Indigenous land, water and religious rights, and the preservation of the Indigenous way of life. She has been a longtime advisor to the American Indian Institute's Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth and was a program coordinator for their

Healing the Future Program. She has also served as an advisor to the Indigenous Elders and Medicine People's Council of North and South America for the past 20 years, and is a consultant and Advisory Committee member for Nia Tero's International Indigenous Land Guardianship Program.

She currently speaks and teaches around the world. Sherri's wisdom is needed now more than ever.

***When that seed is planted, even before the first shoot comes up through the ground, the vibration of that tone exists within it.***

***-Sherri Mitchell***



## NOFA-VT

PO BOX 697, Richmond, VT 05477  
NOFA: 802-434-4122 • VOF: 802-434-3821  
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## Winter Thoughts from Grace

It's been an intense time for all of us living in Vermont with the recent surge of COVID-19. I've been right there myself: after keeping our kids out of preschool to homeschool with another family, we nevertheless ended up in quarantine for two weeks in November after our dear podmates tested positive for the virus (everyone is now OK, thankfully!). We are grateful to be healthy and are thinking of all those who are sick. All the related anxiety and uncertainty brought the intensity of the pandemic home. (Related: for you farmers and farmworkers juggling caregiving and farming through a pandemic—check a community building opportunity highlighted in this issue that is just starting up and join us!)

What happened in this moment of challenge, though, was what often happens in times of fear and struggle: love showed up. A next door neighbor (and NOFA-VT member) picked up our CSA share for us (grown by a NOFA-VT farmer). Another friend brought us a hot meal grown on their farm. A good number of other friends, farmers, neighbors and coworkers delivered ice cream, fresh bread, cookies and crisp apples to our doorstep, offerings to remind us of the unseen but present web of love and support in our community.

I was moved, yet again, by the connective power of food. Of how feeding each other exemplifies this most profound act of love--nourishment at its most basic and sacred. I was humbled at the sense of being so cared for. I was reminded of why I started farming in the first place: I love to feed people, to share food,



to feel our love for each other made so plain. I feel grateful for the chance to be reminded of how we all hold each other and how we take turns showing up for each other.

Farmers and farmworkers have fed us this whole pandemic, and they will beyond it. (In the long term, our organic farmers will lead on the front lines to help us remain

resilient and strong-- check out a recording of our recent panel featuring several farmers who are climate change leaders bringing forward potent solutions to our most pressing problems!) They have been our collective and most critical web of support, making more food accessible to more of us than ever before. They have innovated to partner, to make home deliveries, to change their markets, and to ensure that all will be fed. This winter, I feel particularly grateful for all our food providers' steady work and demonstration of community care. Thank you!

We will get through this time, together, with our food in hand as our love for each other made visible.

Warmly,

Grace Oedel, NOFA-VT Executive Director



The conference will also feature two lively and very timely panel discussions: 'Elders & Long Time Leaders of the Organic Movement' and 'Future Scouting: Innovative and Emerging Leaders for our Vermont Agricultural Future.'

The "Elders" panel discussion was created to celebrate (just a few of the many!) farmer leaders who helped build the organic food and farming movement through their daily hard work and dedication. (We also want to acknowledge that there are far more people out there who helped found this movement than can sit on one panel!) Join us on February 13th at 3pm for this panel discussion to celebrate the collective knowledge and wisdom of our elders, hear about their challenges and triumphs, and imagine ways we can apply these past lessons towards a continued thriving future.

The "Future Scouting" panel is a space to hear from those folks helping to innovate and energize a food movement for our future, rooted in people, land, and justice. This panel will raise up the voices of some emerging powerful leaders helping to build Vermont's agricultural future. This panel will include farmers, sugar makers, community organizers, movement builders and visionary leaders across many aspects of food and farming. Join us on February 20th at 3pm for this important conversation.

#### Workshops & Roundtables:

Twenty workshops and roundtables will take place over the course of the month, organized by track, time & date below.

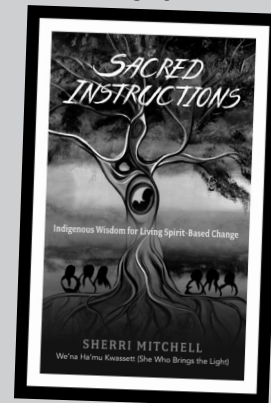
- **Digital Marketing Intensives**  
Monday 2/8, 9-11 am & 1-3 pm
- **Commercial Producer Workshops**  
Tuesdays 2/9, 2/13, 2/23, 3/2, 2:30-4 pm
- **Homesteader & Gardener Workshops**  
Tuesdays 2/9, 2/13, 2/23, 3/2, 6-7:30 pm
- **Changemaker Roundtables**  
Wednesdays 2/10, 2/17, 2/24, noon-1 pm
- **Policy & Food Systems Workshops**  
Thursdays 2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 11:30 am-1 pm
- **Policy Roundtables**  
Fridays 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, noon-1 pm

