


SUMMER 2008

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Back to the  
garden Gay Donofrio  
and her 'Perennial Gardens'

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to berries to  
veggies to fruit  
Reconnect to the harvest with  
a trip to a local u-pick farm

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OUR COUNTRY HOME Summer 2008

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Cover photo by Dorothy Hartz

*"To me a lush carpet of pine needles and spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug."*

—Helen Keller

When I first moved up to the Upper Delaware River region in 1989, Main Street in Narrowsburg, NY consisted of the Chatterbox Café (now Main Street Café), Rasmussen's Furniture Store and Funeral Home, the National Park Service office, the post office, a tiny library, the Delaware Valley Arts Alliance and Kelly's Home for Adults. Kelly's is now a combo plaza with Roasters coffee house, Nest, the T-shirt shop and 15 Main for fine dining. Several other boutiques are open along Main Street, along with Dyberry Weaver and craft and antique stores. What a different place is Main Street 2008 in Sullivan County than two decades ago!

Likewise, the cultural scene is booming, here and in Sullivan's sister counties of Wayne and Pike in Pennsylvania. The Delaware River divides the counties geographically and unites them culturally and politically. In this summer "outdoor living" edition of Our Country Home, we bring you a cross section of cultural resources, including ways to enjoy the beautiful countryside by bike, horseback, on the water or camping. We give you window box gardening ideas, how to enhance your property with a gazebo or create a fountain for keeping drinks cold. We show you how to craft a summer souvenir, where to go to pick your own fruits and veggies and how to create a spectacular outdoor dinner party. We invite you to check out Slow Food UpDeRiVa, a chapter of the national organization. For a wild ride, choose one of the three fairs highlighted here, all celebrating the area's farming heritage. And, we hope that you enjoy Gay Donofrio's 'Perennial Gardens' as much as we all do.

Enjoy.

*Mary Greene*

Mary Greene, Editor  
Our Country Home



TRR file photo

Mary Greene, Editor

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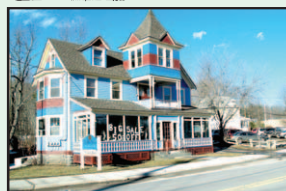
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## *Reconnect to the harvest with a trip to a local U-Pick farm*

By ERIN VANDERBERG

As we become more conscious of the origins of the foods we eat, U-Pick farms are regaining their popularity. They appeal to families looking for fun and educational outings, to locavores striving to eat food grown within 100 miles of their homes, to foodies seeking the freshest produce at the cheapest price and to those who just want the pickin' experience.

But, U-Picks are also at a critical juncture. Over the last decade, several area U-Picks have closed their fields to self-service and have relied instead on their farm stands to hock their produce, claiming

that people don't seem to have the time to pick anymore.

If you are looking for a weekend outing, make supporting your local farmers a destination. You'll find a vast variety of produce is available to be picked within a reasonable radius, including vegetables, berries, fruits, flowers and harvest crops. Some orchards offer the additional enticements of wine tastings and music, while other farms encourage family fun with educational demonstrations, playgrounds and even mini-golf.

Call ahead or go online to learn what crops are ripe for the picking. You can generally expect that green leafy veggies are ready in May; flowers and strawberries pop in June; tomatoes and berries ripen in July and August, along with corn and most garden variety vegetables; tree fruits and melons are just right in September; and harvest crops like pumpkins, onions and gourds mark the end of the growing season in October and November.

*Continued on page 6*

Steve Boyer and Wendy Hollender, weekenders to Spring Glen, with an overflow of freshly plucked peas.

TRR photos by ERIN VANDERBERG

**Kelder’s Farm**  
**5755 Route 209 (8 miles northeast of**  
**Ellenville), Kerhonkson, NY, 12446**  
**845/626-7137, [www.kelderfarm.com](http://www.kelderfarm.com)**  
**Daily from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.**

A northbound journey up Route 209 yields plenty of excellent farm stands, but none surpass the sheer magnitude of activity that is offered at Kelder’s farm, a family-owned, 100-acre U-Pick in the heart of Ulster County. You’ll know you’re there when you see Chomsky, their 2007 Guinness Book of World Records-holding gnome. Their U-Pick fields offer every vegetable from “Asparagus to Zucchini” as the season progresses, currants and berries from July to August and a corn maze in the harvest season. You can play 10 holes of mini-golf at the unique, farm-themed Gnome on the Grange course designed by artist Maria Reidelbach where old farm implements are incorporated as hazards. A petting zoo featuring Walter the donkey and a wooden playground provide fun for the kids; the Kelders also host field trips throughout the school year where kids are given a chance to milk a cow, hearkening back to the Kelder’s roots as dairy farmers. There is a picnic area that overlooks the fields; you can either pack a lunch or put one together from the fields and farmstand. Folks camping at the Rondout Valley Camping Resort in Accord, NY have the perk of getting market goods delivered on a wagon driven by the Kelders every Wednesday and Saturday. Because the Kelder family has been farming since 1836, their farmstand is a quasi-museum of agricultural artifacts and other antiques accumulated during their many years living on the land. They also have a greenhouse dedicated to growing flowers.

Steve Boyer and Wendy Hollender travel to Kelder’s Farm from their weekend place in Spring Glen, NY. “Picking produce ourselves brings us closer to the actual experience of planting and harvesting food for the table,” says Steve.

**The Cutting Garden**  
**4055 Route 52, Youngsville, NY 12791**  
**845/482-3333,**  
**[www.thecuttinggarden.org](http://www.thecuttinggarden.org)**  
**(website updated weekly)**  
**Friday through Monday, 10:00 a.m.**  
**until 6:00 p.m. until the first frost**

Owned by Anne Hart and Fritz Mayer, The Cutting Garden is now in its fifth summer as a destination for fresh-cut flowers. They have over 100 varieties in bloom (including the coveted lisianthus, bred from a Texas wildflower), an herb garden for the culinary cutter and a handful of berry and vegetable varieties all ripe for the picking. With prices starting at three blooms for \$1, it is hard to find a better and fresher way to fill your vases. Anne or her assistant will cut for you, or hand you the scissors and bucket and let you create your own display. Wedding and other celebratory bouquets and orders are welcomed.

While there, visit the store’s delightful assortment of antiques and collectibles as well as pottery, jewelry, handbags, free-trade chocolate, gardening items, artwork, fabrics and much more.

**Paupack Blueberry Farm**  
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**to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 8:00 a.m. to**  
**4:00 p.m. through Labor Day.**

At Paupack Blueberry Farm, the Coutts family has planted 27 acres with an unbelievable variety (25 this year) of blueberries. The names of the berries indicate the North American origins of the bush: Atlantic, Bluetta, Concord, Dixie, Jersey, Patriot and the Paupacken, to name a few. Blueberry picking kicks off in late July. When the berries are in season, the blueberry-laden bakery goods are a main attraction. Of course, you and the kids can fill your buckets and go home and bake your own.

**Applewood Orchards & Winery**  
**82 Four Corners Road, Warwick, NY**  
**845/986-1684 or 845/988-9292,**  
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**Warwick Valley Winery**  
**114 Little York Road, Warwick,**  
**NY 10990**  
**845/258-4858, [www.wvwinery.com](http://www.wvwinery.com)**

Living in or around the “Big Apple,” there is no shortage of U-Pick apple orchards. But if you want to add a little spirit to the equation, two orchards in Warwick—Applewood and Warwick Valley—double as wineries, fermenting the fruits of their vineyards onsite. While the U-Pick does not begin until September (apples and pumpkins are available to pick at Applewood and apples and pears at Warwick Valley), the wineries are open on weekends year-round. At Applewood, live music, puppetry, face painting and wagon rides are possible events d’jour from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., while Warwick Valley, open from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., has a café onsite, and every Saturday and Sunday from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., there is music on the patio.

**Pierson’s Farm**  
**1448 Route 211, Middletown, NY, 10940**  
**845/386-1882, [www.piersonsfarm.com](http://www.piersonsfarm.com)**  
**Thursday through Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.**  
**until 6:00 p.m. through December**

The historic marker makes it easy to spot the Pierson’s Farm on Route 211 between Otisville, NY and Middletown. It states that this particular acreage has been under cultivation since 1790 when a man named Josiah Pierson first settled there. Now the kids being raised on the farm are the eighth generation of farmers whose surname remains Pierson. The Piersons are cattle farmers raising natural beef, but they dabble in everything from baked goods and homemade jams in their Country Shoppe to the festive side of farming, with U-Pick mums and pumpkins and holiday trees. During the fall, they celebrate the harvest with hayrides, corn mazes, haunted barns and hot cider. U-Pickers will also delight in their raspberries, which ripen in September.

