



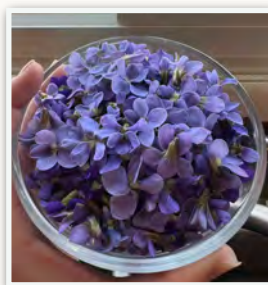
Northeast **Family Farming** *Spring 2023*



Can you smell that?

That hint of warmer weather in the air? It's the smell of green, the smell of new. After a long winter in the Northeast, I, for one, forget that there can be anything else besides cold and dead, that there exists any other colors besides white and brown. I forget that the trees can be green, that the grass can be lush, and that warm breezes can push the swing on the porch.

But can you smell it? It's getting closer now. When I was a kid, I loved the *Chronicles of Narnia* series. Heck, I love it still. And I love the image of the "always winter, but never Christmas," finally breaking when Aslan came through. *Drip drip* went the snow, and the little daffodils and crocuses poked through the earth. My mind goes into high-drive planning all of the ways I'm going to fully embrace the waking up of the earth again. I like to snip off branches of the forsythia and let them bloom on my table, all papery and sunshine. I collect the first of the violets that spread



across our hillside (as long as Remus hasn't visited them first!) and turn them into a simple soda syrup that goes from deep blue to bright purple-pink with a few drops of fresh lemon juice. And I make list upon list of the flowers we want and the varieties of green beans we will plant, along with a million other ideas.

It's so good to be alive again, isn't it, friends? And in all of this, I am so thankful for the imagery of a spring that wakes up from a dead cold winter, and I am thankful for God's creation of the seasons showing us what He does in our hearts. ***"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*** *Isaiah 43:19*



And I am beyond grateful for another year with you all, making new friends and telling you all about the wonderful things they grow and raise and do. Here's to another year!



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*Connecting communities to their local farmers
and preserving agricultural traditions.*

Meet your editors...and Remus



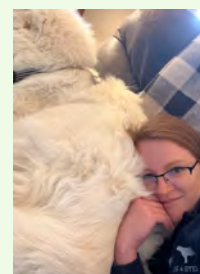
Tony LoSchiavo

Tony grew up in Southern Maryland and started out his professional career working in engineering for government contractors. He met Liz in 2016 and asked her to marry him that same December (spoiler alert - she said yes). Tony now works

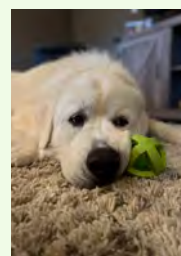
for the Montrose Bible Conference in maintenance and loves every minute. He loves metal detecting and big ice cream cones with rainbow sprinkles. When he closes his eyes every night, he sees tractors.

Liz LoSchiavo

Liz grew up in Montrose, PA. She went away to Liberty University and earned a Bachelor of Arts in English, specializing in literature and writing. Currently she works at Montrose Bible Church as Ministry Assistant. She was



pretty psyched when Tony asked her to marry him and loves being his wife! Liz dreams in flowers and likes to make super challenging and weird recipes in her kitchen, and then spends a good deal of time trying to convince others to try them.



Remus LoSchiavo

Remus was born in North Carolina on a beautiful sheep farm. He was being trained to be a Livestock Guardian Dog and was supposed to guard the LoSchiavo chickens. Currently he likes to chase them because they move funny. He sleeps inside and eats peanut butter out of a Kong toy and begs for belly rubs. He may have failed as a farm dog, but he's an ace at fetching rubber chickens, drooling on furniture, and hating black and white cats.

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MOJO or Hot Paper Lantern?

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By: David Nowacoski

These cold months always have me daydreaming about what I'm going to be pulling out of the garden in July. The whole "too-much-zucchini" problem seems like a daydream. But we can be anything but practical when it comes to our garden planning. I'm so thankful for the following article from David Nowacoski to give us all some helpful and practical planning tips for the garden this spring.

By now your mailbox is probably full of seed catalogs. The seed companies know that, after what seems like nine months of winter, we are desperate to get back outside and grow something. They send these books full of beautiful pictures of the most amazing vegetables. So many vegetables. The book I am flipping through is 205 pages just jammed with options for my garden. Sometimes, there are too many options. Peppers sound good, right? But they list 54 varieties of peppers! 54!

This brings up the question ... how do you decide on what to plant in your garden? When I first started gardening, I would treat the seed catalogs like the Sears Christmas catalog. I'd earmark each page when I saw something that looked good. Of course, they make them ALL look good but I know I can't plant all 54 varieties of peppers. So how do you choose?



Photo courtesy of David Nowacoski

First decision: are you planting for your own family or is this a market garden? That is a biggie as it changes the path you go down for decision making. No sense planting Paper Lantern peppers if your family does not like spicy food. Think of what items that your family would enjoy if they were super fresh. Tomatoes, cucumbers, corn and green beans are all ridiculously better when they are freshly picked. It's great to experiment a bit here too. Never had okra or rutabagas? Try a bit! Be creative in your kitchen ... with fresh ingredients, it is hard to go wrong.

You should also decide if you are going to just eat your veggies fresh, or if you will be storing them for your family. That brings in more questions like, do you have the freezer space? Can you get enough jars to can what you need? Will you have the time, when everything is ripening, to do all this kitchen work? Use those answers before you plan out the garden so that you get the timing and amount of plants correct.

For a market garden, the decision-making process is a bit more complicated. You not only have to consider what other families would buy, but you have to factor in what you can make money at. That is no easy task. No spray organic corn or blueberries are always in demand at a market, but growing them at a profit is extremely difficult. On the other side of the coin, you may be very good at growing potatoes, but they are so inexpensive you would have to grow tons of them to make any real profit.

Which brings up the volume question: once you decide what to grow, how much of it will you grow? Planning on 100 tomato plants might not be out of the question, but 100 zucchini plants will earn you stares from the neighbors. Determining how much to grow should be based on how much you think you can sell. This is a hard question when you are first starting out, but if you keep good records from year to year you will make this process much easier. Make sure you note when in the season you sold out of the product so that you know if you had the potential to sell more.

Having a Plan B for your market garden is, in my opinion, a must. What will you do with that vegetable if it does NOT sell at the market? Don't just resign it to the compost pile, how can you use it so that it does not go to waste. Can you turn the kale into kale chips? The butternut squash becomes soup. The tomatoes become sauce. Knowing what your backup plan is going into the season gives you the option of planting a little more without worrying it will be a total loss. If you plan on selling these secondary products, just make sure you have the proper licenses for your kitchen area.

So, what does this look like for us? We have three defined gardens, which means we have spent years picking out the rocks and adding in soil amendments to make this ground fertile and ready to bear vegetables. We have a finite amount of space and even with companion planting, that limits our possibilities. Corn and potatoes are off the table as we just don't have enough room to grow enough to make it worthwhile. We start by concentrating on our most popular product, salsa. Onions, peppers and of course, tomatoes. But we also sell a lot of tomato sauce and tomato soup, so we tally up what we need to make all these products and work backwards to calculate how many plants we will need. Factor in some blight, animal damage and the occasional hail storm and we get our final order into the seed company.

David Nowacoski grew up on a farm in East Smithfield and lives just down the road a bit from it still. He and his wife Marla raise chickens, turkeys and bunches of veggies at WindStone Landing Farms. They also run an online farmers market with over 50 other small family farms that deliver right to your door all year long! www.DeliveredFresh.Store

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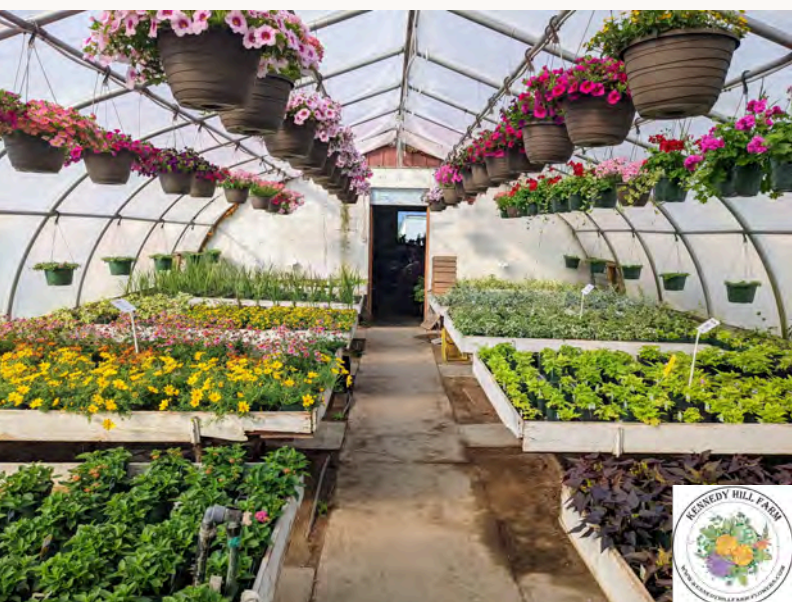
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Say it with Flowers: Dahlias, to be Precise

There are some people who love flowers, and then there are people who *really* love flowers. I thought I fit into the second category, but after chatting with Michelle Marcho of Marcho's Greenhouse and Kennedy Hill Farm, I realized I probably sit back in the first category.