#### A Preview of Workshops & Roundtables:

- Building a Brand for Your Food & Farm Business
- Online Sales & Marketing: Lessons Learned from the Quick COVID Pivot
- Building On-Farm Soil Health with Cover Crops
- Hoophouse Growing in the Shoulder Seasons
- Participatory Capacity Building for an Inclusive Organic Movement
- Soil Health Policy in VT: Changemaking from the Ground Up
- Climate Resilience on the Homestead
- The Fermentista's Garden: Hands-On Fermentation Demonstration
- Community Food Access: Growing for Each Other
- Farm Stress & Emotional Well-being on the Farm

## NOFA-VT Member Book Club

During these virtual times, we're trying a new way to connect - a NOFA-VT member book club! On Thursday, January 21st from 6:30-8pm, please join us to discuss Sherri Mitchell's important book, ***Sacred Instructions: Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change***. This is a great way to get ready for Sherri's keynote at our annual Winter Conference and also connect with fellow NOFA-VT members during these socially distant times. If you don't have a copy of the book yet, you can contact your local library or consider purchasing from one of Vermont's incredible independent bookstores. You can find a list here: [www.vermontbookshop.com/visit-vermonts-independent-bookstores](http://www.vermontbookshop.com/visit-vermonts-independent-bookstores).



**Details & registration can be found on our website here:**  
[nofavt.org/bookclub](http://nofavt.org/bookclub)

An excerpt from

### Sacred Instructions

by Sherri Mitchell

.....

When our children and grandchildren look us in the eye in years to come, they will ask us these questions. When

that moment comes, this is how we are going to want to respond: We woke up, we showed up, we stood up. We did what we had to do to protect your right to exist. We did everything that we could to protect the animals, the land, and the waters, and to ensure that Mother Earth was given the right to live with all of her biodiversity intact. We did everything within our power to ensure that you would not only survive, but have the ability to thrive. We stood up for you, in the same way that our ancestors stood up for us.



# Contributing to a Resilient Agricultural Landscape

## *A look at the environmental and business benefits of Tamarlane Farm's recently implemented aerated static pile compost system*

By Bill Cavanaugh, NOFA-VT Farm Business Advisor

If you looked up “diversified farm” in the agricultural dictionary (should such a thing exist) you would likely see a photo of Tamarlane Farm. Originally a conventional dairy farm, these days owner Eric Paris oversees not just a milking herd of certified organic grassfed cows, but a vegetable and beef operation that supplies the two restaurants in the town of Lyndonville that his family owns. One of his most interesting enterprises, however, is a common but often overlooked part of life on an organic farm: the compost pile.

Tamarlane Farm began composting as a way to add fertility to their hayfields and grazing pasture for their herd of grassfed dairy cows. As Eric himself puts it, “the composting operation was a direct result of us transitioning to certified organic dairy farming.” Without utilizing synthetic fertilizers, the compost provided the best way to promote growth and return nutrients to the farm.

When they began the compost was primarily food scraps from the family's restaurants as well as materials from around the farm. Soon they began to receive food scraps from other sources in their area and with the implementation of Vermont's Act 148, a mandatory food scrap composting law, Eric realized that, “they would be looked at to play a major role in food scrap recycling for the Northeast Kingdom.”

To increase their ability to handle food scraps, this fall Tamarlane Farm made the leap from traditional windrows turned by tractor bucket to an aerated static pile system. In an aerated static pile composting system, air is forced through the compost pile to produce an environment beneficial bacteria need to thrive. Unlike a traditional composting system, this method does not need to be turned, and can produce fully finished compost in half the time. The new system will allow them to process up to 16 tons of food waste a week.

Eric's composting system has another



interesting feature. He's using a “negative air” system to draw outside air in through the compost pile, which is heated by the 140-160 degree compost. This hot air is then run through a heat exchanger, which warms a glycol loop that in turn is used to radiantly heat a nearby equipment shed and bagging building. Wintertime compost packaging will be made possible by the heat produced from the in-process compost!

Up to this point the compost generated has stayed on the farm to fertilize crops and pastures. With the additional capacity this system opens up, Tamarlane Farm can finally begin selling bagged compost as yet another product from their diversified farm. The system will keep the compost hot enough for long enough that the end result will be fully free of weed seeds, and should be able to qualify for organic certification.