*Check these websites for a U-Pick farm near you:*

Hudson Valley U-Pick’em farms, markets, orchards:  
[www.bearsystems.com](http://www.bearsystems.com)

New York State Department of Agriculture’s Farm Fresh Guide:  
[www.agmkt.state.ny.us](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us)

PickYourOwn.Org: Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!  
[www.pickyourown.org](http://www.pickyourown.org)

NY Apple Country  
[www.nyapplecountry.com](http://www.nyapplecountry.com)



**ERIN VANDERBERG** settled in Forestburgh, NY in 2004 after traveling the country as an AmeriCorps\* NCCC volunteer, and throughout East Africa, the Middle East, western Europe, India, Mexico, Ecuador and Indonesia as a student. At her country home, she enjoys growing vegetables and baking bread.

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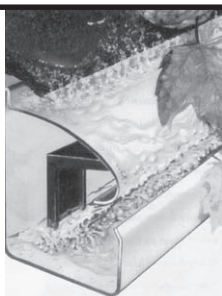
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\$209,000 SAH6406

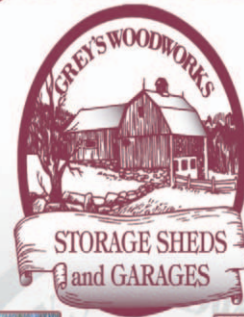
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# Elegance in the round

## Creating a back yard gazebo

By CYNTHIA TOLIVER

Last week, I was at an outdoor café, munching down on a delicious croissant sandwich, when suddenly the clouds opened up and it began to pour. There I was, sitting outside in the rain sipping my morning coffee, yet staying dry underneath the awning, protected from the elements. That kind of dual existence is exactly what a gazebo affords. Up in this neck of the woods, not much thought is given to outdoor shelters, unless the plan is to go camping. The weather is a bit unpredictable. However, a garden gazebo is an ideal way to enjoy the best of both worlds.

The gazebo has been around for centuries. If you've ever visited a Japanese tea garden or seen a Chinese pagoda, then you've seen its early ancestor. Nowadays, gazebos are quite commonplace in many parts of the world, although they are more often seen in warmer climates.

Gazebos are versatile and present a myriad of uses:

as a romantic evening spot as an outdoor reading room, exercise room, breakfast nook, or simply as a cozy extension of the garden. And they come in all types of shapes and sizes, ranging from the traditional white, ornate Victorian structure to a simple, square roof, with four columns covered in ivy and a flat stone floor—a rustic structure that blends right into your garden. Creative woodworkers can build an ornate gazebo frame and roof using limbs from nearby forest trees. Nothing is more magical than an organic shape rising from the imagination and the natural products nearby. Untreated wood will not last as long as treated wood, however, which is designed to withstand our rough winters. Cedar and redwood remain the top choices, for both durability and aesthetic value. Both of these woods look even more attractive as they age. Vinyl is cheaper and just as durable, and can mimic the look of wood or metal.



TRR file photo

### First things first

If you are feeling especially creative, design one yourself. If not, simply hire your favorite local woodworker or carpenter who will gladly take this project off your hands. It should not take more than a few days. The most time-consuming task may be your foundation and flooring. If you or someone else in your family does not possess solid carpentry skills, you'll be better off having your gazebo installed professionally. Depending on your plans and the size of your project, you may need to follow certain guidelines or get permits. Check with your local town zoning office to be sure.

### Added attractions

Railings can add a note of charm and individuality to your gazebo. From antique gilded iron to lattice work, research all your options. Climbing plants such as clematis, wisteria or trumpet vine will add privacy and beauty over time. Consider screens or windows to allow more months throughout the year when your gazebo can be in use. Roof shapes and materials vary, from shingles to slats and from bell shapes to thatched tops. Many are topped off with weather vanes or some whimsical variance. Consider having your gazebo take on similar characteristics of your home in color, style and building materials. This sort of forethought will enhance your property and create a seamless look to your house and yard.

Gazebo trends include the use of alternative building materials, including found and recycled items such as metal gates or lumber from old barns. Even

old satellite dishes have been converted into roofs! Re-use, re-vision and think green!

### Help is on the way

For those with more time and skill, there exist a plethora of do-it-yourself building plans readily available. Many are free of charge, just moments away with the help of an Internet search. Some good ones to try are [www.cedar-outdoor.org](http://www.cedar-outdoor.org), [www.bluegrassgardens.com](http://www.bluegrassgardens.com) and [www.4gazebos.com](http://www.4gazebos.com).

If you're like me and suffer from construction-itis, have no fear. You can still get on the bandwagon by purchasing a pre-assembled kit. Constructing your gazebo from a kit is a relatively pain-free process, and the results are well worth it. For design consultations and kits, visit **Marshall Machinery**, 348 Bethel School Road, Honesdale, PA, 570/729-7117, [www.marshall-machinery.com](http://www.marshall-machinery.com).

### Plan ahead

Interestingly, some find it is better to build the gazebo close to the home, rather than in a remote spot on the property. The theory is that close proximity to the house means more use of the gazebo by more family members, including the youngsters in your household. Take stock of your land to find the perfect spot, one with a nice view of the rear of the house, the garden, a small pond or lake or perhaps the sunset. Be sure that you don't plant your gazebo in low-lying areas. Rainy days can be fun, but not if you need a canoe to get back and forth to your little retreat. As a matter of fact, that unsightly hill out back might actually be good for something. A

slightly elevated spot will give you maximum visibility of your landscape, and keep you dry as well.

Lighting, electrical outlets and furniture requirements should be addressed in the beginning. Planning ahead will prevent the necessity later on of unsightly extension cords or furniture that does not quite fit. Depending on size, benches, shelves and small tables can be built right into the design. Size is also an important factor. Make sure your gazebo is big enough for you and your guests to move around comfortably, but not so large that it takes over the garden. Do not overcrowd with furniture—your gazebo should be functional but feel spacious and uncluttered.

With just a little planning, you can create a romantic getaway right smack dab in the middle of your own yard. Throw in a table and chairs, some lighting, plants and—voilà! Gazebo, sweet gazebo.



**CYNTHIA O. TOLIVER** is a poet, playwright, realtor, chef and actor. She has traveled extensively throughout Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. She has appeared in numerous productions regionally and nationally, and her work has been performed in NYC and at the Liberty Free Theatre in Liberty, NY. She is president of the Fallsburg High School Alumni Association.

*“...Happy in all that ragged, loose collapse of water, the fountain, its effortless descent and flatteries of spray...”*  
—Richard Wilbur



Photos by CASS COLLINS

- What you'll need to create this FUN fountain
- Galvanized bucket
  - Aquarium pump
  - Ice
  - Colorful bottle
  - Plastic or wire pantry shelf
  - Goop or other waterproof adhesive
  - Plastic tubing
  - Drill with glass bit

# Peaceful running water

## Making your own deck or porch fountain

By CASS COLLINS

The sound of water trickling through a stream or sliding down a waterfall is universally soothing. But you don't have to live by the river or even by a pond to take advantage of the therapeutic and pleasing effects of water. And you don't have to spend a lot of money on garden statuary or fancy water-

fall units. You can make your own fountain with an inexpensive pump and some ingenuity. I made this for a deck party using a beverage tub, a simple aquarium pump, a drill with a glass bit and a colorful bottle. It even keeps the drinks cold if you add ice.

### Garden planter fountain

Another easy fountain to make is constructed using resin pots for garden planters. Put a smaller pot, upended, inside a larger one. Position the pump under the upended pot, allowing the water to spray

through the hole in the pot and back into the larger one. Be sure the large pot does not have a drainage hole. It is easy to cut a hole in the resin pot to guide the electrical cord through.



CASS COLLINS is known locally as The River Muse. A city girl, she has always had one foot in the country. She and her husband Jim Stratton, both writers, spend their free time do-it-yourselfing their city loft, Narrowsburg home and Monticello bungalow.

## How to do it



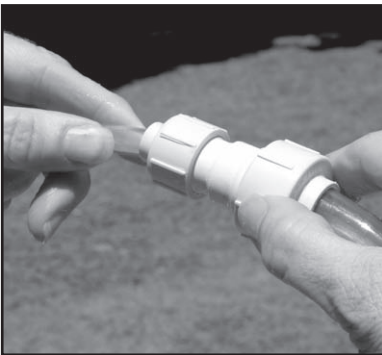
1. Drill a hole in your bottle using a glass cutting bit. (Wear safety glasses and cut over a bucket to catch glass).



2. Solar pump.



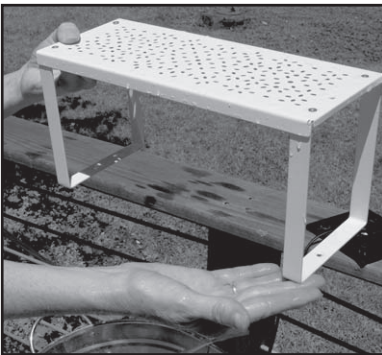
3. Fit tubing over outlet hole of pump.