Brad & Michelle have owned and operated their business for the past 11 years. Marcho's Greenhouse in Gibson, PA, began as a roadside vegetable stand, owned by Brad's parents. Brad's dad went off to horticulture and floral school and re-opened the business as a floral shop. Brad worked with his dad and did landscaping for the business, eventually taking over. The business continued to grow and now boasts seven greenhouses with full-scale landscaping.

Michelle stays very busy at the shop with wedding florals, funeral arrangements, bouquet orders, and so much more. "We've been fully booked with weddings for the past two years," she explained. And on top of that, the greenhouses are kept up with vegetables, annuals, perennials, trees, and shrubs.



I asked Michelle how this true love of flowers came about for her. "Since I was a little girl," she said, "my siblings would be with friends or riding bikes, and I was building flower beds and stone walls. As a kid, it was always what I loved and what I was doing." She met Brad when she was waitressing and started working at Marcho's shortly after they married.

After a few years, she started growing dahlias - just a few varieties that they used in the florist shop for arrangements. "We were just doing snap dragons and things like that, but a couple years in, I started growing dahlias, which I had never done before," Michelle explained.

"I started with fifteen varieties of dahlias and loved them so much. I wasn't so great at wintering them over the first year, but I don't think anyone really is," she laughed. But that's how she got hooked. "The next year I got about 65 varieties or so that were all florist-quality varieties and colors that are usually used in weddings." She went on to say, "the third year I went to 250 varieties. It was obvious that it had become something."

It was then Michelle asked herself, what am I going to do with all the extras? The answer... Kennedy Hill Farm. Michelle and Brad operate Kennedy Hill Farm in addition to their duties at the Greenhouse: growing, breeding, and selling dahlia tubers in their online store. "Kennedy Hill Farm started out as a livestock operation: chicken, turkeys and other animals," she explained, "but then it changed into a flower farm. After about three years we started selling the tubers (the root system of a dahlia plant) and cut flowers. We started the online store and sold cut flowers on the porch. People would pre-pay and pick out their favorite bucket to take home. I was selling probably 25 buckets a week."

Now, the big business behind Dahlias is not so much the cut flowers; however, but the tubers. After hearing Michelle talk, my plant-nerd heart got very excited.



“We start about 350 pots to wake up the tubers. Tubers can go right in the ground, but because our growing season is so short, those tubers may not produce flowers during wedding season,” Michelle said. And wedding season is when they need their cut flowers the most! “I will wake those up early (in the Greenhouse). I’ll pull them out in January and let them warm up, then pot them.” This is just enough to trigger them to want to set roots and get an early start for the season. Michelle added, “They start sending shoots (sprouts), then I cut them, and propagate them using rooting hormones. This makes multiple plants from each tuber.”

“All of those rooted cuttings get planted in the ground and produce their own clump of tubers!” Michelle explained that, on average, each tuber can produce up to seven more plants so it’s a great way to make more from what you have. She went on to explain the incredible nature of this flower’s multiplication abilities: “You start out with a single tuber. You’ll plant that and when you pull it out, it’s in a clump of tubers. Here’s an interesting bit of information... you can still distinguish the original tuber when you pull your clump in the fall! It’s darker and wrinklier. We call it a ‘mother tuber’ and usually you can get two years from that mother tuber. When you split it all up, you can keep the mother and replant next spring. (unless it shows signs of rot). We don’t sell or ship mother tubers because they can be unstable. They do produce a lot of rooted cuttings, however.” I found it amazing that one original tuber has the potential to make thousands of offspring!

Beyond the growing, pruning, and separating flowers, Michelle has worked hard breeding and cross-pollinating to create Kennedy Hill Farm’s very own variety of dahlia. “Our new introduction this year is called, ‘Kennedy Hill Sunshine,’ a bright yellow variety. It’s my own personal dahlia created from cross-pollinating two other dahlias in the gardens.”



Kennedy Hill Paradise

This is not an easy task, Michelle explained. “I have one variety out of hundreds of seedlings that I started. They must meet very specific criteria to be worthy of naming and selling. So far, only one has met those criteria for 2022.” She explained that being a dahlia grower and a dahlia breeder are very different things. “I just tried my hand at it for fun. You really must dedicate a lot of time to breeding if you want to get into that.”

One of the best parts of writing this magazine is to hear from people who have truly found their passion and I loved hearing Michelle describe her love for what she’s doing. “It’s so peaceful and I don’t find it to be work at all. I know it’s a tall dream to love what you do and not call it work, but it is attainable.” She described the joy and peace she feels when walking through the greenhouse and seeing the beauty and growth of the plants they grow.

One can’t help but feel that same peace just to look at the pictures of the flowers at Kennedy Hill Farm & Marcho’s Greenhouse. They’ve truly put their hands to the grindstone and worked very hard, and what they’ve accomplished is spectacular. I, for one, can’t wait to see what they do next. If you’d like to purchase dahlia tubers from Michelle and Brad, visit their website, Kennedyhillfarm-Flowers.com Certain varieties sell out quickly, so keep an eye on it often! You can sign up for newsletters to get more information on when the online store goes live each year. Growing tips can be found on their website blog as well. I’d encourage you to check it out!

I’ve learned so much from Michelle already and can’t wait to try my hand at planting some dahlia tubers this year.



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The Painterland Sisters



Photo Courtesy of The Painterland Sisters

We can't begin to tell you how thrilled we were to "score" an interview and a few moments with this issue's Feature Family Farmers. Having only really launched their farm-to-family business in the beginning of 2022, they're rocketing forward at an inspiring rate, and do you know why? Because they're doing something very original. It isn't an easy undertaking, trying to do something that no one else is doing, because everyone has creative ideas and innovative aspirations. But Hayley and Stephanie Painter, I've got to tell you, they're on to something. And the country is finding that out.

When we started getting farm groceries from Delivered Fresh, we were really excited when this special-looking "Skyr" yogurt started showing up. We tried it, loved it, and began adding it to our order every week. And then fast-forward to the end of 2022, and we were ready to expand into Tioga county in the beginning of the new year. Well, guess whose farm is in Tioga county? That's right, the Painterland Sisters! So, grab some coffee, and a cup of yogurt, and enjoy learning all about this amazing family duo, who added value and ingenuity into their thriving family dairy farm.

Painterland Farms began in 1941. "Our last name is Painter," Hayley told me. "It's essentially, the 'Land of the Painters.' We live on the top of the hill, and whenever anyone wants to know where the farm is, they were told, 'go this way and you get to Painter Land.'"

And it was lovingly given that name in 1966. So Hayley and Stephanie are fourth generation farmers on Painterland Farms.

Cows came to the farm under their grandfather's watch and there's something really special about their herd. Their dairy herd includes all of the big names in the industry, Guernsey, Jersey, Holsteins...but many are cross-bred with Short Horns. "Short Horns aren't often included in the dairy industry," they shared, "but their bodies are healthy and able to withstand a great deal of walking. Their body structure is super strong. And for us it's not so much even about the yield of the milk, but the health of the animal." The sisters explained that the health of the animal greatly impacts the nutrient quality of the milk, which goes right back into their yogurt products.

I asked them what led them to their current endeavor, what impacted them the most to do what they're doing today. "We grew up on a farm with 13 cousins," they laughed, "running barefoot through Painterland where there's no one but us and our cows! We were playing and working alongside our family. In high school, we started to realize just how many more opportunities for a rich and fulfilling life we had. We wanted to preserve it." The love and passion they have for the dairy industry is inspiring, especially when, as it's no surprise, the dairy industry in our nation is struggling. We all have heard and have experienced so many tales of abandoned dairy industries, because it is so incredibly difficult.

