

Brassica Crops on Diversified Farms

On Farm Tours 2006

Featuring:

- ◆ Ecological management for high quality crops
- ◆ Expanding the harvest season
- ◆ New crops and expanding markets
- ◆ Figuring out which crops make money
- ◆ How Brassica crops fit into the whole farm



Why Brassica Crops?

Brassica crops include a wide range of crops in cabbage family that are harvested for fresh salad greens, bunching or braising greens, small or large heads, or as root crops. Some are standards in the US vegetable market, including cabbage, broccoli, collard, kale, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, as well as turnip and rutabaga. Others have become increasingly popular in the Northeast in recent years, such as Pac choy, Chinese cabbage, tatsoi, broccoli raab, mustard greens, daikon and arugula. Brassica crops are well suited to New England because they are cold tolerant and will grow in all seasons. They are tasty and highly nutritious, high in vitamin C, beta-carotene, folic acid, and fiber. Production of these crops in New England is increasing, consumer demand is high, and market opportunities are expanding.

Each of the farms on this tour is part of a two-year project focused on Brassicas. Each farmer has set specific goals for improving or expanding their Brassica crops, growing season, or markets. Join us to see how Brassicas fit into each farm's production system, and hear growers share what they have learned.

Tues. August 15: Brox Farm, Dracut MA, 5-8pm

Sun. Sept. 24: Upper Forty Farm, Cromwell, CT, 10-1

Wed. October 25: Holcomb Farm CSA, West Granby, CT, 3-6 pm

Tues. November 14: Sidehill Farm, Ashfield, MA, 2-5 pm

Sponsored By:

◆ UMass Extension and UMass College of Natural Resources and the Environment



◆ Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station



◆ Northeast SARE

This series is part of the SARE project, *Achieving High Quality Brassica Crops on Diversified Vegetable Farms*

Meetings

**Brox Farm, 1276 Broadway Rd (RT 113) Dracut, MA
Tuesday August 15, 5pm to 8pm
Host: Dave Dumaresq**

Dave Dumaresq has leased Brox Farm on Rt. 113 in Dracut for ten years. In 2003 he also began leasing the East Street Farm in nearby Tewksbury. Last month he acquired his own farm in Dracut. In addition to selling his fruits vegetable and flowers at two farm stands he also sells at eight farmers markets in the northeastern part of the state.

In the Brassica project, Dave set the goal of expanding his fall broccoli harvest season both earlier (late August) and later (November through Thanksgiving). He is testing different planting dates and varieties. We will discuss UMass Extension's trials of both heat and cold tolerant broccoli and get a hands-on view of IPM and scouting in fall Brassicas.

In sweet corn, Dave uses pheromone traps and scouting to help him time his sprays and he is testing biological control (Trichogramma wasps) as well as reduced-risk insecticides for European corn borer.

Dave grows several specialty crops for ethnic markets. We will visit aji dulce peppers set out for fall harvest in a greenhouse.

The NRCS EQIP program has helped Brox Farm design and install a drip irrigation with three shallow dug wells and multiple hydrants. We will tour these systems and Dan Lenthall, District Conservationist at the NRCS Westford Field Office, will discuss how EQIP works



Please arrive promptly by 5 pm and park by the farmstand. We will stop for light refreshments in the shade part way through our tour. Refreshments will be provided by the Mass Association of Roadside Stands. Contact hours for pesticide applicator re-certification: 1 hour

2. Upper Forty Farm, 86 Nooks Hill Road, Cromwell, CT
Sunday, September 24, 10 am – 1 pm
Host: Kathy Caruso

Kathy Caruso's huge selection of tasty traditional and heirloom vegetable varieties have earned Upper Forty Farm a wide following at West Hartford Farmers Market and a dedicated group of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shareholders. Kathy, her husband Bennett, and her son Andy grow vegetables, flowers, and herbs and keep a small flock of laying hens on 3.5 cultivated acres. The specialty of the farm is seeking out and producing a diversity of vegetable varieties, particularly heirloom varieties, chosen for flavor, novelty, and other unique characteristics. In a recent case study, Kathy reported that she was growing 99 varieties of tomatoes, 35 varieties of hot peppers, and 18 varieties of potatoes.

In the Brassica project, Kathy has focused on developing a system for broccoli production and on getting a better handle on soil fertility and soil amendments.