For Eric, the push to compost at this scale is tied to his commitment to organic farming. After taking over management of Tamarlane Farm in 1988, and purchasing the farm from his parents in 1995, he worked to get the farm's practices in line with organic standards and became certified in 2003. In his words, the composting operation, “was a direct result of us transitioning to certified organic dairy farming.” As they

diversified further, the guiding motivation was always doing what they could to protect and restore the environment. As Eric puts it, “we can't fix everything but we do strive to do what we can do in our little bubble to encourage recycling, and encourage organic practices.”

In October 2020, Tamarlane farm received a Vermont Family Farmer of the Month award through NOFA-VT to partially cover the expenses of implementing the new aerated static pile system. The Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Fund makes a financial award to a Vermont family farmer each month for a project that will improve the viability of the farm, and recognizes businesses that are contributing to a resilient Vermont agricultural landscape and demonstrating environmental stewardship through sustainable practices. While the award doesn't cover the entire cost of installing the system, it's a welcome help in a year where the cost of materials for this sort of project have risen almost 400%.

This commitment to environmental wellbeing has served them well over the last 16 years, and will clearly continue to contribute to Tamarlane Farm's success into the future.





# Small Steps Towards Equity in Vermont's Agricultural Community

By Jen Miller, NOFA-VT Farmer Services Director

For the last several months, we have been engaged in a collaborative effort with the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust to work to provide BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) farmers with comprehensive farm business planning and land access services. These services are available to farmers, food producers, and land stewards of color in Vermont across the entire spectrum of farm size and stage of business. While these services have always been available to all farmers, this project seeks to specifically serve BIPOC farmers collaboratively through this unique partnership of the three organizations.

The project's first intention is to support farmers of all production types and project scopes as they navigate the landscape of agricultural service providers, funding organizations, and land-use models while developing core skills to make their farm visions become reality. Our team is currently working with farmers on business planning, searching for land, exploring creative ownership models, and securing financing for infrastructure

improvements, focusing on building relationships and trust alongside skills and practices.

A second intention of the project is for collaborative learning. As we engage deeply as a team and through this work with farmers around the state, we are engaged in self-reflection and active learning as an organization around the continued racism endemic in American agriculture and the power of relationship building, and about ourselves as an organization-- how we must stretch, grow and learn to fully lean into our mission statement that calls us to build a "socially just" food system.

In 2018, under the leadership of NOFA-VT's late, wonderful Enid Wonnacott, we updated our mission statement to include 'social justice' (alongside 'economic viability' and 'ecologically sound' practices) as a focus through which we seek to create a Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things. The American agricultural system developed with origins in land theft, slavery and forced labor, and continues to be rife with justice issues today. We as an organization know

we must do more to address these inequities that have been perpetuated generation after generation for our mission to become reality.

Looking back through the years at our Farmer Services client lists, it is notable that the overwhelming majority of the farmers engaged in our programs are white. Vermont is home to many BIPOC farmers, food producers, and land stewards. To continue with the status quo lends passive support to systemic racism, so instead we are working to take responsibility to ensure our services and funding opportunities are available and accessible for BIPOC farmers-- and more; that we as an organization better understand the role we can play in dismantling racism in agriculture.

This collaborative effort and learning is one small step towards the relationships needed to build a truly resilient, socially just farm and food system in Vermont, alongside many other efforts and relationships developing organically and dynamically all over the state.

To learn more about this project or how you can support these collaborations, please contact Jen Miller at [jen@nofavt.org](mailto:jen@nofavt.org) or 802-434-7159.



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**The Abenaki Land Link Project** is a partnership between the Nulhegan Band of Coosuk – Abenaki Nation, NOFA-VT and the Vermont Farm to Plate Network's Rooted in Vermont Project. 2020 was our first year of the project and our goal was to provide Indigenous seeds to gardeners, homesteaders, and farmers around Vermont who in turn would dedicate land to grow and harvest food on behalf of Abenaki citizens this season. In this first year of the project, we partnered with 15 growers. All together, this project yielded:

- 520 lbs of processed winter squash (peeled, diced, sealed, frozen);
- 32 lbs of three types of dry beans (Vermont Cranberry, Skunk, Mohawk); and
- 38 lbs of corn milled into cornmeal and saved for seed for next year.

All of this food has been given back to the Nulhegan Band of Coosuk – Abenaki Nation, in the forms of food and seed, to provide sustenance for their community over the coming months. In 2021, we are planning to expand the project.