4. Follow instructions on graduated reducing coupler to attach different diameter tubing to connect your pump and bottle.



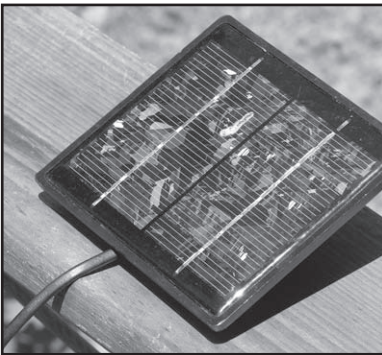
5. Place the pump and tubing inside bucket.



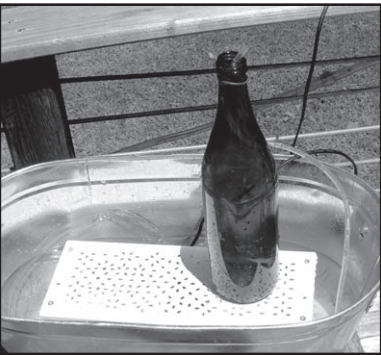
6. Place pantry shelf inside bucket over pump.



7. Thread tubing through bottle hole and neck.



8. Place solar panel in direct sunlight.



9. Place bottle on top of shelf inside bucket.



10. Arrange a glass on the shelf, if you like, to catch the flow from your bottle fountain. Fill your bucket with ice and cans or bottles for your party. (Fountain water is not potable.)

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By **LESLIE RUTKIN**

TRR file photos

It's July, mid-summer: the lush green time of ease and plenty. The sun glints off the water as dusk approaches, that magic hour when the light bounces off the water's surface. A breeze comes up as I put the finishing touches on the makeshift table placed on the grass in front of our house. This table, made elegant with a few simple touches, was cobbled together from sawhorses and old doors and covered with vintage linens. I set the four handblown cruets down the center of the table, each filled with flowers from the garden. All is perfect for our 30th wedding anniversary party as family and friends gather to help us celebrate.

Hosting outdoor parties during the summer months can be successful and enjoyable by sticking to some basic tenets: make ahead, make it simple, make it flavorful, make it colorful. Summertime entertaining should be easy; plan a menu that can be made ahead of time so that you can be part of the party with your guests.

The setting is key. Don't stick to the same old patio barbecue; move the party to the lawn, or under a tree; use your imagination. Add colorful linens; red, white and blue is perfect for summer, but bright greens are fun, too. Vintage cloths look good anytime, and you can even use old Indian print bedspreads for a festive, fanciful look.

I've planned a menu that can be prepared at least a day ahead (except for the actual cooking of the meat) and brought to room temperature before the guests arrive. Brined meats are perfect summer fare because the meat soaks in a flavorful brining (sugar and salt) solution while you attend to the rest of the menu. Brining is an old technique for preserving foods. It works well in modern times to infuse meats with deep flavor with little fuss from the cook.

The dishes offered here are simple foods with a twist: cilantro and lime juice in the cole slaw, asparagus in the potato salad and salsa made from mangos instead of tomatoes. Check your local farmers' markets for ingredients. Add a salad of fresh summer greens and you're done!

# Summertime satisfaction

Planning an outdoor dinner party



## Summer Brined Turkey

- 1 14-15 pound turkey, giblets discarded, rinsed
- 1 cup sea salt or kosher salt
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup white wine vinegar
- 4 bay leaves

- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoons allspice berries
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 2 onions, peeled and quartered
- 3 to 4 stalks of celery
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and slightly smashed
- Oil for roasting pan

Place turkey in a large deep pot that will hold it snugly.

In about a quart of water, combine salt, sugar and honey; stir until dissolved and pour over turkey. Add vinegar, bay leaves, Worcestershire sauce, mustard seeds, allspice berries and peppercorns. Add onions, celery, garlic and enough water to cover turkey. Cover pot and leave in a cool place, like the refrigerator, overnight.

About 4 hours before you want to eat, take

turkey out of refrigerator. Remove it from the brine and dry off with paper towels, brushing off spices. Let it come to room temperature in a roasting pan.

Roast in a 350 degree oven for 3½ hours or until juices run clear when turkey is pierced with a knife. Or, grill over indirect heat on outdoor grill for about 3 hours or until juices run clear (based on 15 minutes per pound).

Let turkey rest for about 15-20 minutes, tented with aluminum foil, before carving.

Continued on page 13



### Brine-Cured Pork Chips

12 servings

¾ cup dark brown sugar, packed  
½ cup kosher salt  
20 black peppercorns  
10 juniper berries  
5 bay leaves  
⅛ cup fennel seeds  
1 generous cup mixed fresh herbs  
(rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano),  
stems included  
1 quart boiling water  
3 quarts cold water  
12 center-cut pork chops  
2 tablespoons virgin olive oil

Combine all the ingredients, except water, chops and olive oil, in a large non-metal container. Add boiling water and stir to completely dissolve the sugar and salt. Stir in the cold water to cool the brine.

Put the chops into a 2-quart zip-lock bag and add the brine (have someone hold the bag open while you pour). You can also lay the chops out flat in one layer in a non-metal pan and cover them with brine. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate from 12 to 24 hours; more time means more flavor.

Heat a grill or broiler. Drain chops, discard brine and pat dry with paper towels.

Brush chops with olive oil and grill or broil for 5 to 8 minutes per side depending on thickness of the chops. When done, set aside on a platter for about 5 minutes, covered with foil.



### Coleslaw with Lime & Cilantro

1 medium cabbage, about 3 pounds, outer leaves and core removed  
½ jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
1 medium red onion, diced  
1 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped  
3 to 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
3 to 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
¼ to ⅓ cup olive oil  
1½ tsp sea salt or kosher salt  
Ground black pepper to taste  
Pinch of sugar or more to taste

Finely shred cabbage and add to large bowl with jalapeno, onion and cilantro leaves.

Combine lime juice, vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper and sugar. Whisk together and taste, adjusting seasoning. Pour dressing over cabbage mixture and toss to coat. Let slaw sit for 1 hour, tossing occasionally. Taste and adjust seasonings.



### Potato Salad with Bacon

Serves 6

3 pounds medium red boiling potatoes,  
scrubbed well  
1 pound medium asparagus, trimmed  
6 slices bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
2 stalks celery, diced into ¼-inch pieces  
1 cup finely chopped onion

Cut potatoes in half if large; steam in a vegetable steamer set over boiling water in a 4 to 5 quart pot, covered, until easily pierced with a knife, about 20 minutes. (Don't overcook or potatoes will fall apart.) Transfer to cutting board.

Cook asparagus in a 4- to 5-quart pot of salted water (about 3 teaspoons salt), uncovered, until just tender, about 3 minutes. Transfer with tongs to a bowl of ice and cold water to stop cooking, then drain and pat dry. Cut into 1-inch pieces. Add to large bowl.

Cook bacon in a 12-inch heavy skillet over mod-

erate heat, stirring occasionally, until golden and crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer with slotted spoon to paper towels to drain, reserving drippings in skillet.  
When potatoes have cooled, cut into ½-inch slices. Add to bowl with asparagus along with bacon, celery, onion, parsley and pickle.  
Heat bacon drippings; add oil, then whisk in vinegar, sugar, mustard, salt and pepper and cook, stirring and scraping up brown bits, 30 seconds. Taste and adjust for seasoning. Immediately pour hot dressing over potato salad and toss to coat.



### Watermelon Ice

Makes about 4½ cups

My ice cream maker\* only accomodates about 3 to 4 cups of liquid. When making this ice for a crowd, I double the recipe but make one batch at a time.

1 cup water  
¾ cup sugar  
4½ pounds watermelon, pared, seeded  
Watermelon spears

Combine water and sugar in small saucepan. Cook, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves; continue to cook, without stirring, to boiling. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered 5 minutes; refrigerate covered until cold, about 1 hour.

Puree seeded watermelon in a food processor or blender; strain (you should have 3 cups of juice); discard fibers. (I sometimes add back some of the pulp to make a richer ice.) Stir puree into cold syrup.

Freeze in ice cream maker following manufacturer's instructions. Scoop into airtight container and freeze until ready to use. This ice will freeze very solid.

To serve, take out of freezer about 20 minutes before serving. Scrape with a heavy spoon or ice cream scoop into bowls. Garnish with watermelon spears.

\*If you don't have an ice cream maker, pour mixture into a flat 2-quart serving dish and put into freezer (make sure dish is not tilted). After about ½ hour, take a fork and scrape it through the ice mixture. Do this several more times until ice is frozen.