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“There was a lot of heartache,” Hayley said. “I didn’t know if your milk was even going to get picked up.” And that’s when the sisters decided they wanted to create a value-added product from their farm. They went to college and started traveling around the world. Stephanie has been to 47 states and 20 countries and found herself always talking about the farm. They realized just how disconnected people were from the direct source of their food, the farmer. But this wake up call only lit the fire under them even more. They tossed around several ideas, beginning with different types of cheeses. “The last thing I wanted to do was yogurt,” Hayley said. “I thought, it’s the most perishable product, it’s saturated on the market, and I don’t even like it! It’s usually either delicious because it’s super unhealthy for you, or it tries to be so healthy that it doesn’t taste good.”

As they continued to study and learn, they really understood what the consumer was looking for. They want a transparent product from a farmer, minimally processed with few ingredients. Well, it’s here that Stephanie and Hayley found their niche. They met a 10th generation yogurt maker of Icelandic Skyr who started making this special style of yogurt right here in Pennsylvania in 2019. They tried it, and they loved it. Through working with him, they honed their product and launched that first product in March of 2022. And I can attest, it is delicious. It’s thick and creamy, more like a mousse than a yogurt. Skyr is four cups of milk that is filtered down into one cup of yogurt. The water is strained out of the pure double cream milk to create that dreamy texture. On top of that, there is a very small amount of pure organic cane sugar. 33 billion probiotics are added. The sisters explained, “we use BB12, which helps with brain development, digestion, and a whole host of other things. There are 13 essential nutrients in each cup of yogurt.”



Photo Courtesy of The Painterland Sisters



Photo Courtesy of The Painterland Sisters

Between the calcium, the protein, and the probiotic functions, I can truly attest, as a frequent consumer of Painterland Sisters yogurt, there is a strange phenomenon at work where, I truly do feel better, starting my

morning off with a cup of Meadow Berry, Vanilla, Blueberry Lemon, or Strawberry skyr. “A yogurt a day does the body wonders,” the sisters laughed. The special blend of probiotics can even help with anxiety, they explained. I never realized yogurt could do that much good!

Taking it even further, this incredible creamy yogurt is lactose-free. Because so many individuals struggle with a lactose intolerance or sensitivity, the girls wanted to ensure that everyone gets to enjoy amazing dairy products by adding an enzyme that eats the lactose, making this an easily-digestible yogurt for any consumer, regardless of what their relationship with dairy may be.

So they had a great product, now what were they going to do with it? Well, at the beginning, they got their foot in the door with family-owned meat and cheese distributor, JF Martin, who mainly distributes to local stores and markets. So, any store within their 5-state-radius who sells JF Martin meat and cheese began carrying Painterland Sisters yogurt as well. Delivered Fresh started including their yogurts in their online store for local delivery.

Well from there, they launched with Giant out of Pennsylvania and they created a great partnership as Giant has similar values when it comes to agriculture. They work with organizations such as Farm Bureau and PA Friends of Agriculture, to name a couple. “They had the same mission as us,” the girls explained. All of a sudden they were launched into a new world where they had to learn a whole new language, a whole new way of conducting business on a large scale. They are very thankful for the hired expertise of Trever Knoflick, of Kitchen Table Consultants, their VP of sales, who coached them every step of the way. “If you don’t know, find someone who does,” they shared. After Giant, the yogurt was picked up by Central Market chain in Texas, Kimberton Whole Foods in the Philadelphia area, and other great Pennsylvania chains. Then they ended up at Sprouts markets and Natural Grocers, and their product is now in 42 states around the country.



Photo Courtesy of The Painterland Sisters

If you'd like to learn more about the Painterland Sisters, and all they're doing, you can go to their website: www.painterlandsisters.com. Here you can sign up for their newsletter, find out where to buy the yogurt near you, and even suggest a flavor you'd like to see them produce in the future! You can help spread the news of this amazing product by contacting your local stores to carry their products, and to leave a google review!

If you follow the Painterland Sisters on social media, you will find a sweet, yet honest portrait of the dairy industry, a beautiful painting of the value of the local farm, and a wealth of education behind their products. We love this so much because here at Northeast Family Farming magazine, our goal is to draw a treasure map to point folks to their local treasures: local farms. And not only is Painterland Sisters and Painterland Farm one of those amazing treasures, but they're working hard to accomplish the same goal: championing the local family farm and teaching everyone about it.

But the cool thing is that all of this milk going into creamy, nutrient-dense yogurt, sold across the nation, is coming from not only their local dairy farm in Tioga county, but their neighbors' farms as well. And I think this is what gets me most excited about their story. The Painterland Sisters are not just trying to sell a yummy and healthy yogurt; they're taking local farms to the entire nation with a goal of educating the modern consumer about the origins of their food. Painterland Sisters yogurt is also "PA Preferred," which means it is sourced and produced right here in Pennsylvania!

"We're trying to make dairy cool again," the sisters laughed. "So we have a huge education piece along with this product. We got on social media and started connecting to people to, in turn, connect them to their local farms." The passion for this was bubbling out of them as they explained this drive and mission behind what they do. "We're trying to bridge that gap and get that conversation going. And in the meantime, we want to build our community up, helping farmers come together. What is the saying? A rising tide rises all ships. If we help out our neighbor, we can help everyone by coming together."

I couldn't help but see if I could get the skinny on any new developments to share with you, and I didn't come away disappointed! The sisters shared that they're hoping to add a peach flavor in the future, as well as to sell the yogurt in a larger, 24oz container, which is great news for me!



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Saving the Planet: *One Garden at a Time*

Special thanks to Christine Keeney of the Bradford County Master Gardeners for this insightful and educational piece about gardening with native plants.

I took my childhood for granted. Growing up in the 1950s, I often played in fields and woods in New York's Hudson Valley. Video games and smart phones were not invented and television was not for daytime viewing. My siblings and I would love to hide in the tall grasses, build forts in the trees and pile fallen leaves. Vernal pools were our laboratories, observing egg masses and tadpoles as they transformed into wood frogs. We listened to spring peepers and spotted salamanders and American toads. We took joy in the feel of the spongy cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and the satisfaction of breaking it open to spread the seeds. We fished in ponds and created ant farms from gallon glass jugs to observe their daily habits. I recall the praying mantises hatching from egg cases and my delight in a monarch butterfly emerging from her chrysalis. We climbed trees and observed bird nests filled with eggs. We rescued stunned birds and baby rabbits. We sucked nectar from honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and ate wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*). We picked blackberries (*Rubus allegheniensis*). My mother was gracious to accept our wildflower bouquets of dandelion and violets. We rolled back rocks and rotting leaves to collect earthworms for bait. We were stung by bees and bitten by mosquitos and snakes. We suffered the itch of poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) and the sting of nettles (*Urtica dioica*).

The trails were notable for native plants and trees. According to the National Wildlife Federation, a plant is considered native if it has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem or habitat without human introduction. (1) Our playing fields were a community of organisms living together to form an ecosystem.

The ability of a place to support these species of insects, butterflies, plants and trees in ponds, woods and meadows is referred to as its "carrying capacity." (2) The carrying capacity of our environment is threatened not only by invasive plants, pesticides and herbicides but species that are produced by man-made selective breeding which alter the physiology and chemical make-up of the plant, neither supporting or promoting the growth of natural wildlife. While walking through our woods today, I am struck by the absence of the melancholy images of species once prevalent in my youth.

In 2022, the International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) reclassified the monarch butterfly to the red list of endangered species. The number of monarchs overwintering in Mexico has declined by 90% over the past several decades. (3) The only host plant of the monarch butterfly, milkweed (*Asclepius tuberosa*), disappeared rapidly in the 1990s due to the production of herbicide-tolerant crops and urban sprawl.

Another threatened species is the spicebush swallowtail butterfly. The spicebush swallowtail's host plant, the Northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), known for its support of spicebush caterpillars rich in protein and fat, is susceptible to laurel wilt disease. Laurel wilt disease is caused by a deadly fungus deposited by the redly ambrosia beetle, believed to have originated in packing materials from Asia in 2002. (4)

Most of North America's terrestrial bird species - 96% rear their young on insects rather than seeds or berries. (5) The decline in caterpillars is responsible for less birds. Alarmingly, according to a recent study published in Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 48% of existing bird species worldwide are known or suspected to undergo population declines. As a result of data collected by the popular Christmas Bird Counts nationwide, nearly three billion birds in North America have been lost during the past 50 years across the United States and Canada. (6)

Pastoral walks through woods and fields today are notable for invasive plants. The National Wildlife Federation defines an invasive species as "any kind of living organism that is not native to an ecosystem and causes harm." (1) They can harm the environment, the economy, or even human health. An invasive plant can be introduced by businesses or agricultural entrepreneurs (e.g. the multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), or as hitchhikers shipped with goods from other countries such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*). Unattended roadways, parking lots or abandoned fields are notable for the tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissimo*) which is notorious for its suckering roots. In the past decade the tree-of-heaven has become the host to the spotted lantern fly ring damage to vineyard and fruit trees. Two climbing invasive plants, mile-a-minute (*Persicaria perfoliate*) and kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobar*) smother herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees. None of these invasive plants support the insect populations of my childhood.