3. Holcomb Farm CSA, 111 Simsbury Road, West Granby, CT
Wednesday, October 25, 3-6 pm.
Host: Sam Hammer

Holcomb Farm CSA is the largest CSA in Connecticut, serving about 500 households with a weekly share of produce, selling at a farmers market in Hartford, and donating 45,000 pounds of produce each year to social service organizations in Hartford and Granby. Sam Hammer, the farm manager, cultivates 24 acres with over 35 crops, including pick-your-own cut flowers and berries as well as the complete array of vegetables and salad greens. Holcomb Farm was established by the Hartford Food System to support a dual mission of supporting local agriculture and providing low-income people in the Hartford area with a source of fresh, nutritious food.

As part of the Brassica project, Sam has set up a bench-top greenhouse operation to produce salad greens through the month of November. This has increased the value of the option for fall shares in his CSA. He is also doing evaluations of broccoli varieties and working on organic management of Brassica pests, especially in fall root crops.



4. Sidehill Farm, 137 Beldingville Rd., Ashfield, MA
Tuesday November 14, 2-5 pm
Host: Amy Klippenstein

Sidehill Farm is a small, diversified

farm with a mission to provide fresh, healthy food to the local hill town community. Amy Klippenstein and Paul Lacynecki specialize in greenhouse tomatoes and high quality vegetables for farmers market and restaurant trade, and this year have started a grass-fed dairy currently selling raw milk to on-farm customers. Amy and Paul are interested in low-tech, inexpensive methods for season extension, and are exploring ways to reduce fossil fuel consumption such as wood heat in the greenhouse and conversion of an Allis-Chalmers G cultivating tractor to electric.

As part of the Brassica project, Amy and Paul have focused on record-keeping systems to determine the profitability of brassica crops on a farm with limited field space, and on developing a system for winter greens production in an unheated greenhouse and an inexpensive fieldhouse. In combination with a separate SARE grant, they are designing and prototyping a roller system for a night blanket to retain heat in winter greens grown in an unheated greenhouse.

For those who wish to stay, there will be an extra hour at the end for a visit to Sidehills' straw bale house construction and new dairy operation.

Mark Your Calendar!

On Tuesday March 6, 2007 there will be a one-day Brassica School, at the Sturbridge Host Hotel in Sturbridge, MA, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. This program will cover field and greenhouse (hoophouse) production, fertility, crops & varieties, pest management, breeding and selection, economics and marketing.

Directions

1. Brox Farm 1276 Broadway Rd. Dracut, MA:

Rt. 93 North from I-495 to exit 46 (the second to last exit before the NH line) go around rotary to RT 113 west. Brox Farm is 2.5 miles on right. Park in rear of parking lot.

2. Upper Forty Farm, 86 Nooks Hill Road, Cromwell, CT:

From I-91, take exit 21 toward Cromwell/Berlin. At the end of the ramp, turn left onto Route 372. Follow 372 for about 2.5 miles, then turn left onto New Lane. At the end of New Lane, turn left onto Main Street (Route 99). The road forks almost immediately at the Holy Apostles Seminary – take the right fork onto Prospect Hill Road. Then, turn right onto Nooks Hill Road. You will pass through a narrow underpass under the railroad bridge – be careful here. Upper Forty Farm is on your right.

3. Holcomb Farm CSA, 111 Simsbury Road, West Granby, CT:

I-91 to Exit 40. Go West on Rt. 20 for approximately 14.5 miles (12 miles to Granby Center, then continue on Rt. 20 for 2.5 more miles) Take a left onto Day St. South for 0.4 mi. Then take a right onto Simsbury Road, go 0.2mi. Then take a left into Holcomb Farm CSA Parking Lot (big red tobacco barn)

4. Sidehill Farm, 137 Beldingville Rd, Ashfield, MA:

From I-91 South, take exit 25 (Deerfield, Conway, Rt 116) At the top of the ramp, turn right. From I-91 North, take exit 25 and go left at the top of the ramp. Take a right at the first light. At your third light, turn left onto 116 North. Follow 116 for approximately 12 miles until you come up a steep hill into the center of Ashfield. Make your first right at the top of the hill onto Baptist Corner Rd. Go 1.75 miles down Baptist Corner to Beldingville Rd - there will be a white milk jug sign at the corner. Make a right on Beldingville, and go .2 miles to a small bridge. The driveway is immediately before the bridge on the left - there will be another milk jug sign with the number 137 at the end of the driveway. Keep following milk jug signs to the parking area.

For more information regarding the Brassica Twilight Series please contact

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