*If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please contact Livy Bulger at [livy@nofavt.org](mailto:livy@nofavt.org) or 802-434-7153.*



# Local Products Wanted!



## Current Local Food Sourcing Needs

### Grocery

Beet Sugar  
Local Fruit, dried or frozen

### Dairy & Perishables

Goats' Milk  
Single-Source Cottage Cheese  
Eggs  
Oat Milk  
Fresh Organic Milk  
Tofu

### Grains

Barley  
Buckwheat  
Rolled Oats  
Blue Cornmeal

### Meats

Buffalo  
Duck  
Pork  
Fish (trout)

For a full list, visit [www.citymarket.coop/local-product-gaps](http://www.citymarket.coop/local-product-gaps) or contact Claire Ross at 802-861-9747 or [CRoss@citymarket.coop](mailto:CRoss@citymarket.coop)

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# Winter Policy Update

By Maddie Kempner, NOFA-VT Policy Director

As 2020 comes to a close, there really isn't much left to say about this year that hasn't already been said. The past nine months have been a time of immense challenge, growth, and learning – all of which, I hope, will set us on a path toward a new and better normal.

In the realm of policymaking, this was a year of rapid response and fervent crisis mitigation. As the 2021-2022 legislative biennium quickly approaches, I am working hard against society's—and my own—often short attention span in order to hold on to the critical lessons this year has provided and carry them into our work in the New Year.

This year has made even more clear that we need a food system where everyone who wants to grow food has access to knowledge, tools, and land on which to do so. Where farmers both support and are supported by their communities. Where agriculture works in concert with natural systems, rather than displacing them. Where all of our neighbors are not only fed, but are nourished.

Read on for an update of some core areas where we are advocating for these changes. Please be in touch ([maddie@nofavt.org](mailto:maddie@nofavt.org) or 802-434-7157) and let us know what you want the future to look like, and how you think we can get there together.

## ***Agriculture as a Solution to Climate Change***

Our top priority for the coming years is to center organic agricultural practices as a solution to the climate crisis. One way we will do this is to lift up the knowledge of farmers and other land stewards who are on the frontlines of adapting to our already changing climate.

## ***Farmer Panel: Farming for Resilient Communities and a Stable Climate***

On December 3rd, we hosted a virtual event that more than 70 people joined to hear from four farmers about how they are adapting to our changing climate, how our collective social, economic, and ecological well-being are inextricably linked, and how we as a state can be prepared for the future. To view the recording of this event, visit our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/thenofavt](https://youtube.com/thenofavt).

## ***Global Warming Solutions Act***

We are excited to share that organic dairy

farmer and NOFA-VT Board Member, Abbie Corse, has been appointed to represent the agriculture and forestry sectors on the newly formed Climate Council as part of the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA). We look forward to supporting Abbie in this critical role and ensuring that the voices of as many land stewards as possible are included in the process.

## ***Payment for Ecosystem Services***

Compensating farmers for the many ecological benefits their stewardship provides (beyond food, fiber, and timber) has the potential to expand the adoption of farming practices that work in concert with natural systems, while also supporting viable livelihoods for farmers. The Soil Health & Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group will reconvene for two years starting in early 2021. We look forward to using our voice as members of the Working Group to ensure that a holistic set of ecosystem services are considered, and that farmers who have long used organic and regenerative practices are not excluded.

## ***Act 164 (Cannabis Tax & Regulate) Reforms***

In 2021, NOFA-VT will continue to work in partnership with Rural Vermont, Vermont Growers Association, and Justice for All to advocate for a more equitable cannabis marketplace in Vermont. We will seek reforms to Act 164 (formerly S.54) that go further than current law in repairing the harms of prohibition and providing meaningful opportunities for farmers, legacy market growers, and BIPOC Vermonters to benefit from this emerging market.

## ***Reducing Toxic Inputs in Agriculture***

Reducing pesticide use in Vermont is critical to protecting public and farmer health, water quality, and to slowing and reversing climate change. As such, this is a core policy priority where we will continue to work to reduce the use of toxic inputs and increase support for farming systems that rely instead on prevention, natural controls, and farmer ingenuity to manage pests and disease.



## ***Expanding the Farm Share Program***

During the 2021-22 legislative biennium, we will be seeking to expand the reach of NOFA-VT's Farm Share Program, which provides half-priced CSA shares for limited-income Vermonters. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, both food insecurity and demand for local, organic food increased dramatically. Our Farm Share Program responds to both of these needs in our communities while directly supporting local, organic farms.


## ***Amplifying Farmers' Voices***

A core part of our work at NOFA-VT is to lift up the voices of organic farmers who work every day to build healthy soil and grow nourishing crops and animals to feed us all. Throughout the year, we host events to build connections between farmers and those representing them in the legislature.

## ***State House to Farmhouse***

On December 16th, we co-hosted the 3rd annual State House to Farmhouse event in collaboration with 11 other food and farming organizations around the state. Each year, this event is an important opportunity for farmers to connect directly with their legislators to share their stories and strengthen relationships that can lead to better policy decisions.

## ***Small Farm Action Days***

In partnership with our friends at Rural Vermont, we are excited to co-host a number of Small Farm Action Days during the 2021 legislative session. These are opportunities for farmers to connect with their legislators to discuss issues they care about, and to learn how to use their vast knowledge and experience to be the most effective advocates for a thriving Vermont food system. Be on the lookout for dates and details. 

