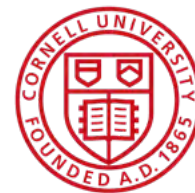


# Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest New York



An innovative Cornell Cooperative Extension team that focuses on development projects in the Farm and Food Industries of rural and urban New York.

## Quarterly Highlights Q3 2024



**Biochar 101 Field Day in Germantown, NY. See page 4 for details.**  
Ben Shute, Hearty Roots Farm Owner, welcomes Biochar Field Day attendees to his farm and speaks about why he chose to take part in the trial.

- **Culinary Training**
- **Welcome Kate Preston, Farm to School Education Specialist**
- **New York Farm to School Summit**
- **FarmAid Festival Goers Build a Balanced School Lunch**
- **Summer Climate Resiliency Programming**
- **The Intersection of Soil Health and Climate Resilience**
- **Urban Agriculture Climate Field Days Come to New York City**
- **Resilient Gardens Symposium in NYC**
- **Karen Guzman Joins Harvest NY as New Urban Gardens Specialist**
- **USDA's Inaugural National Urban Agriculture Conference**
- **716 CSA: A Success in Its First Season!**
- **Overcoming Food Safety Barriers in NY Plain Communities**
- **2024 High-Cannabinoid *Cannabis sativa* Hemp Field Day a Great Success!**
- ***Cannabis sativa* Production Manual Released in Spanish**
- **Honeyberry Conference Highlights a New Emerging Fruit for New York State**



# Culinary Training

Harvest NY and the New York State Department of Education (NYSED), in partnership with [Brigaid](#) and NYSED Master Instructors, are excited to announce *Regional Roots: Culinary Training to Enhance School Meals with Local Foods*, a brand-new, FREE culinary training program designed specifically for School Food Authorities. This hands-on, small-group experience will empower participants to master essential skills and techniques for crafting delicious Farm to School menu items that celebrate New York's fresh, local ingredients. Culinary training sessions will kick off as early as November in select regions across the state. More details to come!



Regional Roots Culinary Train-the-Trainer event, hosted at Schuylerville CSD. Pictured from L-R: NYSED Master Instructors, Ruth Pino & Sarah Keen, Brigaid Chef, Ryan Kennedy, and NYSED Master Instructors Bridget O'Brien Wood & Pat Meyer.

## Welcome Kate Preston, Farm to School Education Specialist

We are thrilled to welcome [Kate Preston](#) as our Farm to School Education Specialist—a new role within the Harvest NY team made possible through our partnership with the New York State Department of Education, with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In this position, Kate will work to strengthen Farm to School collaborations among cafeterias, classrooms, and communities.

Before joining Harvest NY, Kate served as an Agriculture in the Classroom Educator for CCE Madison County. Her passion for education and agriculture began in her youth when she participated in the Otsego County 4-H program, where she raised and showed her own herd of dairy goats, as well as beef cattle and horses. Driven by her dedication to agriculture, Kate earned a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business Management from SUNY Cobleskill, followed by a Master's in Agricultural Education, Communications, and Leadership from the University of Missouri.





## New York Farm to School Summit

Join us for the inaugural [NY Farm to School Summit](#) on November 21-22 at the Syracuse Oncenter! This exciting event will bring together all Farm to School stakeholders, including food producers, farmers, food service directors, educators, school administrators, and community-based organizations. With a diverse array of [workshops, panel discussions, presentations, and optional field trips](#), the Summit offers valuable insights for both newcomers to the Farm to School movement and seasoned professionals. Important details below!

- Registration closes November 1st. [Register now!](#)
- [Dr. Jen Gaddis](#), Associate Professor of Civil Society and Community Studies University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of the [Labor of Lunch, Why We Need Real Food and Real Jobs in American Public Schools](#) is our Keynote Speaker. Pre-order your copy of the Labor of Lunch when you register, and have Jen sign it during the Summit!
- Check out the [trade floor!](#) We have over 50 exhibitors registered to join us on the floor, and include food producers, farmers, food hubs, distributors, and support service providers.
- Producer Scholarships Available! We are offering NY producers 50% off the registration price (\$160), while funds remain. To apply for a producer scholarship, please fill out [this short form](#), and we'll send you a discount code.
- [Certified K-12 teacher scholarships](#) are available through NY Agriculture in the Classroom, covering the entire cost of registration. Teachers are able to earn up to 13 CTLE credits.