Awareness of the problem is only half of the story. Researching, purchasing and planting native plants for your home garden is one way to restore the natural ecosystem. According to the National Wildlife Federation's definition, "a native plant is considered native if it has occurred naturally in a particular region, ecosystem or habitat without human introduction." (1) Most native plant gardeners will refer to their USDA Plant Hardiness Zones (5b to 7a in Northeast Pennsylvania) when identifying plants that are native to their region. This designation is not strict; sometimes, the plant origins can encompass a whole region such as Northeast United States. Planting only native plants ensures populations of native insects and birds. The oak, willow and cherry trees are host to 454 species of caterpillars. Examples of native plants in Northeast Pennsylvania are garden phlox (Phlox paniculate), bleeding heart (Dicentra eximia), bee balm (Monarda didyma), New England Aster (Symphyotrichum novae-anglia), butterfly weed (Asclepius tuberosa), and flowering dogwood (Cornus florida). (7)

Most nurseries are abundant with beautiful flowers - petunias, pansies, impatiens, and begonias; however, these flowers are not native to our environment. Insects, especially the plant eating species, depend on a limited number of native plants for survival. The diet of most insects is restricted to a single plant family. Diet restrictions of butterflies and moths are also plant specialized such as the zebra swallowtail's dependence on pawpaw trees (Asimina trilby) as their only source of food. The monarch butterfly caterpillar is well known for its affinity to the milkweed (Asclepius tuberosa). Unfortunately, in urban and suburban landscapes, most plants are not native to the area. It is not uncommon to see barberry, burning bush, butterfly bush, Norway maple, Bradford pear (a.k.a. Callery pear), English ivy, privet and maiden grass in most suburban gardens today. None of these plants provide benefit to wildlife.

Native gardeners today are converting their home gardens to include native plants. When deciding on which plants to purchase, some excellent resources are the Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center in Austin, Texas, your local county's Penn State Extension, and the Native Plant Finder based at the University of Delaware. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Resources handout, "Landscaping with Native Plants," provides an abundance of information on native plants. It can be found at dcnr.pa.gov.

Two advantages of native plant gardens are low maintenance and less watering. The deep roots of native plants increases the soil capacity to store water. No fertilizers are required, and herbicides are discouraged. The native plant garden provides shelter and food for wildlife. Gardeners are instructed to avoid pruning their long-stemmed plants until spring, leaving the stems for overwintering insects and providing food for birds in winter months when food is difficult to find. "Leave the leaves" is a favorite mantra of the native gardener. Not only is there less work in the fall but the leaves provide a habitat for mice, moles and rabbits during the winter. These ecological interactions perpetuate individual species of wildlife in our Pennsylvania landscapes.

Taking steps to identify which plants are native to one's region and eliminating the non-native and invasive plants is the first step to a native garden. It takes research, planning and basic gardening skills to be successful. The rewards are not only a unique garden of colorful flower but satisfaction that the garden is contributing to the correction of species extinction and bringing life to a healthy habitat. If all gardeners participated, the reward of ecological restoration can be accomplished in our own backyards, from the soil up!

Christine Keeney

*Penn State Master Gardener
Bradford County*

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Bee Balm (Monarda didyma)
Photo courtesy of Maple Hollow Botanicals



Multiflora Rose (Rose Multiflora)

My Beekeeping Journey

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by Brad Seward

In our own adventures in beekeeping, one of the most helpful resources has been our local seasoned beekeeping experts. Brad Seward has been one of those wellsprings of information for us. And we're delighted to share a look into Brad's Beekeeping journey with you!

Beekeeping has been the challenge of all challenges. I started beekeeping as a hobby in the summer of 2002, kind of by chance. My family and I live on my spouse's old dairy farm. We moved there in 1993 and enjoyed the property as a hobby farm. We grew a few acres of pumpkins, sweet corn, and various squashes. We also made maple syrup from the

abundance of maple trees on the property and started selling our syrup to cover the cost of producing it. That's where our farm name, Maple Hill Farm, came from. That is where our adventure started.

I took up beekeeping when a neighbor was moving to Oklahoma. He wasn't going to take his six colonies with him, so he left them for me to enjoy. Before the neighbor moved, he gave me a crash course in what to do. It was so much simpler back

then. I would split the colonies in the spring time and pull off the honey in the fall. Once the honey was off, I would give the honeybees a treatment for Varroa Mites, a pesky mite that has led to the downfall of many honeybee colonies. This went on for a few years with some losses and some successes. One spring, the honeybee colonies crashed like never before.

That year, I was up to ten colonies going into winter. The honey was plentiful. In fact, we started selling the honey with our maple products at local craft fairs. We were harvesting more honey than our family and friends could eat. Though, the following spring was disastrous for my beekeeping hobby. Nine out of the ten colonies had succumbed to Varroa Mites. This was a huge disappointment. I made up my mind to quit beekeeping and I would have if the last remaining colony had perished as well. Over the spring, I told myself I'm either going to figure out how to keep these bees alive or not have bees. A few short years ago, we didn't have internet access with hundreds of years of beekeeping knowledge at our fingertips. At this time, all I had was a monthly magazine called the American Bee Journal. This magazine was where all my beekeeping knowledge came from. With my losses during that spring season, I realized that was not enough.

I began to search for other beekeepers in the area that I could learn from. There were a few people around but most of them were too busy to help. Then, I found a beekeeper in Tunkhannock who hopped in his truck and came right over when I called. For that, I'll always be grateful. I learned lots from my new mentor. Additionally, I met the State Honeybee inspector. The inspector suggested that I join a beekeeping club. This was another great way to learn beekeeping knowledge.

That same spring, I purchased a few packages of bees to get my colony numbers back up. I caught a swarm or two as well. I learned that the Varroa Mite treatments I was using did not work like they used to. The mites had become resistant to the medicines I had been using, which made me feel somewhat better about losing so many colonies. There was really nothing more I could have done for them. I spent the next several years trying new things that I heard about at club meetings.

I spent a lot of time and money trying every new gadget that came on the market, most of which were not worth it. Over these years, the number of colonies I kept was growing and growing.

In fact, I was so involved with the bees, I did not have enough time to continue producing maple syrup and tending to the bees' needs anymore. I made the choice to take the beekeeping challenge and forgo the syrup production. As years went on, the internet and YouTube became a really great source for the beekeeping knowledge I was seeking.

I realized there are different aspects to beekeeping: the art, the science, and the biology of beekeeping. I was sure I had the art of beekeeping down. I believe the art is in making candles. Whether hand dipped or molded, it's truly an art. There is also art in bottling and marketing honey products as well. Another piece of the puzzle was the biology aspect, which I did not completely understand. Then, I came across an ad from Penn State University. They were looking for beekeepers in Northeast Pennsylvania to help tend bees on a research project. So, of course, I applied and joined the research team. I worked on that project for three years. It was comparing different colony management practices in beekeeping. We kept bees organically, treatment free, and commercially in a side-by-side comparison. After that, I worked on another research project comparing honeybee queen genetics for different queen producers. That study was over two years. Meanwhile, I was keeping 75 colonies of my own and traveling with my mentor to Florida and New York for pollination of oranges and apples. I am blessed to have a career in the natural gas industry that fulfills the time I'm not spending in a bee yard or those few hours of sleep. Having a very understanding family helps make this beekeeping journey happen.

Photo Courtesy of Brad Seward



Photo courtesy of Brad Seward



The last aspect of beekeeping I had to learn about was where pollen and nectar come from. As a young man, I never guessed I would be stopping to observe honeybees on flowers. Now, I have an app on my phone that tells me what the plant is by taking a picture of it. One of the first pollen sources for honeybees is red maple trees. They pollinate just before the leaves pop out. This is huge for the honeybees in my area. I've also learned that when the dandelions come out, it's time to add boxes to the colonies because they are expanding rapidly. Most nectar sources are not the flowers we all plant in our backyard gardens, but here in the northeast, most spring nectar is from basswood and black locust trees. We all know the smell of goldenrod pollen in the fall. Goldenrod produces a very light honey that will crystallize fast. Additionally, we all know about the bamboo, otherwise known as knotweed, that produces a dark, rich, full-flavored honey in the fall.