# Building Resilient Communities—and Chefs!

By Maria Buteux Reade, NOFA-VT Ag Engagement Partner, Farmer, and Writer

Cast iron pots and skillets covered every burner of Jessee Lawyer's stovetop. One contained a burbling vegetable stock enriched with Jacob's Cattle beans, hominy, late fall roots, and herbs. Another held a crisp golden cornbread, and in the third sizzled a thick loin of moose. Chunks of East Montpelier squash tossed with dried sumac berries and granulated maple sugar roasted to caramelized perfection on a sheet pan in the oven below. Those deep orange cubes would soon infuse the vegetable stock with earthy sweetness, part of the allure of an authentic Three Sisters Stew.

A Missisquoi Abenaki, Jessee Lawyer serves as executive chef at Sweetwaters Bistro in Burlington. While he loves his role there, he nurtures his passion for Abenaki foodways by cooking traditional Indigenous cuisine at home for family and friends. His ultimate goal? "To inspire other Indigenous folks to cook what is ours. Education is important, and I've done several pop-ups at The Great Northern, Shelburne Farms, and the ECHO Center. I'm slowly developing recipes that will help folks find and use the native corn, beans, squash, wild game, and anything they can forage locally."

Jessee shared his knowledge of Abenaki cuisine via a Zoom cooking class as part of the 2020 Agricultural Literacy Week offerings on Monday evening November 16. This event kicked off the 11th annual Agricultural Literacy Week, a partnership of NOFA-VT and the Vermont Department of Libraries. Two hundred viewers of all ages logged on to watch Jessee prepare these traditional dishes comprised of elements grown specifically Alnôbiawi ('in the Abenaki way') or foraged by Jessee himself. Earlier in October, he traveled to the deep woods of Maine to hunt moose with a peer from the Penobscot tribe. The excursion was a success, and Jessee brought home a coveted loin of moose.

Jessee admits he didn't grow up eating many Indigenous foods nor did his parents pass down culinary traditions. "My family are artisans and shared skills in art, not food." After studying graphic design in college, Jessee began his culinary career at a humble pizza shop in Plattsburgh, NY. He landed a position as a fry cook at Sweetwaters in 2013 and vaulted to executive chef in 2017. "Cooking is creative and satisfying, and who doesn't love to play with

knives and fire?"

He freely acknowledges that he's not an expert and relies on a wide group of colleagues and teachers in the Indigenous food world who help to expand his knowledge. "I'm constantly asking questions, learning about and tracking down new 'old' ingredients." He points to Sean Sherman's *The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen* and Dr. Fred Wiseman's tome, *Seven Sisters*, as his bibles.

Traditional Indigenous cuisine involves no pork, beef, dairy, or flour, which are post-contact ingredients introduced to the Americas after Columbus arrived. Instead, Abenaki meals center on wild game, fish, nuts, seeds, berries, and native vegetables. "Although I'm an Indigenous chef, I do use modern techniques and occasionally build flavors using butter and cream," he explained. "The food has to taste good if you want people to eat it!"

At the conclusion of the class, Jessee ladled the thick, rich Three Sisters stew into a wide shallow bowl, arranged thin slices of rosy moose loin on top of the steaming stew, and added a wedge of hearty cornbread crisped in duck fat.

"I honor the ingredients I'm given, especially those grown exclusively for our people, and give them the utmost respect. I love sharing these foods and skills with the Abenaki. These dishes are so nourishing and meaningful, and cooking them gives me a sense of purpose, of connection."

Jessee loves to engage with people so feel free to reach out and connect with him on Instagram @the\_dawnland\_kitchen.



Abenaki chef Jessee Lawyer

## RECIPE:

### Three Sisters Stew

*Although a skilled chef, Jessee Lawyer tends to cook by his senses and instinct. "I'm a terrible chef in that way – I always wing it!" Here's a narrative-style recipe based on the Three Sisters Stew he prepared for the Zoom cooking class on Monday, November 16 for Agricultural Literacy Week.*

#### Ingredients for the vegetable stock:

Carrots, sweet onions, celery, yellow potatoes, Algonquin squash or a New England pie pumpkin, pre-cooked Jacob's Cattle beans, cooked or oven-roasted hominy, fresh ginger root, bay leaves, fresh or dried thyme leaves, kosher salt and pepper.

In a heavy stock pot, combine equal amounts of 1-inch chunks of carrots, sweet onions, celery, and yellow potatoes. Add 1-inch cubes of seeded and peeled Algonquin squash or a pie pumpkin. Add a handful of grated fresh ginger, a couple bay leaves, fresh or dried thyme leaves, kosher salt and pepper to taste. Cover with water, bring to a boil, then drop to a low simmer and cook slowly for up to ten hours, adding more water as necessary to keep vegetables just covered. Near the end of cooking, stir in a cup or more of pre-cooked Jacob's Cattle beans and a cup or more cooked or oven-roasted hominy.