## FarmAid Festival Goers Build a Balanced School Lunch

The Cornell Farm to School team proudly participated in FarmAid's HomeGrown Village in Saratoga Springs on September 21. Festival-goers were invited to take on the challenge of building a school lunch that adheres to the federal Child Nutrition meal pattern. This engaging and interactive experience highlighted the complexities and regulations surrounding school lunch programs while also revealing the limited budgets that School Food Authorities have to work with for each student.



FarmAid festival goer builds a school lunch following the Child Nutrition meal pattern.



Cornell Farm to School Coordinators at FarmAid. Pictured from L-R: Kristy Apostolides (Lower Hudson Valley), Katie Sheehan-Lopez (Upper Hudson Valley/Catskills), and Amy Bly (Long Island).



# Summer Climate Resiliency Programming

Over the summer, Ag Climate Resiliency Specialist Savanna Shelnett organized a series of climate adaptation and mitigation-related programs alongside partners, including Scenic Hudson and the National Wildlife Federation.

## Biochar 101 Field Day

The Biochar 101 Field Day, held on June 25 at Hearty Roots Farm in Germantown, NY, attracted 43 attendees, including local farmers, technical service providers, and elected officials including Assemblywoman Didi Barrett. The event introduced the basics of biochar and its soil health benefits. A key feature of the event was a live demonstration of biochar application, which kicked off a three-year trial evaluating changes in soil health. Organizing partners included Cornell Soil Health, Scenic Hudson, the Glynwood Center, NY Carbon, and the American Farmland Trust.



Biochar and compost mix applied at Hearty Roots Farm during the Biochar 101 Field Day.

## Beginning Agroforestry Field Day

The Beginning Agroforestry Field Day took place on September 19 at Mastwood Farms in Kerhonkson, NY. This event offered guidance on funding for agroforestry, species selection, and starting a silvopasture operation to 45 attendees. A highlight of the event was a tour of the farm's multi-functional riparian buffer. Presenters included Ulster County Soil and Water, NRCS, Glynwood Center, Propagate, CCE Orange County, Wellaway Farms, and Mastwood Farms. The event was organized in conjunction with Scenic Hudson.



Erik Schellenberg, Commercial Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator at CCE Orange County, discusses species selection with a small group of agroforestry field day attendees.

## Grow More Training

The National Wildlife Federation offered a Grow More training on September 24 in Ithaca. It focused on providing technical service providers from CCE and other farm-facing organizations with tools to better assist producers in adopting conservation practices like planting cover crops and reducing tillage. The training's 17 attendees were given social science-based resources to help restructure their programming to be more appealing to hesitant audiences. This was the first time the training was provided in the Northeast, and we hope to offer it again in the coming years.



Triticale cover crop. Cover crops reduce compaction and increase organic matter, scavenge and fix nitrogen without adding salts or spurious nutrients to the soil while the nitrogen, carbon and other plant compounds are 'feedstocks' for the soil life.





Photo by Oswego County Business Magazine

## The Intersection of Soil Health and Climate Resilience

An on-farm research project exploring the distribution, depth and severity of soil compaction on commercial dairy farms continued into its 6th year in 2024 and was highlighted in a presentation of findings to attendees of the 24th North American Manure Expo in Auburn, NY in July.

The project began in 2018 with an examination of the within-field variability in 7 key soil health indicators and was funded by the Northern NY Ag Development Program. Results from this initial study revealed serious soil compaction on all fields and led to an expansion of the project focusing solely on compaction. The 2023-2025 iteration of this project is funded by the NY Farm Viability Institute and has expanded to include farms and fields in Central and Western NY in addition to more Northern NY fields. Currently the Harvest NY and campus research collaboration is examining the relationship between soil compaction severity and historical crop yield and yield variability on individual fields. Additionally, a new protocol permits a dramatically better description of the depth, severity and variability of the compaction compared with the initial 2018 study. Preliminary findings indicate that consistently higher yielding areas of these farm fields tend to be less severely compacted soils than the consistently lower yielding areas. Data collection and analysis will continue into 2025 in collaboration with Cornell Extension Specialists in WNY and CNY and with Cornell's Nutrient Management Spear Program staff and their new PhD student who is now dedicated to this project.