This brings us up to where we are currently. With the help of my wife and our children, we are keeping over 250 colonies of honeybees. We produce thousands of pounds of honey every year along with beeswax & candles, lip balms, and pollen. Additionally, we sell bee packages, nucs, and queens seasonally. We are traveling to Georgia and New York currently for wintering and pollination. I am an active member of four different beekeeping clubs. As president of one club and a co-leader of another club, I like to give back where I learned. The summer is booked up every weekend and most weekdays with farmers markets, fairs, and events. Beekeeping has been a journey of learning, discovering, and adapting. Every day is an adventure and while I never imagined that a small hobby could turn into a business that helps sustain our farm, I know that 21 years ago I made the right decision to take on the challenges of beekeeping.

You can follow along with Brad & his family's beekeeping adventures by checking out their instagram account: @maplehillfarmandapiaries



Photos Courtesy of Brad Seward



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On Tap: *The Sweetest Part of Spring*

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It's no secret: one of the best parts of spring in the northeast is the maple syrup. When I was little, we tapped a few trees for fun and taste-tested the whole process from clear sap in juice glasses to thick syrup by the spoonful. It's an incredible process and an even more incredible result. We're privileged to hear from three of the area's maple experts on the timeline of the tapping season, their operation's procedures, and some of their favorite maple products and recipes!

Lochs Maple Syrup

Springville, PA
lochsmaple.com

What's the prep work like before you even get to tap a tree?

Walking woods, sawing trees that have fallen on lines, repairing squirrel chews in lines, replacing taps every year and every three years we replace drop line from tap to lateral lines. We do this to make sure tubing is tight with no sags where sap can lay. This starts in the fall.

Tell us about the collection process, spiles and lines and barrels? How does it all work? The tap goes into the tree to a 36 inch piece of 5/16" tubing that runs into a lateral line 5/16" from tree to tree (no more than 5 taps per lateral line). And then it goes to a main line 3/4" to 2". The main line runs to the collection site: some sort of stainless steel tank (the more taps, the bigger the tank). It is then transported to the Sap House, either with well-pump or by truck in a tank on a trailer.

What sort of set up do you have in your sugar house for boiling down all of that sap? We have 2 Reverse Osmosis units and a 3.5' x14' wood pellet Evaporator and a 3'x 12' Fuel oil fired evaporator.

Explain the different grades of maple syrup, what creates different colors, depth of flavors? Early in the season everything is clean and the sugar content is higher with cooler weather. This will give you Lighter color syrup with milder maple flavor (golden color, delicate taste). As the season progresses the weather gets warmer, causing natural bacteria to grow in the sap and the sugar content in the sap begins to drop, creating a need for longer boiling time to get to a shelf stable sugar content. This creates more caramelization, which leads to darker color and stronger taste (amber color, rich taste, dark color, robust taste, very dark color, strong taste).

Photo Courtesy of Loch's Maple



What's the process for making other maple products like cream and candies? For Pure products like cream, candy, and sugar, more water needs to be removed and more stirring to form sugar crystals.

What other varieties of maple products do you offer? Maple cinnamon sugar, maple cinnamon syrup, maple caramel corn, maple jelly, maple walnut topping, maple mustard, maple lip care, maple vinegar, maple peanut butter, maple seasoning, maple coated nuts, maple fudge bourbon barrel aged syrup, star anise syrup, maple cotton candy, maple milk shakes.

What advice do you have for someone who wants to tap a few trees in their backyard and try it out? Figure out how you want to cook it down first. It will create a lot of steam and remove paint and wall paper in a house if you do a lot. It needs to boil not just simmer.

Whiskey Hollow Maple

Warren Center, PA
whiskeyhollowmaple.com

What's the prep work like before you even get to tap a tree?

There is always work to be done in the woods. Given the unpredictability of mother nature, there will always be branches and trees down on lines, lines to be repaired due to animal damage - deer, squirrels, and bears can damage the lines once they figure out there is such sweet stuff inside, and lines to be replaced. We have been adding taps each year as well since we bought this property in 2018, so there is always a rush to get them finished up and tied in addition to working on our existing sections.



Photo Courtesy of Whiskey Hollow Maple

Tell us about the collection process, spiles and lines and barrels? How does it all work? Once we tap, the tubing runs the sap to two different collection tanks. From there, it is pumped up to the sugar shack where it is run through a reverse osmosis. The reverse osmosis removes a portion of the water from the sap before it gets to the evaporator. The sugar content of the sap coming out of the tree is usually any where from 1-2.5% and syrup is 66%, so there is a lot of boiling involved to get it from raw sap to finished product.

What sort of set up do you have in your sugar house for boiling down all of that sap? We boil all of our sap down on a 6'x14' Leader Evaporator. Once the syrup is drawn off, it is run through a filter press to filter out any impurities, and then hot packed into 40 gallon stainless steel drums.

What's the process for making other maple products like cream and candies? Maple is very unique in that you can end up with several very different products that are all one ingredient - sap. Depending on the temperature you take it to, sap can be turned into syrup, cream, candy, or granulated sugar, making it a very versatile agricultural commodity.

What other varieties of maple products do you offer? We not only make regular maple syrup, but we also have a line of infused syrups - vanilla, cinnamon, hot pepper, smoked, whiskey barrel aged, and rum barrel aged. All natural, nothing artificial. We continue to add to our product line but currently offer - mustards, candied pecans, candied almonds, pancake mix, hot chocolate mix, candy, cream, and applesauce - all containing maple in some form. Kyle also has a small apiary of which we harvest and offer raw honey and a whiskey barrel aged honey.

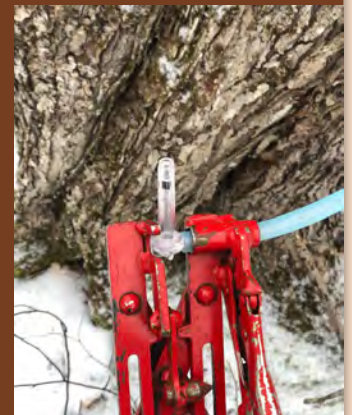


Photo Courtesy of Whiskey Hollow Maple

Whiskey Hollow Maple

Continued...

What advice do you have for someone who wants to tap a few trees in their backyard and try it out? TRY IT! And then be prepared to expand your operation next year, and the year after, and the year after that. It seems to be an addiction once you begin - maple fever! There's just something about the whole process that is almost magical - taking the sap which looks like water when it comes out of the tree down to golden syrup! And don't be afraid to ask questions; there is a wealth of knowledge out there and maple producers are well known for helping anyone that comes along.

What are some of your favorite recipes or ways to enjoy maple syrup? Everyday cooking - roasted veggies, salmon, salad dressings, chicken, marinades, with hot sauce, etc. It's not just for pancakes! Maple also makes a great cocktail mixer - think smoked maple old fashions. Simple syrup can be replaced with maple in many cocktails.

Miller's Maple

Continued...

What's the process for making other maple products like cream and candies? Making other maple products is easy and complicated at the same time. Different cooking and cooling temperatures make pure maple syrup useful in different ways. Pure maple syrup is cooked to 7 degrees above the boiling point of water. Maple cream is cooked to 20 degrees above boiling point of water and then cooled to around 50 degrees and then stirred. Maple candy is cooked to 30 degrees above boiling point cooled to about 180 degrees stirred and poured into molds. Crumb sugar is cooked to 47 degrees above boiling point of water and stirred right away. When it breaks apart, it is put through a screen to break up any lumps. It is used in baking just like brown sugar.

What other varieties of maple products do you offer? We offer all the pure maple products plus we use use maple syrup to make a number of other products. Maple fudge, maple coated nuts, maple kettle corn, maple mustard, maple BBQ sauce and maple jelly to name a few. Maple cream is a favorite on toast We love a dish of vanilla or maple walnut ice cream topped with maple syrup and sometimes maple whip cream. If I really want a treat I make a maple milkshake, using vanilla ice cream, whole white milk, and a generous portion of dark robust or very dark very strong maple syrup.