### Mango Salsa

Makes about 7 cups

⅓ cup fresh orange juice  
⅓ cup fresh lime juice  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1½ tablespoons honey  
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced  
Salt to taste  
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and ground  
4 large mangoes, ripe or semi-ripe, peeled, pitted and cut into ½-inch cubes  
1 small red pepper, stemmed, seeded and finely chopped  
1 small red onion, peeled and chopped  
24 mint leaves, thinly sliced

Whisk citrus juices, oil, honey, garlic, 2½ teaspoons salt, cayenne, oregano and cumin together in a large nonreactive (not metal) bowl. Add mangoes, red pepper, onions and toss well. Adjust seasonings.

Add mint to salsa just before serving and toss well again. You can let salsa rest at room temperature or in the refrigerator before serving.

Great when served with grilled meats.



*LESLIE RUTKIN has been a copywriter, creative director and owner of a graphic design and marketing company. She and her husband have an antique business and are avid auction goers. She writes every day and has finished a memoir that is in search of a publisher.*

# With the open sky above

## Outdoor recreation for the whole family

By LIZ HUNTINGTON

Summertime in our beautiful mountains and river valley teases and begs us to come out of doors. Whether it's a slow day hike or horseback ramble, the cool slap of water under a canoe or the wind ruffling through your hair as you bicycle down a country road, there is something to do under the big blue mountain skies for everyone. It's especially enjoyable when a planned activity can include the whole family. Here are just a few places that can provide your family or group of friends with everything necessary for a great time in the outdoors.



TRR file photos

### Biking

Is stretching out over a country road for an all day ride your style? Or would you delight in a leisurely two-wheeled turn around a little Catskill town, ending up at a wonderful bake or coffee shop for an afternoon treat? Whatever your ambition, **Cinder Track Bicycles (36 C Main Street, Livingston Manor, NY 12758; 845/439-4590; [www.cindertrackbicycles.net](http://www.cindertrackbicycles.net))** can outfit your day from helmets to handlebars with the right bikes and the right roads.

Located in a picturesque mountain village, Cinder Track owners Virginia and Charlie Sanborn provide guided rides and bike tours and all the necessary gear. Or bring your own gear and join any one of dozens of beautifully arranged tours. There is even a moonlight ride! Events are scheduled through October to take advantage of the region's spectacular fall viewing. The Sanborns also have a full service bike shop, where you can purchase anything bike-related and also have repair work done.

While you're at it, check out the newly developed **Liberty Bike Trail** that ranges through the eastern end of Sullivan County. You can find out more information at **P.O. Box 403, Parksville, NY 12754; 800/516-0422, ext. 3; [www.liberty-biketrail.org](http://www.liberty-biketrail.org)**.



### The world from horseback

**Triple W Stables (Hawley, PA, 570/226-2620 or 800/540-2620, [www.pocono.org](http://www.pocono.org))** offers loads of activities for the whole family to enjoy, with gentle trail riding for riders of any experience heading the list of things to do. In addition to trail rides through the rolling hills of the Poconos, Triple W Stables offers nature hikes, paintball, camping, hay rides, raft trips and even murder mystery theater evenings. Located on 183 acres in the northern range of the Pocono Mountains, Triple W can customize your visit to please everyone.

Another spot for guided trail riding is **Little Pond Farm at the Villa Roma Resort and Hotel (356 Villa Roma Road, Callicoon, NY 12723; 845/887-4880, 800/533-6767; [www.villaroma.com](http://www.villaroma.com))**. These stables are part of a large resort complex that offers many outdoor recreational activities. You do not have to be a guest to participate in a trail ride, open to ages 10 and older (pony rides are available for younger children). Reservations are requested and can be made in the time share office.



### Hiking

**The Slide Mountain Wilderness**, accessible from the northeastern corner of Sullivan County, encompasses over 47,500 acres and is the largest wilderness area in the Catskills. All 35 miles of trail in this area are open exclusively to foot travel and primitive camping, giving the visitor the rare experience of solitude and simple recreation in a place where humanity is a respectful visitor and the details of modern life are refreshingly absent. Elevations range from 1,100-4,180 feet and the hiking trails vary in length and difficulty. Permits are required for backcountry camping for groups of 10 or more. For more information about the location of trailheads, rules for wilderness travel and permitted activities, call the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at 845/256-3000, or visit [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor).

*Continued on page 15*



TRR file photo

## Water magic

Whether it's canoeing, rafting or just playing in the water, the spectacular Delaware River and nearby lakes offer many ways to enjoy the water on a hot summer day. Prices vary depending on the activity you wish to pursue. Rafting and canoeing is not cheap, and so should be planned as a special trip involving the whole family. It is an unforgettable experience to float the clean, clear waters of the Upper Delaware amid the fish, water ferns, birds and wildlife; such as deer, otters and eagles that can be spotted.

**Lander's River Trips** (Narrowsburg, NY; 800/252-3925; [www.landerrivertrips.com](http://www.landerrivertrips.com)) provides recreation on the water for everyone, whether for a day or a weekend of rafting, tubing, canoeing or kayaking. Lander's has riverfront campsites at four locations along the Delaware River, as well as comfortable rooms at the Ten Mile River Lodge, located in Narrowsburg. This is not wilderness camping, but it is convenient to many locations and to the campground store and a pleasant short walk to river access locations.

**Kittatinny Canoes** (Barryville, NY; 1/800-FLOATKC; [www.kittatinny.com](http://www.kittatinny.com)) offers a wide variety of canoe, kayak, tubing or rafting trips on the Delaware River, plus a paintball course. Campsites provide brookside camping in addition to open, grass-covered sites bordering the Delaware River. Amenities include a stocked trout stream, catered group BBQs, river-runner lunches, birthday parties, a game arcade, volleyball and badminton courts, horseshoes, a swimming pool, hiking and a camp store.



*LIZ HUNTINGTON teaches composition and speech at Sullivan County Community College (SCCC) and coordinates the SCCC Writing Center. Her poetry has appeared in numerous national and local publications. She is currently working on a novel about farming, wizards and unemployment.*

**Cedar Rapids Kayak and Canoe Outfitters** (Barryville, NY; 877/557-6158; [cedarrapids@nac.net](mailto:cedarrapids@nac.net)) has something for everyone at its campground on the banks of the Delaware River. In addition to guided rafting, canoeing and kayaking trips, campers can enjoy campfires, fishing, volleyball, horseshoes and bar and restaurant service.

**Soaring Eagle Campground** (877/278-8383; [www.soaringeaglecampground.com](http://www.soaringeaglecampground.com)), located on the Pennsylvania side of the upper reaches of the Delaware, is a family business run by the Backlunds: Brian, Anne, Jeremy, Tara and Rufus. At Soaring Eagle, you can enjoy a full day of fishing, canoeing or tubing during the day and be lulled to sleep by the murmur of the river by your campsite at night. Bring your tent, trailer or RV.

**Lake Superior State Park** (Dr. Duggan Road, Bethel, NY; 845/583-7908, June-August) is an alternative to the Delaware River for families looking for a day of relaxed swimming and picnicking. The well attended Lake Superior beach area includes a sand beach with lifeguards, picnic areas with grills, a group picnic pavilion (available for a fee), rowboat and paddleboat rentals, a fast food concession, restrooms, a shower and changing area, fishing (with a DEC license), volleyball nets and a playground for ages 5 to 12. There is a small per-person fee at the beach area from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, and plenty of parking. Group rates are available to groups of 10 or more people.