#### Ingredients for the roasted squash:

East Montpelier squash, butternut or Blue Hubbard if Indigenous East Montpelier not available. Avocado oil, granulated maple sugar, dried sumac, kosher salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 375. Cut seeded squash into 1-inch chunks, and in a large bowl, toss squash with avocado oil, granulated maple sugar, and dried sumac. Spread seasoned chunks out on a parchment-lined sheet pan and roast in oven for about 30 minutes, until squash begins to caramelize on the edges. (Jessee notes that roasting squash separately helps to maintain their consistency and shape when added to a soup or stew.)

Gently add the roasted squash chunks to the vegetable stock and let flavors mingle before serving. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



# Calling all Teen Chefs: Join the Jr Iron Chef VT Cooking Club Today!

Since 2008, nearly 5,000 Vermont teens have participated in the statewide culinary competition, Jr Iron Chef VT. Jr Iron Chef VT is a program of Vermont FEED (a collaboration of NOFA-VT and Shelburne Farms) that challenges teams of middle and high school students to create nutritious dishes highlighting local ingredients that inspire school meal programs.

While participating in the Jr Iron Chef VT competition, youth across the state have learned healthy cooking techniques, team building and leadership skills. Some students have shared that:

- "Without Jr Iron Chef, I would have never fell in love with cooking."
- "Because of Jr Iron Chef, I make healthier food decisions."
- "Because of Jr Iron Chef, I know how to be a good leader."

To honor the spirit of Jr Iron Chef VT and student cooking this year, when a large, indoor event cannot be held safely, Vermont FEED is bringing you the Jr Iron Chef VT Cooking Club! Our monthly cooking challenge is a fun way to bring our community together while honoring the core values of Jr Iron Chef VT. Here's how it works:

Each month, we will announce one former Jr Iron Chef VT winning recipe for participants to prepare at home. Students are encouraged to adapt the recipe and add their own flare.

Participants will cook that recipe during the month. We encourage students to get creative and add their own pizzazz, snap a photo of their creation, and share it with us. By sending a photo, they'll be entered to win



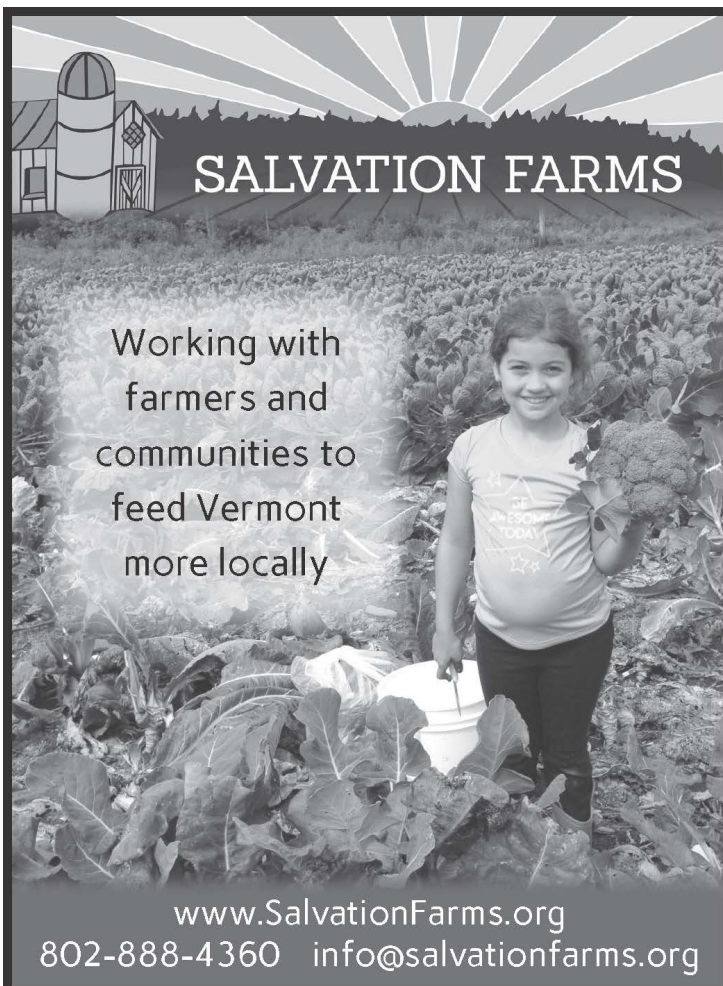
one of five exciting monthly prizes!