The 3rd weekend in March every year we open our sugarhouse to the public, this year March 18th and 19th. We allow people to come in to see us boiling, ask questions, and look at our educational exhibit. We offer a pancake breakfast, ice cream sundaes, maple milkshakes, maple frappe and maple iced donuts. We also have several free samples of our products and have a large variety of 2023 maple products for sale, 9am to 4pm both days.

Miller's Maple

Wellsboro, PA
millersmaple.com

What's the prep work like before you even get to tap a tree?

Experience is a good thing to give you a idea of when to tap. I know my bush is a later bush, so usually I wait til late January to start to tap. I like to have my taps in around Valentines. Watching extended forecast is a help in seeing warming trends. Getting ready to tap takes several weeks of prep work. From one season to the next, many things change in the woods. Many trees fall down on lines (thanks to the ash borer beetle and other invasive pests). My biggest problem is bears. We repair several hundred bite marks in the lines every year.



Photo Courtesy of Miller's Maple

Tell us about the collection process, spiles and lines and barrels?

How does it all work? My operation involves tapping 8,000 trees. My trees are all on my property and I have 80 to 90 miles of line to carry the sap off the mountain. It is set up to come into 1 location and is then pumped 500 feet to my sugar house. All my taps are on tubing. We run vacuum on our lines to help with production and bring the sap off the mountain, some traveling almost a mile.

What sort of set up do you have in your sugar house for boiling down all of that sap? After the sap arrives at the sugar house it is stored in stainless steel tanks until we have enough to begin to process. When we have 5 to 8 thousand gallons of sap, we run it through a reverse osmosis machine. This uses pressure to separate the water from the sugar. We remove 70 to 80% of the water using this process. The remainder goes to what we call a feed tank, which feeds the evaporator. All maple syrup needs to be boiled. The boiling process is what gives maple syrup its color and flavor. We have a 4 x 14 foot evaporator fueled by natural gas. When we are running, we average about 40 gallon of maple syrup a hour.



Photos Courtesy of Miller's Maple



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From the Butcher's Mouth: Marbling 101

In an area where farming and agriculture is so prevalent, one of our most important natural treasures is our local butcher. With a bird's-eye-view of what's going on with our animals and our farm-raised meat, John Stahl of Waldron Custom Meats LLC provides us an informative look into marbling, and the quality scale of locally grown beef.

It's no secret that marbling equals flavor, but did you know marbling also can contribute to meat tenderness? Marbling is so important to the meat industry that the USDA (United States Dept. of Agriculture) Grading Service, as well as other countries throughout the world have developed scales in which marbling is graded. The higher the grade of meat is, the higher the price per pound it can be sold for. In the US there are 8 distinct grades recognized by the USDA, with the top three grades sold in commerce being Select, Choice, and Prime. Select and Choice graded meat is mainly sold in markets and grocery stores while Prime grade meat is sold to upscale restaurants and butcher shops. Recent studies have shown that 92% of USDA Prime graded beef comes from the Certified Black Angus cattle and 2% of all steaks are graded USDA Prime!



Grass Finished



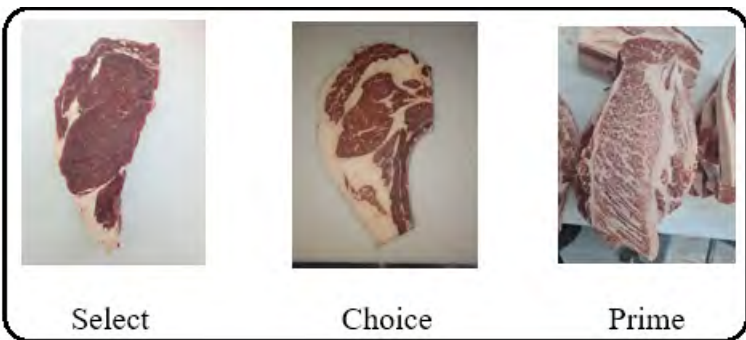
Grain Finished

Intramuscular fat between muscle bundles and fibers disrupts the mesh of collagen fibers, allowing microscopic holes to form within the muscle. This helps to weaken the solidity of muscle's connective tissue, increasing tenderness when we chew.

Marbling can be found in both grass-finished and grain-finished beef; however, grain-finished animals usually contain more marbling and can attain a higher grade quicker due to their grain-fed diet. We aren't going to get into the differences between grass finished vs. grain finished in this article (maybe the next one), but what can be said regarding marbling is what the animal is fed, not only the last few months, but its entire lifespan directly represents the makeup of the fat, flavor, fat distribution, texture, and overall marbling of the meat.

When farmers breed their cows, they look for the best breeding stock and bulls that will pass on their genetic code to help increase yields, marbling, and weight gain. Genetics largely play a part in how cattle will marble and with the advent of AI (Artificial Insemination) most farms can afford to achieve great results and diversity on a small-scale farm for a small investment.

A message from your local butcher: after years of processing beef and directly dealing with local farmers and getting involved with their feeding, breeding, and developing processes, we have been impressed with how many animals come through our facility that represent choice or higher grade. The northeast region of Pennsylvania takes great pride in how cattle are raised, fed, and cared for and most importantly how it directly affects the end user.



Select

Choice

Prime

The grading system comes from the standards set forth by the USDA. It is a 100% voluntary service paid for by the slaughterhouse, butcher and/or packager. Most small processors cannot afford to pay for this service and to do so a butcher or processor are required to be a USDA inspected establishment. Currently, Waldron Custom Meats, LLC is the only USDA inspected facility in Susquehanna County and does offer grading services for a nominal fee. After the carcass has attained a temperature of 45 degrees or less, the USDA grading inspectors analyze the carcass between the 12th and 13th ribs. After a short amount of time (usually 10 minutes) the ribeye will bloom (or be exposed to oxygen to turn the meat bright cherry red). The ribeye is then inspected for its kernel fat, intramuscular fat, and the age and maturity of the animal. This can be done by modern picture analytic technology or by USDA personnel using grading cards.

But what is marbling and the science behind it, you may ask? Marbling within the meat industry can be defined as white flecks and strips of fat within the meat. The greater the amount of marbling, the higher the grade because marbling makes beef more tender, juicy, and flavorful.

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Preserving a Breed and an Artform

One of the underrated qualities seen in our local hardworking farmers is their bravery. So many farms have faced the uncertainties of the market their farm was built to reach and have been left with the need to adapt and grow. Bohlayer's Orchard is no exception, but rather a beautiful example of what happens when you're brave enough to make a decisive shift in your offerings. From fruit orchard to fiber farm, Bohlayer's remains a staple in the farming community.

Article & Photos by Heather Loomis



We have enjoyed every moment with this quiet, personable, and intelligent flock of sheep. The Romeldale breed originated in the early 1900s in northern California. They are a cross between New Zealand Marsh Romney rams and Rambouillet ewes. They are a dual purpose sheep providing a fine fiber in an array of natural colors and carrying a solid meat carcass. Originally bred as white sheep, in the 1970s, lambs with badger face markings and variegated gray fleeces were born. These naturally colored sheep became known as Romeldale California Variegated Mutant (CVM) – a name reflective of where they were bred, the uniqueness of the colorful fleece, and a misnomer. At the time, it was a thought a genetic mutation was causing what we now know is natural expression of recessive color patterns found in a number of sheep breeds. The colors of wool now produced by this breed include white, a variety of grays, shades of off-white to brown, and black.

Bohlayer's Orchards was established in 1876, when Fred and Laura Bohlayer purchased the property in Farmers Valley, Troy, PA. Throughout the generations, fruit orchards and sheep were constants. A dairy herd, honey bees, and a substantial flock of chickens all had their moment as important parts of the farm. But tree fruit and sheep weathered the shifts of generations. The ebb and flow of the year – lambing flowing into pruning into hay into harvest into shearing and back to lambing – is perhaps one of the reasons they've been partners here for 147 years.

In January of 2012, we introduced 5 Romeldale CVM sheep. That year we also experienced our first complete crop loss in the orchard. In the years since, fully bloomed trees have sometimes arrived in March, often in April, and rarely in the first weeks of May as they should. This has meant partial crop losses have become the norm for our orchard. Partial crops are a difficult way to keep a farm business going. While our orchard crops were decreasing, demand for our sheep and their wool were on an increase. We made the decision in 2020 to continue raising fruit primarily for cider production. This would mean we could focus our attention on our growing sheep and wool business.