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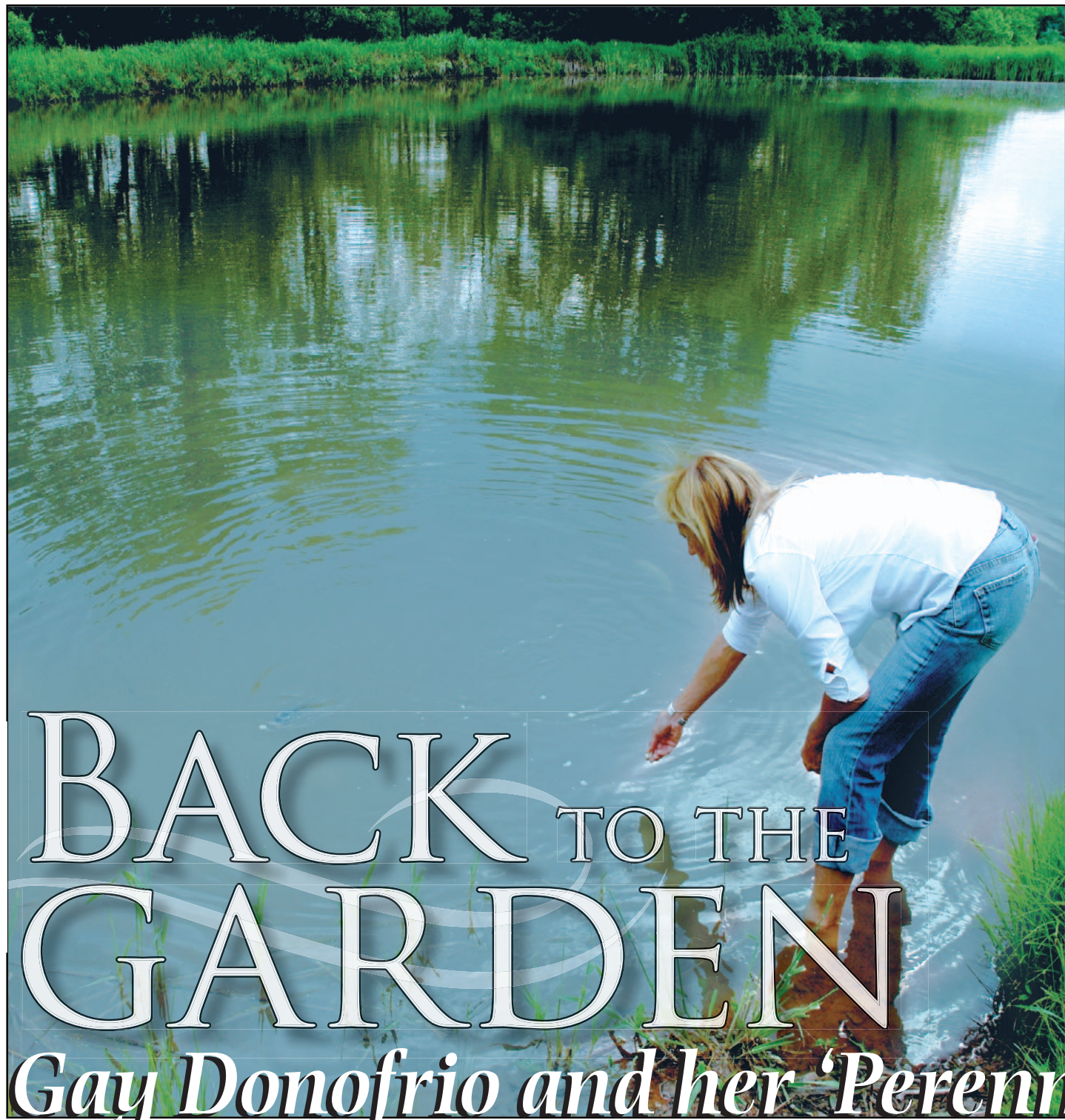
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By DOROTHY HARTZ

In Bethel Township, a lovely, sequestered sampler of Eden awaits the visitor after a surprisingly short drive off of Route 17B. Long the Hendricks’ family dairy farm, and briefly a parking lot for the 1969 Woodstock festival under the ownership of Max Yasgur, the property today is a gracious testament to the gardening alchemy of Gay Donofrio. Gay and husband Robert acquired the property in 1975, moved into the farmhouse that has stood at the end of a long tree-lined drive since 1885, and have tended children, grandchildren, horses, assorted stray cats and three acres of gardens—beautiful gardens—over the past 33 years.

When Gay first got her hands dirty in pursuit of her landscaping visions, she had 30 acres to select from, but only a few spruces to work with. She established some perennial beds, and then planted the trees which today anchor islands and groves and arbors in a dreamlike landscape, leading the visitor through and around various nooks and habitats that showcase both native vegetation, gently groomed, and specimen plantings. The effect is an ever changing palette as the seasons spin along.

“I don’t like to take things out. If something’s working, it doesn’t feel right to remove it,” says Gay of her process.

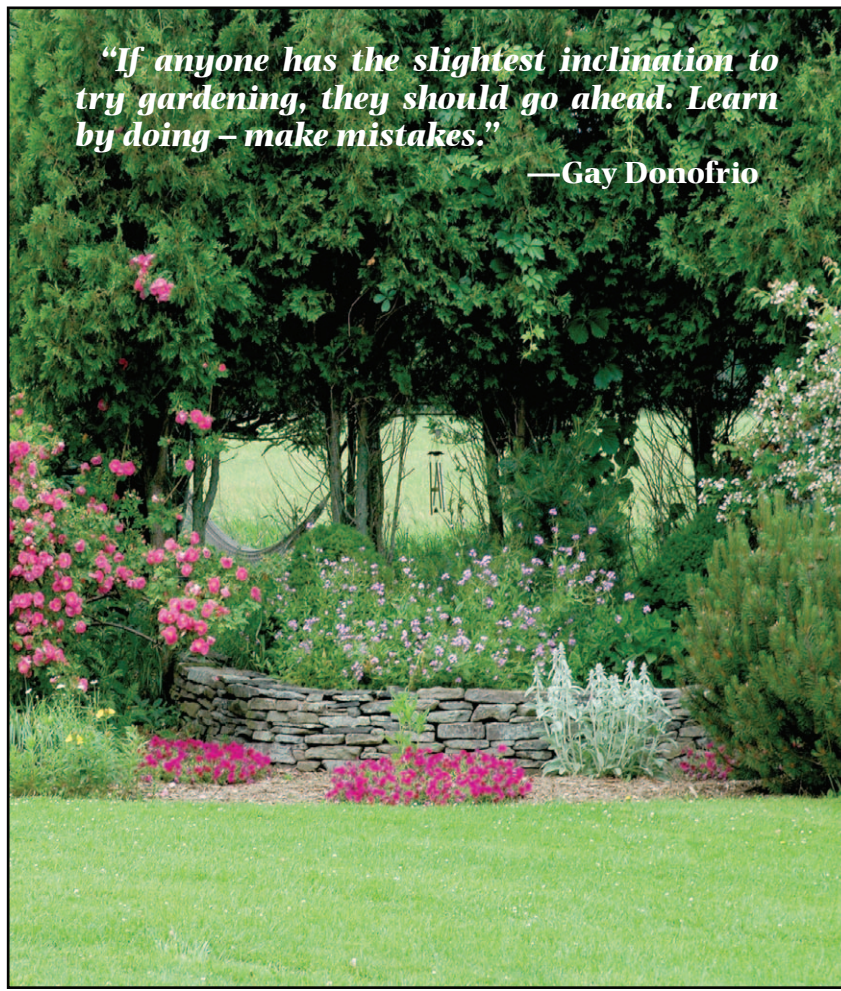
A ramble from any direction seems to lead to an alle´ of Bradford pear trees, lovely as brides in early spring, which connects towering evergreen shelters over beds, benches and rustic pools to a more formal patio with an imposing planted urn, in turn an accent against background layers of pond and field, woods and hills. The views can be enjoyed from a verdant paddock porch, comfortably appointed.

Whimsical, homey touches are meant to be appreciated by the resident fauna as much as by gardening aficionados. A variety of birdfeeders ornaments a wide wisteria arbor built off the kitchen window, and gourd birdhouses hang unexpectedly, low in shady spots, while large wooden bird condos, pitched at rakish angles, mark sunny borders. Gay’s solicitous affection for her private eco-system prompts her to remove new-hatched tadpoles from small pools to a pond until they are large enough to escape the pools’ filters on their own. The Donofrios excavated the pond, now home to schools of goldfish

and koi, many of which eat out of Gay’s hand. The site, in its languid perfection during a warm June photo shoot, is unimaginable without the water-scape.

Gay comes from a long line of gardeners, and her love of her calling is apparent in her enthusiasm, as her sense of stewardship is in her methods. She has always gardened organically, and attributes her success—and the absence of swarming pests, at a time when the region is plagued with gypsy moths and flies—to the natural balance her methods have produced in her environment over time. She also believes in the therapeutic benefits of working in the earth. Her belief was recently validated by hard science. It seems a particular bacteria in the soil, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, given contact with a human, will release serotonin in the brain, leading to a sense of relaxation and satisfaction—the same sense, Gay surmises, already known to gardeners everywhere.

A lifetime of dirt therapy has given Gay an exceptionally high level of energy, as well as some clear favorites for her personal and professional planting



pleasure. Her choices for never-fail bedding plants are catmint (“ ever bloomy, spilly”) and iris, both the Japanese and Siberian varieties. Both are deer proof, as is the wild Dame’s rocket, commonly mis-identified as wild phlox, which Gay has introduced here, there and most everywhere to supplement her borders. Her favorite flower palette is purple and yellow—“a knockout”—and her favorite rose, the deep pink, ever-blooming single, William Baffin. Offering a hint, she reveals, “I feed banana peels to the roses—they love the potassium.”

Other gardener’s pets singled out for special praise include red jade crabapple; kolkwitzia, or beauty bush; shasta viburnum; and mandarin honeysuckle. Gay’s knowledge of species and their variations is dazzling as she introduces the visitor to any and all of her plantings—and a few accidents—with a blend of correct nomenclature, loving anecdote and practical advice.