We'll be sharing student chef creations over at [jronchefvt.org](http://jronchefvt.org) and Vermont FEED's social media pages ([facebook.com/vtfeed](https://facebook.com/vtfeed) and Instagram [@vermont\\_feed](https://instagram.com/vermont_feed)). You can follow along with #JrIronChefVT, too.

Despite not being able to gather in-person this year, we believe it is vital to create an event that continues to lift youth voices, connects students with local food, and engages students with lifelong cooking skills. The Jr Iron Chef VT Cooking Club is an opportunity to bring Farm to School directly into the home.

Please share the news of this club with all the Vermont teens in your life who love to cook! For more details about the club, participation, and rules, visit [jronchefvt.org](http://jronchefvt.org).

\*In order to keep the program free for students to participate, we rely on generous sponsors from local businesses and donors. If you would like to become a sponsor of this year's Jr Iron Chef VT Cooking Club, please contact Kayla Strom at [kayla@nofavt.org](mailto:kayla@nofavt.org) or call 802-434-4122. ✨



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***A NOFA-VT heartfelt thank you goes out to our 2020 Agricultural Literacy Week presenters and panelists who shared their knowledge with us to inform, educate and create community around the topic of resiliency in all of its forms.***

- ✦ **Jessee Lawyer**, Missisquoi Abenaki – Exploring Abenaki Foodways Cooking Class (11/16)
- ✦ **Migrant Justice** – #MilkwithDignity: Advancing the Human Rights of Farmworkers while Fostering a Sustainable Northeast Dairy Industry (11/17)
- ✦ **Kate Spring**, Good Heart Farmstead; **Nic Cook**, Cedar Circle Farm & Education Center; **Tyler Webb**, Stonypond Farm – Building Soil Health Resilience (11/18)
- ✦ **Ike Leslie**, University of New Hampshire; **Tatiana Abatemarco**, Bennington College; **Bennington College students** enrolled in Gender, Subsistence, and Agriculture class – Gender, Agriculture & Food Access (11/19)

*Thank you!*

# NOFA-VT Members: Thank you for supporting organic agriculture!

***A warm welcome to the following members who joined us or renewed their membership in the 4th quarter of 2020:***

## NEW MEMBERS

Jen Banbury, Charlotte, VT  
Sarah Bartos Smith, South Strafford, VT  
Charles Bolton, S Burlington, VT  
Paul Cate, Montpelier, VT  
Olivia Cole, Lyndonville, VT  
Susan Corrigan, Seekonk, MA  
Charlie Costello, Berkeley, CA  
Adam Davidson, Charlotte, VT  
Zach Davis, Williston, VT  
Lori Donna, Milton, VT  
John Ela, Putney, VT  
Debi Gobin, Lyndonville, VT  
Megan Herrington, Bennington, VT  
Zoryan Ivakhiv-Gray, Burlington, VT

Brian & Joanna Jerosse, Enosburg Falls, VT  
Madelynn Johnston, Craftsbury, VT  
Larry Kupferman, South Burlington, VT  
Suzanne Leiter, Norwich, VT  
Albert LePage, Eugene, OR  
Lily McGrath, Northvale, NJ  
Maya Moore, Burlington, VT  
Judith Pomainville, Essex Junction, VT  
Jeremy Read, Stockbridge, VT  
Katie Reuther, North Chittenden, VT  
Laury Saligman, Montpelier, VT  
Sarah Spengler, Burlington, VT  
Lucia Tonachel, Stockbridge, VT  
Kristen Wirkkala, South Burlington, VT

## NEW & RENEWING BUSINESS MEMBERS

Alan Kempner, Scottsdale, AZ  
All Souls Tortilleria, Burlington, VT  
American Flatbread Waitsfield, Waitsfield, VT  
Cedar Circle Farm, East Thetford, VT  
Curiosity Farms, Barnard, VT  
Dobra US LLC, Burlington, VT  
Johnny's Selected Seeds, Northampton, MA  
King Arthur Baking Company, White River Jct, VT  
Michael Pill, Shutesbury, MA

Northeast Kingdom Hemp, Barton, VT  
Salvation Farms, Morrisville, VT  
Sweet Tree Holdings 1, LLC, Island Pond, VT  
The Maple Standard, Burlington, VT  
Upstate Elevator Supply Co., Burlington, VT  
Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA), Montpelier, VT  
Vermont Soap, Middlebury, VT



## NEW ORGANIC CERTIFICATIONS

*Vermont Organic Farmers welcomes the following new producers who have recently obtained organic certification (certified between 6/1/20-9/1/20) for all or a portion of their operation, joining the more than 700 organic farmers & processors throughout the state.*