Our search for a sheep breed was directed by my interest in wool. I wanted to find wool I absolutely loved to spin. Our search led me to buying fleeces from rare breeds of sheep listed on the Conservation Priority List compiled by The Livestock Conservancy. I would process and spin the wool in hopes of finding the breed we would raise. As soon as I started spinning the Romeldale CVM fleece I knew I had found the breed for us! We did research into the breed, liked what we read, visited a flock, and in January 2012, we brought home 4 bred ewes and a wether. This small starter flock meant we could enjoy a lambing season and then raise that little flock so I would have wool to play with and our pastures would be grazed. We didn't have plans to manage a breeding program. 12 years later, we have a flock of over 100 Romeldale CVM sheep.

This is a mid-sized breed with ewes weighing 140-190 pounds and rams weighing 200-250 pounds. Ewes are excellent mothers who often twin. Rams are quiet and easy to manage. Most do not have horns, but it is possible and acceptable to have horns in this breed. The breed is parasite resilient/resistant and they have strong hooves which means they have minimal hoof issues. Overall, they are easy to keep healthy. We raise our flock on grass and hay as their primary food sources. Grain is offered to pregnant ewes ahead of lambing and for about a month after to be certain their protein and energy needs are met. Otherwise, a grass-based system is one this breed thrives on.

We sell sheep to other breeding flocks as well as fiber flocks. Bred ewes are often sold as small starter flocks. Because of their temperament and mothering skills, this is an excellent breed for beginners. In addition, we sell meat lambs to local customers.

As a dual-purpose sheep, their wool is an important part of our business. There is a lot of production that goes into creating wool products. In order to have a mill produce products with wool, shepherds need to complete a process with each fleece called "skirting." This is when a fleece is laid out on a table and very dirty wool is removed from the edges, second cuts (small bits of wool which are natural results of shearing) are removed, and any bits of vegetative matter that might be in the fleece are cleaned out. The cleaner the wool that is sent to the mill, the better the finished products. These skirted raw (unwashed) fleeces are delivered to the mill where they are washed to remove the lanolin. The clean wool is then carded to open up the wool and organize the fibers.





The carded wool from Northeast Family Farm can be used to create various products. It can be pulled off into thin sections called roving which can be used by hand spinners to spin yarn, or it can be spun into yarn by the mill. To make felt, the carded wool is sent through a machine with a series of barbed needles. The needles move through the wool compressing it in repeatedly, building layer after layer of wool until you have the desired length and thickness for the sheet of material you are creating. Wool loves to stick to itself and it is this quality that enables us to make yarn and felt.

Our wool reaches customers in a variety of different forms. Raw fleeces are sold to hand spinners (those who enjoy processing and spinning their own wool). We work with several different mills to produce a variety of prepared products. Roving is used by hand spinners as well as those who felt wool. Our farm yarns are always popular for knitting and crocheting. This wool has a next-to-skin softness, making it great for both hats and scarves as well as sweaters. Felt is another product we have produced. I use the felt for a variety of products such as our wool dog coats; "A Woof In Sheep's Clothing." I also have a felting machine which allows me to make thinner sheets of felted fabric. I use this fabric for making pillows.

In farming there is rarely a typical day! Our days always begin and end with chores to feed, water, and visually check the flock. During the spring, summer, and autumn we move the sheep around through pastures and during the winter months we feed hay. Several times per year we run the flock through to check their health and body conditioning, trim hooves if necessary, and to change their coats. We keep our flock coated to minimize the amount of hay, grass, leaves, etc. that might get into the wool. Most sheep will require about 4 coat changes throughout the year as their wool grows. The flock requires the most attention during lambing and the next 3-4 months after as we monitor the health and growth of the lambs and make certain their dams remain in good condition.

We are grateful for everyone who purchases products from us. We know not everyone is a fiber artist, so we've worked to find other ways supporters can add wool to their lives. Our dog coats, coasters, pillows, and even sales of our photography from around the farm help us in our efforts to conserve this rare breed of sheep. Sharing our farm story via social media is also another great way to help us in our conservation work. Part of what can help to save rare breeds of livestock is to find jobs for them to fulfill. Creating a demand for the wool of this beautiful, personable breed is important for their survival. We love to share with customers that their purchase of a rare breed wool product from our small family farm makes a difference.



www.bohlayersorchards.com
 @bohlayersorchards on Instagram
 and Facebook
 David & Heather Loomis

Susquehanna County Farm and Home Day

Don't miss Susquehanna County Farm and Home Day, April 10th, from 10am - 3:30pm at the Elk Lake High School! This agricultural expo will feature over 75 business and organizations to connect you with local agricultural opportunities. Eat, learn and shop all things farmstead at Farm and Home Day. For more information, connect with the PennState Extension office via phone: 570-278-1158, email: susquehannaext@psu.edu, or online: extension.psu.edu.



Photo courtesy of PennState Extension



Your Local Farm Directory

Bradford County

Back Achers Farm
Sue & Aaron Bullock
Rome, PA
570-247-2940
backachersfarm@epix.net
backachers-farm.weebly.com
pastured pig & poultry, 100%
grass-fed beef, organic seasonal
produce and maple syrup

Backroad Creamery
Amanda Kennedy
Columbia Crossroads, PA
570-404-0664
backroadcreamery@gmail.com
www.backroadcreamery.com
quality artisan cheeses

Bluebird Ridge Farms
The Ashby Family
Milan, PA
www.bluebirdridgefarms.com
pastured grass-fed beef, veal,
chicken and Berkshire hogs

Bohlayer's Orchards
David & Heather Loomis
Troy, PA
570-297-2480
www.bohlayersorchards.com
heather@bohlayersorchards.com
quality Romeldale sheep and
wool products

Dirt Road Herbals
Gillett, PA
Dirt Road Herbals on Facebook
dirtroadherbals@yahoo.com
Natural herbal remedies, lotions,
salves and other botanical
products

Edsell's Greenhouse
Wyalusing, PA
seasonal: May - Mid June
570-744-1960
Edsell's Greenhouse on Facebook
hanging baskets, annual flowers,
pre-planted containers,
vegetable plants and herbs

Greener Pastures
Troy, PA
Steve & Nicole Harris
www.greenerpasturesfarm.net
570-337-0815
pastured pork, poultry, grass-fed
beef, plants, produce, pumpkins,
maple syrup, hay

Grown Food LLC
Gillett, PA
Tim & Liz Owen
www.grownfood.com
570-423-6612
seasonal vegetables and a variety
of sustainably grown mushrooms

Bradford County Continued

Norway Ridge Angus
Paul & Stacy Fusco
Wyalusing, PA
570-721-2425
paul@nrangus.com
www.nrangus.com
naturally raised Black Angus
beef, Forest Raised Pork, Tallow
Balm, raw honey, pastured eggs

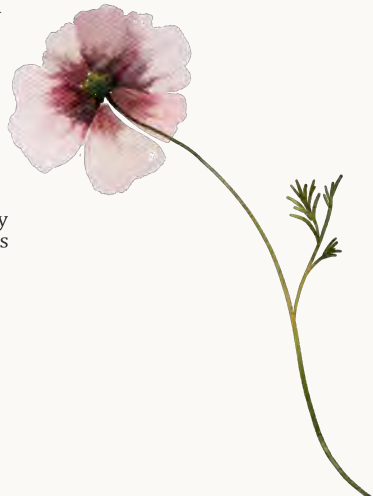
Small Dog Orchard
Craig, Wanda, Jake & Cody Lezak
East Smithfield, PA
570-574-6298
smalldogorchard@gmail.com
Small Dog Orchard on Facebook
12 varieties of apples grown on
a trellis system. Pick-your-own,
pre-picked, orchard tours
& delicious cider

Southview Station
Jessica Newman
585-261-5434
SouthViewStation@outlook.com
www.southviewstation.com
grass-fed cows and sheep,
pastured pork and poultry

Sunset Ridge Creamery
New Albany, PA
570-924-3949
Sunset Ridge Creamery on
Facebook
delicious A2 Jersey milk

**Under the Moonlite
Alpaca & Garlic Ranch**
Ulster, PA
underthemoonlitealpaca@gmail.com
underthemoonlitealpaca.com
variety of natural alpaca fiber
crafted items and apparel,
variety of gourmet garlics

WindStone Landing Farms
David & Marla Nowacoski
Columbia Cross Roads, PA
570-596-4470
dnowacoski@gmail.com
wslfarms.com
quality pastured pork, chicken
and turkey, eggs, vegetables,
jams, salsas, soups, pickles



Susquehanna County

Albert C. Shaulis
Montrose, PA
Albert & Rachelle Shaulis
tweetyburdz@yahoo.com or
beefcow10@icloud.com
570-934-2833
grass fed, grain finished quarter,
half, whole beef

Amy Boot
Montrose, PA
snoylany@hotmail.com
570-396-2043 (text or call)
quality farm fresh eggs

Barbour Farms
Jim & Kim Barbour
Hallstead, PA
607-435-0830
barbourfarms.com
organic/sustainable vegetables &
pumpkins. Raising grass-fed
American Aberdeen beef.

