



In This Issue:

- Carroll County Fresh!
- Organic Gardening. . .
- February Classes. . .
- Coming in March!

PLEASE TURN IN WORK
HOURS TO NETA OR
LAVONNA

If you have any questions or concerns regarding information contained within this newsletter, please feel free to contact me at 870.423.2958.

Sincerely yours,

Leon Duncan
County Extension
Agent-
Staff Chair

LD:sw

YOU ARE INVITED TO...

CARROLL COUNTY FRESH!

A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE

Help shape a vision for a Community Sustainable Agriculture
Initiative in Carroll County

MEETING

Saturday, February 16, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Berryville Community Center, Berryville, AR

Lunch provided. RSVP to Judy Turner:

H 479-253-5865; C 870-654-2426; judy@christviewmin.org

Are you a citizen of Carroll County who would like to have access to a variety of fresh, locally grown foods that will decrease our reliance on imported food and increase our food security?

Would you like to buy more local products to help increase income for small-scale farmers and small-scale food sector entrepreneurs?

Do you have ideas for a county-wide, agricultural-focused economic development organization that can help coordinate city and county government efforts, community leaders, farmers and food sector entrepreneurs?

Can you share input about how such an organization could best provide training, technical assistance, and financing for small-scale farmers, bakers, canners, meat producers, etc.?

What are your ideas for expanding markets for local products in the county and region?

(Continued – see Meeting Goals – page 2)

Meeting Goals: Discuss Strategies To...

1. **Increase incomes** for small farmers and small-scale food sector entrepreneurs in Carroll County.
2. **Educate the general public** about what makes a community food secure.
3. **Inculcate a buy local ethic** in Carroll County consumers.
4. **Bring more human and product diversity** into the local market.
5. **Prepare area small farmers** to successfully engage Carroll County growth.
6. **Start and operate** an agricultural focused economic development organization.

Organic Gardening and More Sustainability in Gardening and Agriculture

By Calvin F. Bey

The word “sustainable” is used to describe many things in today’s world. I consider it overused, generally in areas where marketers are promoting something “good” for the environment. We hear phrases like “sustainable development, sustainable resource management, sustainable cities, and even sustainable living.” What does this all mean?

John Jeavons says, “Sustainability means living in such a way that there are enough resources to live well in an alive, diverse, thriving environment— indefinitely.” The challenge implied here is in the word “indefinitely.” It seems clear that in terms of working toward sustainability in gardening and farming, we must use practices that build, rather than destroy the system’s ability to produce. It follows that any gardening or farming practices that continuously lose top soil, lose organic matter, lose biological activity, and/or lose nutrients will lead to exhaustion of the system and therefore will not be sustainable.

We can look at “sustainability” in another way... how we use our nonrenewable resources, like oil reserves. If the energy output in production gives us less energy than the input required for production, it is not a sustainable system. (Some folks today are saying that it takes more energy to produce a gallon of ethanol from corn than the energy that is in that gallon of ethanol.) If true, it makes no sense to produce energy from corn.

The issue of where we are headed in the world, from a sustainability perspective, applies to both renewable and nonrenewable resources. The oil situation is clear. We have used about half of the total supply of oil in the last 75 years. If we continue the current rate of use, estimates are that it will be gone in about 30 years. The situation is clearly not sustainable.

What about the soil situation in the U.S.? See the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service report on soils and erosion. Since farming began in the U.S., we have lost more than half of the top soil. A lot of it is in the Gulf of Mexico destroying coral reefs. Our soil organic matter content has gone from the original five to ten percent to about two percent. In Arkansas, the soil organic matter content is now reported to be 1.25 percent. There are plenty of reports to show how the use of pesticides reduces soil biological activity.

(continued from page 3)

When we lose topsoil and organic matter, we lose nutrients. Unfortunately, we have to say that unless changes are made in farming practices, the situation is clearly not sustainable.