Transplants themselves, the Donofrios first discovered Sullivan County while visiting Monticello Raceway, where Robert had frequent business. Moving from Long Island’s North Shore, they lived as snowbirds between Bethel and Florida until their two children were of school age, when they were

enrolled in the Homestead School. The family settled into country life here, raising horses for many years on their rolling fields, with Gay, an accomplished craftswoman, also busy teaching. Today, one pet horse remains, and evidence of Gay’s artistry is everywhere, in and out of the gardens. Even though the children are grown, the tree house and other outdoor play areas still entertain grandchildren for three seasons of the year. As for winter, Gay and Robert have resumed travel to Florida.

A fabulous feature of the Donofrio yard is a 12-year-old grape arbor sheltering an alfresco dining spot, complete with rustic candelabra. The neighboring tomato patches further a fantasy of Tuscany-in-Bethel. Three times was a charm for the leafy retreat, supplanting as it does two earlier versions. After hearing of the attendant frustrations in coaxing it to its present glory, I sat sipping seltzer, basking quite literally in their shared success, and I asked the Donofrios what they wanted people to know from reading about their experience of creating an environmentally friendly country estate. Robert didn’t hesitate to respond, only half-jesting, “How hard I worked all these years.” Gay was characteristically enthusiastic by advising, “If

anyone has the slightest inclination to try gardening, they should go ahead. Learn by doing—make mistakes.”

Gay estimates that she currently spends about 10 hours a week maintaining her home gardens. Having established, if not completed, her personal Eden (all gardeners know that a garden is never finished), she now shares her knowledge and passion with the public in Perennial Gardens, “a unique gardening design company, specializing in creating beautiful landscapes with flowers, ornamental grasses, flowering trees and shrubs.” Gay employs and works along with an installation crew, mostly at new residences, such as the several at The Chapin Estate graced by her sensibilities. Visit Perennial Gardens at [www.perennialgardenslandscape.com](http://www.perennialgardenslandscape.com) or call 845/583-5760.



*DOROTHY HARTZ is a writer and retired teacher of English currently living in Fremont Center, NY. Her poems and articles have appeared in local publications since 1997 when she returned to the River Valley. She is a member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective and has been a grant facilitator for Delaware Valley Arts Alliance.*

# Casting about

## For souvenirs of summer

By NANCY DYMOND

What do Bigfoot's footprints\*, the hapless dwellers of Pompeii and pre-historic trilobites have in common? Give up? All have been immortalized using the technique of plaster casting. Plaster casting is a craft that reproduces three-dimensional objects in intricate detail.

According to Wikipedia, plaster of Paris is named for a large gypsum deposit at Montmartre in Paris. When the gypsum is heated, it becomes plaster of Paris. Then, when the dry plaster powder is mixed with water, it re-forms into gypsum. Because it expands while hardening, then contracts slightly just before hardening completely, it makes excellent molds.

Whether your summer vacation takes you to a cool lakefront cottage or to the hot and sandy beach,

nothing captures the essence of that special time like something personalized by your participation in the act of creation and discovery. Imagine the fun of using the plaster casting technique, paired with a good book on animal tracks, to find out what kind of animal upset the garbage can in the night!

The craft project presented here combines natural elements from a beach vacation into a unique and attractive piece for display in a seashell arrangement or to hang on a wall. Because the supplies are so readily available and the procedure so simple, this project can be repeated many times, using multiple forms you create yourself in sand with found objects.

*\*Bigfoot's alleged footprints are displayed at the Hearst Museum in Berkeley, CA.*



Other imprints to cast in plaster:

- Animal tracks
- Small feet or hand prints
- Fossils
- Seashells
- Driftwood shapes
- Pine cones
- Interesting rocks
- Your own designs

Start by choosing your design.

### You will need:

- Sand and water
- A container to hold the wet sand—or just dig your impression into the wet sand on the beach
- A template (clip art on paper or drawn directly from your imagination)

- Plaster of Paris and a coffee can for mixing the plaster with water
- Various found objects, such as shells and stones
- A scoop and a stirrer
- A paper clip or a twistie tie



Photos by NANCY DYMOND

Add sand to water.



Rinse off the loose sand.



Poured mold with hanger for wall.



A work of art that speaks of happy memories.

1. Scoop water and sand into container. Pour off any excess water. This will be the basis of the wet sand mold. (Skip this step if you are using wet sand on the beach.)
2. Place the template on top of the wet sand and trace around it. (I used the outline of a starfish.) Using fingers, stick or spoon, dig out the sand within the tracing, removing it from your working area. Make your impression one to two inches deep.
3. Press small shells, pebbles and found items into the sand. Embed about a third of the object into the sand. Remember to face the object downward so that its "back" will be encased in the plaster and its "front" will be showing after you remove your piece from the mold.
4. Using the stirrer, mix plaster of Paris in the coffee can, following the directions on the package. I found that a quantity of one cup of water to two cups of plaster was more than sufficient to fill the starfish mold.
5. Insert a paper clip or the ends of a looped twistie tie into the wet plaster after you determine how you would like it to hang on the wall.
6. Let the plaster dry thoroughly (two to five hours, or more, depending on size). I let the starfish dry for five hours.
7. Remove your beautiful cast sculpture from the sand and rinse it gently with water to remove all the loose sand. As soon as it dries, it is ready for display!



NANCY DYMOND creates from her home in Bethany, PA. In addition to contributing writing to **The River Reporter's** special sections, she served as newsletter editor for the Wayne County Arts Alliance and is a participating poet in the Upper Delaware Writers Collective. She is interested in traditional music and is currently working on her guitar 'hammer-ons' and 'pull-offs' with a hope of playing in a bluegrass group someday.

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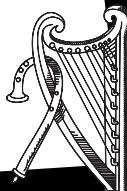
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# GARDENING SMALL

## *A window of opportunity*

By ANNE HART

August represents the best of summer in these parts. Flowers and vegetables are at their peak, and we are humbled by the abundance of nature. Now is the time to reflect on the gardens of summer and to plan for next year. While the gardens still flourish, we can see our successes and failures as well as those of our friends and neighbors.

Some may want to expand their gardens next year, growing more food, herbs and flowers. Others may decide to downsize and garden on a smaller scale. If gardening in a smaller space appeals to you, container gardening may be just the ticket. Take some time to look around the area and on your Main streets and borrow the best ideas for next year's projects.

There is nothing more cheerful than a window box full of flowers and greenery. Seen from the street, a house adorned with window boxes welcomes friends and passersby.

First, select a box that complements your home's style and décor. Your choices will range from the very rustic to elaborate confections in wrought iron. Or, design and make your own.

Choose your plants. The classic window box design features the tallest plants in the center, smaller plants on both sides, with trailing plants at the front and side edges of the box to create a pleasing and softening effect. Consider choosing plants to complement the room inside. A box in the kitchen window planted with food or herbs makes it easy to cook with fresh ingredients. A box outside the bedroom window brings nature's fragrances closer to your pillow.

When designing a flower box, choose colors that will pop against the outside wall. Use bright colors for light colored homes, or pale colors and variegated leaves to contrast with a dark background. The choices are as endless as your imagination, and the winter months can be filled planning the perfect window boxes for your home.



TRR photos by ANNE HART

Spike, red geranium, begonia, impatiens, vinca and lobelia fill this box from Bold's, Honesdale, PA.

### Making a window box

- You can make your own window box very easily with wood, simple butt joints, glue and galvanized screws.
- Use a rot-resistant wood, such as cedar. If using another wood, paint or stain the outside to help preserve the box. Use a liner inside of the box.
- If planting a kitchen herb box, avoid using any wood or wood preservatives containing toxic material. The width of the box should be about the same as the width of the windowsill. Boxes should be from six to eight inches wide, with a matching depth.
- Make sure there are adequate drainage holes in the bottom of the box.
- Position the boxes slightly below the windowsill, mounting support brackets carefully to the outside wall.
- Keep in mind that the addition of soil and plants will increase the weight of the boxes. Attach strong support brackets every 12 to 18 inches, using proper mounting hardware.
- After the brackets are attached to the building, rest the box on the brackets and screw the bottom of the box to the brackets.

### Preparing your window box for planting

- Fill the box halfway or more with a mixture of potting soil, vermiculite, peat moss, compost and a slow release organic fertilizer.
- The mix must drain well, but should retain some moisture in between watering.
- A soil-less mix is a lighter alternative, but may require additional fertilization throughout the season. Place your plants in the box, arranging them with an eye to their future growth and habits. Taller plants should be placed in the center and in the back of the box, while trailing plants should be in front.
- Fill the remainder of the box with soil, stopping about an inch below the top of the box.