Bennett Farms
Brandon & Adele Bennett
New Milford, PA
570-947-4056
Bennettfarms.biz
local beef, pork, and equine
services

Burke Farms LLC
Bill & Becky Burke
Meshoppen, PA
570-240-0714 or 570-240-5485
wb.burkefarmsllc@gmail.com
whole, half or quarter beef and
individual cuts and packages

C. Birchard Farm
Chapin Birchard
Birchardville, PA
607-321-9298
U.S. Inspected Individual retail
beef. Call or text for meat order.

Carlton Farms
Jennie & Richard
Montrose, PA
570-396-0886
info@carltonfarms.net
carltonfarms.net
certified organic produce,
pastured lamb, fire-tonic, pestos
and CBD products

Castiglione Family Farm
Heather Castiglione
Montrose, PA
Grass-fed beef, free range non-
GMO eggs
dcastiglione111@gmail.com

Clodhopper Farm
Pete & Eliza Comly
Springville, PA
570-965-2201
clodhopper@epix.net
clodhopperfarm.com
pasture-raised chicken, turkey
and eggs, grass-fed beef and
natural pork

Susquehanna County Continued

Corbin Family Farms
David Corbin
Hop Bottom, PA
570-396-6105
djc005@lvc.edu
locally sourced, naturally and
sustainably grown beef and
lamb. Beef Quality Assurance
certified.

Endless Mountains Ranch
Paul & Emily Travis
Hallstead, PA
607-205-0361
info@endlessmtnsranch.com
www.endlessmtnsranch.com
@endlessmtnsranch
quality pastured pork and
pastured poultry

Ellsworth Farm
Samantha Ellsworth
Montrose, PA
910-352-0929
Ellsworth Farm on Facebook
organic, non-gmo homegrown
plants and flowers

Evelyn Adams
Montrose, PA
570-982-3702 (text only)
local fresh eggs

Hog Haven Farm
Larry & Eileen Traver
Montrose, PA
570-665-8177
pork & beef, pasture raised, fed
certified non-GMO

Jill's Happy Bees
Kate & Chuck Castrogiovanni
Montrose, PA
570-396-0311
Jill's Happy Bees on Facebook
honey, nuc boxes, and wax-
dipped bee boxes

LaRue's Farm Market
Ben & Renee LaRue
Montrose, PA
570-934-2618
laruesfarm.com
seasonal home-grown vegetables
and meats

Legacy Farm/Lauer Farm
Springville, PA
John Krayestki
570-575-0284
beef and hay

**Marcho's Florist and
Greenhouses &
Kennedy Hill Farm**
Brad & Michelle Marcho
Susquehanna, PA
570-756-2616
marchosgreenhouses.com
florist, greenhouse, dahlia farm

Your Local Farm Directory

Susquehanna County

Continued

Parrish Family Farm

Karen & Guy Parrish
South Montrose, PA
607-759-8201
karen.glparrish@frontier.com

Rocky Ridge Farm

Rob & Hannah Squier
Brooklyn, PA
845-258-0742
rocky-ridgefarm.com
grass-fed beef, pork & chicken

Russell Farms

Mike Russell
Brackney, PA
@russellfarms
russell-farm.com
year round farm store, CSA, and
u-pick apple orchard

Si's Sow & Steer

Silas Lewis
Montrose, PA
570-278-4533
sisowsteer@gmail.com
@sisowsteer
Si's Sow & Steer on Facebook
fresh homegrown pork and beef

Trinity Angus, LLC

Edward & Dr. Rebekah Burke &
Family
Brackney, PA
570-840-7376
trinityangus@gmail.com
www.trinityangus.com
veteran-owned family farm
offering hormone and antibiotic-
free Angus beef for your freezer
and/or local business. Also
offering embryos and bulls to
help build a healthy Angus herd.

Viva Villa Farm

Jill Kutz
Friendsville, PA
h-570-553-4280,
c-607-237-6053
jill.kutz24@gmail.com
www.VivaVillaFarms.com
Great Pyrenees breeder, goat
soaps and lotions, Icelandic
sheep fiber and crafts

White Dog Farm

Tony & Liz LoSchiavo
Montrose, PA
570-280-0718
@whitedogfarmnepa
local raw honey, seasonal
produce

Windy Willow Homestead

Montrose, PA
Mark & Stephanie Rozelle
srozelle@live.com
570-309-7955
@windy.willow.homestead
registered Nigerian Dwarf goats,
chickens, ducks, turkeys, quail,
meat rabbits, herbs and produce

Tioga County

B&S Farm

Bryant & Shayna Painter
Westfield, PA
570-439-2956
Local non-classified organic
pastured eggs

Blair Creek Farm, LLC

Kyle & Courtney Rouse
Little Marsh, PA
Blair Creek Farm, LLC on
Facebook
570-439-0525
Pasture raised chicken (whole
birds or cuts by the pound),
grass-fed, grain finished beef by
the half, quarter, or cuts buy the
pound, free-range brown eggs,
fresh, never frozen pasture-
raised Thanksgiving turkeys,
mixed grass hay in small squares
and round bales

Miller's Maple

Dale & Melanie Miller
Wellsboro, PA
570-724-7907
www.millersmaple.com
Quality maple products sold
year-round

New View Farm

9578 N Elk Run Rd, Mansfield, PA
570-549-3545
newviewfarminfo@gmail.com
New View Farm on Facebook
vegetables, gourmet blend
lettuce and pastured eggs, using
aquaponic & soil based growing

Northwood Homestead

Scott & Hannah Kroll
Mainesburg, PA
northwoodtunis@gmail.com
raising Tunis Sheep for meat and
fiber, growing dahlias for market
bouquets and tuber sales

Wyoming County

Avery Mountain Bines & Twine

Joe Mitchell & Paul Robinson
Tunkhannock, PA
570-335-2403 (prefer text
message)
averymountain@yahoo.com
fresh hops

Black Barn Homestead

Nolan & Autumn Maxwell
Nicholson, PA
570-914-8994
Black Barn Homestead on
Facebook
American Guinea Hogs,
American Bresse Chickens, Black
Copper Maran, Heritage Turkeys,
Bobwhite and Coturnix Quail.
Fresh quail eggs, pickled quail
eggs in mild, Cajun and Ginger
Rosemary flavors. All can be with
or without beets

Wyoming County

Continued

Brown Hill Farms

The Brown Family
Tunkhannock, PA
570-241-8430
brownhillfarms@gmail.com
brownhillfarms.com
seasonal tulip & sunflower fields,
pumpkin patch and local produce
stand

Brown's Locust Grove Farm

Dennis & Cody Brown
Tunkhannock, PA
570-690-7532
570-240-0582
Brown's Locust Grove Farm on
Facebook
family farm that grows corn,
soybean, oat, and wheat crops, as
well as high quality hay and
straw. We also raise all natural
beef cattle. All our beef is raised
from start to finish locally in PA.

Carlin Farm (4 Seasons Farm Market)

Gerald & Tina Carlin
Meshoppen, PA
570-240-5094
4seasonsfarmmarket@gmail.com
4seasonsfarmmarket.com
wide variety of fresh produce and
pasture-raised beef

Redfield Farm

Falls, PA
570-614-6697
redfieldfarmpa.com
beautiful daylilies in a full
spectrum of colors, varieties and
bloom times

Rock "N" K Farm

Josh & Elena Kuwaye
Meshoppen, PA
607-206-1036
KuwayeJosh@yahoo.com
grass fed, grain finished beef by
the whole, half or quarter

Wilson Farm

Tunkhannock, PA
Lynn
570-836-3289
grass-fed lamb and poultry, wool,
Texel breeding stock

*Should your
farm be in
our directory?*

We'd love to list
your farm and
grow our
directory to help
our community
learn where to
find quality
home-grown
products! Please
contact us via our
website so we can
connect with you
and list your
family farm for
free!



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PAINTERLAND
SISTERS
ORGANIC SKYR YOGURT