Walker Hill Estates LLC  
802 Craft Cannabis LLC  
Nutty Life LLC  
Sunnyside Farms VT  
Working Class Heroes LLC  
Four Suns Farm  
Family Tree LLC  
Bear's Choice Hemp LLC

*Learn more about the benefits of certified organic, locally grown at [www.nofavt.org/why-organic](http://www.nofavt.org/why-organic)*



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# Farmer Services Supports Farmers Through COVID-19

By Megan Browning, NOFA-VT Farm Services Program Facilitator

Sara and Bob Schlosser had been vendors at the Stowe Farmers Market for 25 years, until 2017, when they made an intentional shift in their business, Sandiwood Farm. They decided to grow just a few crops in bulk for wholesale markets and focus on events on their farm. This careful intention and planning got turned upside down this spring with the arrival of COVID-19. Restaurant accounts dried up and on-farm events became a safety and regulatory challenge.

Seasoned farmers, with carefully planned systems and sales channels, Sandiwood Farm had to pivot quickly to meet the needs of their community and keep their business running. They started a CSA, which Sara said, "was the last thing we wanted to do," since learning entirely new record keeping and customer management systems was going to be a challenge. With their reputation built over years at the farmers market, however, their initial 20 members grew quickly to 60 members and they adapted their production plan and systems to meet their growing demand.

Longtime NOFA-VT members, Sara learned that NOFA-VT's Farmer Services team was offering support for farmers to respond to changes in their businesses brought about by the pandemic. Over a video call, Sara and her son Cal, who also helps on the farm with his marketing degree, met with Bill

Cavanaugh for assistance building a spreadsheet system to help track dates, deposits, weeks, additional items and totals each week, month and year. "This is an invaluable resource for us," said Sara, "that we will be able to use for years to come!"

NOFA-VT's Farmer Services team – Jen Miller, Bill Cavanaugh, and Megan Browning – is committed to meeting the needs of producers through this ever-changing landscape. From financial and inventory management systems, to cash flow projections, break-even analysis, and employee management support, our growing list of services is available and customizable to meet specific needs, whether during a time of crisis or not.

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***This is an  
invaluable  
resource for us  
that we will be  
able to use for  
years to come.  
– Sara Schlosser***

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Sandiwood is just one of many farms that our Farmer Services team has worked with through the pandemic. Since March, we have assisted over 50 farmers with their VCAAP (VT COVID Agriculture Assistance Program) applications, provided 12 farms with in-depth one-on-one marketing technical



assistance to pivot their systems and strategies, provided 11 other farms with additional COVID-response services, held farmer forums for community connectivity and opportunities for farmer-to-farmer learning, and built out a list of over 100 people to serve as relief milkers on dairy farms in the event that the primary farmer or farmworkers fall ill from COVID and must quarantine.

In April, Sandiwood Farm realized they needed additional refrigeration to support contact-less pick up for their CSA, and increased storage for additional produce they were buying in from neighboring farmers to fill out their CSA program. They applied for a NOFA-VT Resilience Grant and used their award to meet this need, which has helped to make their growing CSA program possible. Including Sandiwood, NOFA-VT supported 44 farms with nearly \$42,000 in resilience grant funding to keep farm businesses running through all of the shifts, interruptions, and impacts of COVID-19.

Although they had been reluctant at first to start a CSA, after a long season of learning new systems, Sara spoke lovingly about the CSA program they had created and the resulting community connections. When asked if she would recommend NOFA-VT's Farmer Services to other farmers, Sara responded emphatically: "Yes! Do it! Absolutely 100%. Such a wonderful resource."





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*Happy winter!*  
*Stay safe!*



*Artwork by Emily C-D*

### **Upcoming NOFA-VT events:**

## **NOFA-VT Book Club**

On Thursday, January 21st from 6:30-8pm, please join us to discuss Sherri Mitchell's important book, **Sacred Instructions: Indigenous Wisdom for Living Spirit-Based Change**. Details & registration at [www.nofavt.org/bookclub](http://www.nofavt.org/bookclub) or call (802) 434-4122.

## **Winter Conference**

This February, we invite you to join us for an incredible month-long series of events with many different opportunities for online learning, gathering, and movement building. This series will also be the kick-off of a year-long celebration for our 50th anniversary. See the article on page 1 for more information, or visit [www.nofavt.org/conference](http://www.nofavt.org/conference)

When the pandemic hit, our orders and events started to get cancelled and we had to pivot quickly. With the help of NOFA-VT's farmer services team, we started a CSA. They helped us navigate this change quickly and effectively, and provided invaluable resources for us that we will be able to use for years to come!"

– Farmer Resilience Grant recipient

**YOU ARE THE REASON** we can deliver on essential and ambitious work. Please donate today to ensure we can continue to support a food system for the future we all desire. **[WWW.NOFAVT.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.NOFAVT.ORG/DONATE)**