- For a two-season box, place early flowering plants, such as potted pansies, directly in the window box. Surround them with sphagnum moss or other filler.
- When the plants are spent, you can remove the pots and transfer the plants to the ground. The box will be ready for the next generation of planting.

### Select your plants

- Favorites for **sunny places** include spike, geranium, petunia, marigold, zinnia, alyssum, lobelia and vinca. Other great choices are bacopa, lantana, creeping gloxinia, miniature morning glory, plumbago, celosia and torenia.
- Favorites for **shade** include impatiens and begonia, small hosta, coleus or balsam.
- When planting for **fragrance**, consider scented geranium, heliotrope and lavender. Other excellent choices include pink, stock and sweet peas, and viola and violets in spring.
- Favorites for a **sunny kitchen** might be beans, baby carrots, small peppers and nasturtiums. Rosemary, basil or parsley can be surrounded with trailing thyme in variegated colors. Calendula will add a burst of color.
- Best choices for a **shady kitchen** would be lettuce mixes and leafy greens.

Continued on page 22



**ANNE HART** is the proprietress of Domesticities & The Cutting Garden in Youngsville, NY. When she's not there, she's playing in the dirt somewhere else.



Spike and white geranium surrounded with alyssum, begonia and verben were found at Bold's Florist, Honesdale, PA.



Petunia, eucalyptus and sweet potato vine make summer cool at Everlasting Spring, White Sulphur Springs, NY.



Nasturtiums create a nice flow at Catskill Harvest Market, Liberty, NY.



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## Cherish the food



By MARCIA NEHEMIAH

If you've ever had the good fortune to travel in Italy, you've witnessed that culture's reverence for and indulgence in food. So it shouldn't surprise you that people who often spend three hours around a table savoring a home-cooked meal created a worldwide movement to celebrate eating slowly.

In 1986, food critic Carlo Petrini organized a demonstration in which he and his followers carried bowls of penne to protest McDonald's Corporation's plans to build a fast food joint near the Piazza di Spagna in Rome. Although ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the fast-food incursion into the great Italian city, Petrini founded the International Slow Food Movement to stem the overwhelmingly fast pace of modern life. Since its inception, the movement has expanded to 122 countries and over 83,000 members who believe in its core mission to preserve regional and cultural cuisine, food plants, seeds, domestic animals and farming. Slow Food encourages cooking with regional produce, organic and ethnic food and enjoying the resulting meals in the company of others.

Slow Food USA, comprised of 800 local chapters known as convivia (the plural of "convivium," from the Latin convivere—"a feast or banquet"), uses the snail as a logo. New York State has 13 convivia, one of which recently began in Sullivan County thanks to the inspiration of several residents.

The Slow Foods Upper Delaware River Chapter (UpDeRiVa) is an "educational organization dedicated to stewardship of the land and ecologically sound food production; to the revival of the kitchen and the table as centers of pleasure, culture and community; to the invigoration and proliferation of regional, seasonal culinary traditions; and to living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life," according to its web site.

The volunteer-led group describes itself as a collective of local farmers, business owners, second-home owners and residents committed to promoting local, ecologically sound food production, responsible stewardship of land and water and the pleasures of the kitchen and table.

If you're interested in food, or if you enjoy growing your own food, join Slow Foods by visiting [slowfoodusa.org](http://slowfoodusa.org). Members receive a one-year subscription to a quarterly newsletter, a monthly e-newsletter that highlights the group's activities, membership in UpDeRiVa, and invitations to local, national and international Slow Food events, ranging from seasonal feasts to film festivals, farm tours and taste workshops. Jason Siebenmorgen, volunteer and assistant leader, notes that membership "taps you into a larger group" of people concerned with food issues, and "expands our local base in UpDeRiVa."

A primary aim of UpDeRiVa is to share information about the special culinary heritage of the area. To that end, the young organization has hosted a pot luck feast, a ramp festival and a tour of a local farm. Upcoming events will include a demonstration on preserving foods through pickling in September and another potluck feast in October to celebrate the fall bounty. Details will be posted at [slowfoodupdariva.org](http://slowfoodupdariva.org).

Food is more than just nourishment for the body. It is one of life's simple, yet powerful pleasures, and a way to celebrate community. Leisurely meals shared with family and friends can be among the most memorable experiences of our lives, combining the indulgence of good food with conviviality and love.

Just take it slow.

## How to take it slow

- Visit one of the many farmers markets in our area to buy locally produced food that's in season so your nourishment won't travel the average 3000 miles to get to your table.
- Buy organic products.
- Bring your own reusable bags when you shop.
- Make eating a gracious, even sacred event. Set your table with care, using a tablecloth and cloth napkins rather than disposable plastic or paper plates or utensils. Share your meal with family and friends.
- Take the time to prepare food. Many of us believe that we don't have time to cook, but consider this:

the average American spends two hours a day on the Internet. Spend one of those hours cooking and you will have a sumptuous meal to indulge the senses.

- Experiment by tasting things you haven't eaten—Swiss chard, arugula, kohlrabi. Use part of that other Internet hour to find interesting recipes, or talk with other cooks to find inspiration.
- Cook with friends and family to celebrate the love.
- In this beautiful season, eat outdoors to heighten the sensual pleasures of a well-cooked meal.



Contributed photos

Supermarket tomatoes pale in comparison to a fruit picked from the field. UpDeRiVa hosts tasting workshops to introduce members to the subtle flavors of locally grown foods.



Jason Siebenmorgen, left, Trina Polinero and Eric Barnsness, volunteer leaders of the Slow Foods Upper Delaware River chapter, educate the public about ramps, a wild-growing spring delicacy, at the first Callicoon Farmers Market of the 2008 season.



Cows from Highland Farm dairy in Pennsylvania eye visitors who enjoyed a farm tour hosted by Slow Foods UpDeRiVa. Visitors also toured Calkins Creamery cheese room near Tyler Hill, PA.



MARCIA NEHEMIAH writes *The River Reporter's* monthly sustainability column, "In Our Hands." She is a member of the Upper Delaware Writers Collective and lives in Lackawaxen, PA.

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Wayne County Fair

# Fun at the fair

Three regional fairs lend flavor and spice to the season

By MARY GREENE

As summer reaches its peak and begins to wind down, one of the great ways to enjoy the Upper Delaware River valley is through its country fairs. There are many fairs and festivals to enjoy, showcasing regional music, food, the river, the environment and the arts. The three we have chosen to highlight here all celebrate the agricultural heritage of the region.

The oldest and most traditional of the three fairs is the Wayne County Fair, which has everything you could hope for in a rural county fair. You'll see animals, food and craft stalls, produce galore, farming heritage exhibits and an extensive midway with its

kid-pleasing kaleidoscope of rides and games. Nearly as historic is the Grahamsville Little World's Fair, a bit smaller and folksier, but with a complete lineup of agricultural exhibits and rides. Finally, the much newer and more contemporary Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods celebrates the harvest, with a huge offering of produce, organic meat, regional wine, jams, baked goods, sweets, soups and cheeses, as well as artists, musicians, authors and craftspeople gathering to sell their wares and celebrate the region.

So put on your comfortable walking shoes, grab the kids and enjoy.

Continued on page 26



Photo by RICHARD ROSS

Grahamsville Little World's Fair

## 146<sup>th</sup> annual Wayne County Fair

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Friday, August 1 through Saturday, August 9  
Midway opens at 12:00 noon  
\$8 includes all midway rides, farm, produce and livestock displays; some concerts and events extra

For many in the region, high summer begins with the Wayne County Fair, which runs during the first week of August. Chartered in 1862, this fair celebrates the farming heritage of Wayne County and is a delight of agricultural exhibits, contests, midway rides and games, vendors, fireworks, special events and—of course—food stalls featuring corn on the cob, fried dough, sausage sandwiches, ice cream and every other kind of fair food imaginable.

Twenty acres running along the Dyberry River between Honesdale and Bethany became the original tract of land for the fair. The land was developed to accommodate the farm exhibits and in 1902, the first grandstand was built. Tents were erected in 1914, and in 1919, the present Poultry Building was built. The fair became a popular annual event.

Devastation struck in 1942 when a flood destroyed most of the fairgrounds and many other spots in Wayne County. All that was left of the fair were the foundations and huge water gullies gouged through the landscape. Using the foundations, the Wayne County Agricultural Society began the process of rebuilding. In 1950, the Jadwin dam and reservoir was built to safeguard the county from future flood destruction.

Over the next half century, the Wayne County Fair continued to grow in size and attendance. Since the 1960s, the fair has seen extensive renovations and continued growth. When the fair instituted the pay-one-price policy, attendance skyrocketed and the large parking lot was built.