The good news is that these soil problems are fixable, and we can be part of the solution. It all starts with each of us doing lots of little things. The list is endless, but for gardeners who want to set the example, start here:

1. Make your own compost. Grow your own compost material. Save all organic material, e.g., kitchen vegetable scraps, grass clippings, and tree limbs for eventual sources of organic matter and nutrients. Collect organic material from the neighbors. Use lots of cover crops. Establish a worm bed.
2. Stop using soil-damaging pesticides. If you have pests, use biological materials.
3. Re-mineralize the soil to the optimum level to grow nutrient-dense produce.
4. Do not roto-till your garden. Keep your tools to a minimum. Use and save heirloom seeds.
5. Mulch to conserve water and control weeds. Use newspaper mulches where appropriate.
6. And most important, share your enthusiasm about striving for greater sustainability with others.

Coming Dirt attractions

Look for two new columns in your March Dirt: *Who's That/What's That?* And *The Book Worm!*

Who's That/What's That? will feature a brief bio of a CCMG and an AR plant of interest.

The Book Worm will review one or two of recently published gardening books.

February classes, tours and meetings:

February 9 - CCMG monthly meeting. Carroll Electric, 10 a.m. Guest speaker: Joanne Sorne, Between the Rivers Nursery, "Flowering Shrubs for All Seasons."

February 13 - CCMG Tour - Butterfly Palace and Emerald Forest Mirror Maze - Rain date, Feb. 20. Members may invite a guest. \$16.95 per person. \$14.95 senior rate. Contact Neta Stamps, 870-480-3667 or nsos@hbeark.com

February 16 - Carroll County Fresh: A Community Sustainable Agriculture Initiative. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Berryville Community Center. Lunch provided. RSVP, Judy Turner: 479-253-5865 or 870-654-2426 or judy@christviewmin.org

February - Tuesday Evenings - Cross County Master Gardener Horticulture Lecture Series. 7 p.m. Free & open to the public. Cross Co. Museum, 711 E. Union Ave., Wynne, AR 72396. For more info, contact Richard Klerk at 870-238-5745 or raklerk@uaex.edu
(Feb. 5) Clematis, Delores Adams
(Feb. 12) How to Design Your Landscape, Janet Benson
(Feb. 19) Plant Material for Your Landscape, Janet Carson

(Feb. 26) Discover the World of Garvan Woodland Gardens, Susan Harper

March 1 - "No-Till Organic Gardening," CCMG sponsors Patrice Gross, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Carroll Co. Electric. Free and open to the public. www.foundationfarm.com

Feb 29-March 1 - Biological/Organic Gardening and More, CF Bey
An all-day class including concepts and practices on how to establish and maintain your flower and nutrient-dense vegetable garden. Retired USDA Forest Service scientist, trained under John Jeavons using the Grow Biointensive system. Dr. Bey is a Washington Co. MG who regularly attends AcresUSA meetings. Contact Calvin at 479-527-6951 or <http://harmonygardens.blogspot.com>

COMING IN MARCH:

March 8 - Developing an Ozark Green Thumb Seminar, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Redeemer Lutheran Church Family Life Center, 312 W. North Street, Mt. Home, AR 72653. Cost \$15. Registration deadline is March 3, 2008. **Contact** Cheryl McConkey 870-499-3315, camconkey@yahoo.com

Speakers and Topics:

- **Shade Gardening**, Janet Carson, Extension Horticulture Specialist, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
- **Color in the Ozark Landscape**, Chris Olsen, Local TV Commentator, Owner of Botanica Gardens in Little Rock
- **Outstanding, Easy to Grow Plants**, Lucinda Reynolds, Advanced Baxter County Master Gardener, Master Gardener Educator
- **Mediterranean Herbs at Home in the Ozarks**, Tina Wilcox, Head Gardener at Ozark Folk Center, Board Member of International Herb Association

March 7-8, 14-15 - Biological/Organic Gardening and More, CF Bey
For details, contact Calvin at 479-527-6951 or see <http://harmonygardens.blogspot.com>