Today, some 90,000 visitors attend the fair regularly, representing a wide variety of states. (See how many states you can find in the parking lot.) You will enjoy the down-home carnival atmosphere and your kids will beg to return. Be sure to check out the livestock buildings and the multiple tents displaying 4-H projects, farm implements, prize-winning produce and baked goods. And don't miss Wednesday night, when the fair's traditional fireworks display will light up the sky.

## 129<sup>th</sup> Grahamsville Little World's Fair

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The Grahamsville Little World's Fair, presented by the Neversink Agricultural Society, presents an atmosphere that harkens back to an earlier era. It has a midway, but the midway and rides are smaller and less conspicuous than what is offered at the Wayne County Fair. What you will find is a dazzling array of special exhibits, contests, demonstrations, farm goods and livestock punctuated by the ever-present aromas of—yes—traditional fair cuisine.

Town of Neversink historian Carol Smythe says that, according to research done by the former town historian, Smythe's mother Inez George Gridley, the fair began in 1878 with a resolution by the Farmers Club of Neversink (which was a part of Ulster County at that time). A one-day fair was held to celebrate the strong agricultural flavor of the region, and 425 tickets were sold.

Today's fair is held in conjunction with the Sullivan County Youth Fair, and there are rabbit, horse and goat shows; performances by the Catskill Puppet Theater; the Grahamsville Idol competition; a classic car show; and fireworks (Friday night). Vendors selling arts and crafts and traditional country items are plentiful. You can also find 4-H winners, enormous prize zucchinis and other produce, milking demonstrations and a pie auction.

At night, beginning at 10:00 p.m., the stage comes alive with performances by Rivers Edge Band on Friday ([www.riversedge.com](http://www.riversedge.com)), a country band with a self-professed different style; and Somerville on Saturday, formerly known as New Frontier, which is described on [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com) as "a slice of Americana that blends together contemporary country with rock and roots, spanning a spectrum of influence from Vince Gill and Restless Heart to the Eagles and Jackson Browne."



Contributed photo

### Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods

## Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods

Bethel Woods Center for the Arts  
Hurd Road  
Bethel, NY  
Phone: 845/295-2448  
[bethelwoodscenter.org](http://bethelwoodscenter.org)  
Sundays, August 24 through October 12  
11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.  
Free; no pets

The Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods, held on the old Woodstock site across the street from the new arts center, is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> season. It has grown from a small farmers market with only a few vendors to a major food, music and arts festival befitting the historic ground where it is held. The festival has a huge array of locally grown produce, baked goods, specialty foods and crafts, fine art, jewelry, clothing and regional music. It also has a corn maze, pony rides, a kid's tent, local author signings and a creative scarecrow contest.

Harvest fair organizers say that in addition to the variety and quality of the vendors, "what makes the festival unique is a strong sense of community that is reflected within the mission to support sustainability through buying local. In the fast pace of the world today, the festival offers a chance for people to gather and connect on many levels." Shoppers can talk to the farmers growing the food and the artisans making the pottery and furniture, coming away with their shopping bags full and a deeper sense of community and connection.

**Event Schedule**  
August 24 – Wine Festival  
August 31 – Alpaca Festival  
September 7 – Rustic for the Home  
September 14 – Mountain Music Festival  
September 21 – Earth Day in Autumn  
September 28 – The Ag Experience  
October 5 – Cajun Festival  
October 12 – Chili Cook-Off



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**Our Country Home**, a special publication of **The River Reporter**, is published by Stuart Communications, Inc. Entire contents ©2008 by Stuart Communications, Inc.

**The River Reporter** maintains an office at 93 Erie Ave., Narrowsburg, NY. Its mailing address is P.O. Box 150, Narrowsburg, NY 12764. Phone 845-252-7414. E-mail [ads@riverreporter.com](mailto:ads@riverreporter.com). **The River Reporter** is online at [riverreporter.com](http://riverreporter.com).

Subscription to **The River Reporter** is \$60.00 for two years, \$35.00 for 1 year or \$25.00 for six months. USPS 354-810. Periodical postage paid at Narrowsburg, NY 12764, and additional mailing offices.

Publication date: July 24, 2008

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# FOOD FOR THE SOUL

## *The Himalayan Institute's greenhouse and garden has plenty*

By ERIN VANDERBERG

*Contributed photo by MAUREEN CASSIDY*

Just past the town of Bethany, PA, a sweeping view of rolling hills marks the entrance to the **Himalayan Institute (952 Bethany Turnpike, Honesdale, PA 18431, 570/253-5551, 800/822-4547, [himalayaninstitute.org](http://himalayaninstitute.org))**, the area's foremost authority on yoga practice and ayurvedic health. It is easy to understand why people come from around the world seeking peace and respite here. The institute's land comprises 400 acres surrounded by state forest. Easy walking trails intersect the topography, gazebos and flower gardens dot the landscape, a calm energy pervades the air and people from all walks of life come to visit every day for guidance and renewal.

While the yoga coursework nourishes their souls, there is a large garden under cultivation from early spring to the first frost that grows fresh, organic produce to nourish their bodies. On any given day, there are about 80-plus people visiting the institute, so feeding them is no small task. But the crops grown in the greenhouse and the two-acre garden yield more than enough produce to feed the community and its guests from May through early November.

"It's not unusual to bring in 200 to 300 pounds of produce in a day," says garden manager Tom Woodson, who came from tending a 40-acre organic market garden in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A diligent record-keeper, last year Woodson recorded 17,000 pounds of produce brought into the kitchen, not including the produce that was picked directly from the garden by community members.

The Himalayan Institute grows a little bit of everything in its gardens, but heirloom tomatoes are one of Woodson's favorites. Last year he grew

20 varieties of tomatoes, 17 of them heirlooms for eating fresh off the vine. "Peach, cherry, orange, red, yellow, striped... each one tastes a little bit different. In some cases, we are eating tomato varieties that are over 100 years old," he says.

Since greens are critical to the vegetarian diet, the institute grows large quantities of kale, mus-

**"Once people start tasting the things coming out of the garden, there is real interest in working in the garden."**

—Tom Woodson

tard greens, collard greens and lettuces. Lettuce is the first thing planted in the early spring. One May, Woodson recorded that he had already grown 200 pounds of lettuce in the greenhouse before most people had even planted their gardens. Woodson works closely with the head chef on meal planning so that exactly what is needed is picked, ensuring freshness and minimal waste.

The greenhouse structure is simple and durable. Double-wall plastic comprises the walls, which generally withstand Pennsylvania's weather. Gravel flooring acts a passive solar heat source. The only energy costs associated with the greenhouse are to run the ventilation system, heat the germination table and occasionally fire up the propane heater in a cold snap. The sun does the rest for free.

With an organic farming strategy of building up healthy soil, cover-cropping and using a four-year rotation, the method seems to facilitate the high yield of produce. Woodson mixes a super-

light, nutrient-rich potting soil in the greenhouse and improves the soil in the fields with homemade compost and soil amendments: peat moss, used mushroom soil, rock powders, humates and worm castings are a few of the ingredients. Covering the fields with alfalfa, vetch and broad beans over the winter and then incorporating them in come spring enriches the soil. Institute gardeners also follow the biodynamic method, planting crops according to a complicated astronomical calendar and using prescribed soil preparations. It is an esoteric practice, explains Woodson, that "changes the garden energetically." But it works.

Apart from the greenhouse and good soil, the other essential to a productive garden is a productive gardener, and Woodson is that. "I can be working 12 hours a day and still not get everything done," he says. But he enlists plenty of help and has a summer intern. He admits that starting the lettuces early in the spring, when snow surrounds the greenhouse, and then allowing folks to come in and cut them for salads, is his recruiting tool. "Once people start tasting the things coming out of the garden, there is real interest in working in the garden."

Adjacent to the greenhouse is a large enclosure where a male and female peacock observe the daily rituals of the garden. As the national bird of India, they are living symbols of the institute's philosophical origins. Perhaps these guardians are the real secret to the garden's success. The formula, then, is simple: amended soil, organic methods, universally coordinated plantings, nettle tea, many hands working hard and peacocks—and you too can have 17,000 pounds of veggies every year.

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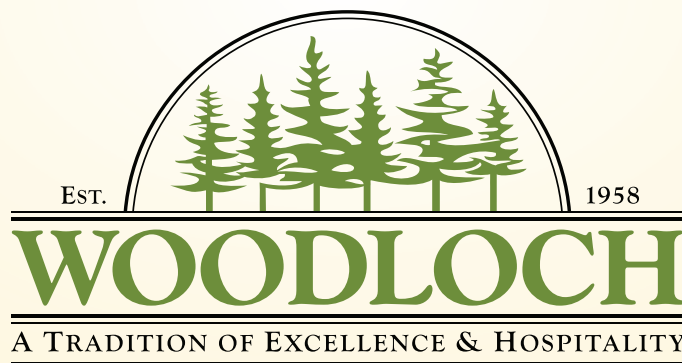
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