A highlight for the project in 2024 was an invitation to speak to attendees of the 2024 North American Manure Expo in July. The Expo was organized and hosted by both Cornell ProDairy and University of Vermont. The Expo had never been held in NY before, but over 1,000 farmers, custom manure applicators and nutrient management professionals from across NY and the Northeast attended the 2-day event which included farm visits, equipment demonstrations and educational sessions. Harvest NY's Dr. Kitty O'Neil spoke in the educational sessions, tying together topics of manure and equipment management, soil health and overall climate resilience. Soil compaction is a widespread, difficult and largely 'invisible' problem on most commercial farms, stemming from decades of heavy equipment traffic and is difficult to manage and remediate. It is a major barrier to climate resilience and deserves more attention. Dr. O'Neil addressed the main causes of compaction, its impacts to water movement and climate resilience, and diagnostic, preventive and remedial methods recommended for addressing it, how it is diagnosed, the promise of central tire inflation systems and controlled traffic farming for prevention, and potential remediation strategies. The crowd was highly engaged and asked extremely thoughtful questions. A smaller but similar presentation and discussion was also held with apple producers in Northeast NY in mid-August.

This on-farm soil compaction project will continue to evolve and contribute to our overall understanding of the factors contributing to soil health, crop performance, greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience. Presentations of our findings in the context of NY agriculture are scheduled for this 2024-25 winter program season.

# Urban Agriculture Climate Field Days Come to New York City

In recent years, the impacts of climate change have become increasingly widespread in the urban agriculture community of New York City, with more intense weather events like flooding, drought and record-breaking summer temperatures. Faced with these environmental pressures, urban growers search for mitigation and adaptation strategies to alleviate the impacts of an ever-warming planet.

As a response, Harvest NY, Cornell Cooperative Extension's Ag Climate Resiliency Program, Cornell Soil Health, and Climate Smart Farming organized two Urban Ag Field Days at Brooklyn Grange and Governor's Island. Thanks to funding from NY Soil Health, over 40 participants from the urban ag community, including urban farm managers, service providers, legislators and urban ag enthusiasts, discussed the basics of climate resilience, adaptation planning, and soil health.

The following topics were covered during the two Urban Ag Climate Field Days:

- Background on climate change science and agricultural impacts in NYS
- Biochar as a tool for soil health and climate change mitigation
- Results from the NYC Urban Soil Survey and the specific characteristics of urban soils
- Climate smart farming practices, extension support and decision tools
- NYC Urban Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Fellowship (CAMF)
- Funding Opportunities such as Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and the project dashboard

Participants got an overview of the climate change affects that we can expect in the next few years, with stark reminders of the pronounced impacts for urban and rural agriculture. For many, biochar was a new topic and could serve as a potential tool to build soil health. In attendance were also legislative representatives including Senator Brisport from 25th Senate District (see photo). The Governor's Island Teaching Garden tour featured perennial varieties that were more resistant to pest and disease pressure, like pawpaw trees and ginger, and climate-related pressures like extreme heat and plant hardiness. These urban ag climate field days serve as a reminder to continue offering climate-related educational programming to serve urban growers who are most impacted by warming temperatures.



Speakers gather with State Senator Jabari Brisport at the Urban Ag Climate Field Day at Brooklyn Grange.



A full house listens to a presentation at the Urban Ag Climate Field Day at Brooklyn Grange.





Community Garden Tour group at Robert Clinkscales Garden

## Karen Guzman Joins Harvest NY as New Urban Gardens Specialist

A native New Yorker, Karen attended CUNY Hunter College, studying in Environmental Science, and received her Horticulture certificate from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. For the 6 years prior to joining the CCE Harvest NY team, Karen worked all over NYC on urban farms, most recently as the Farm Manager at the Queens Botanical Garden. She also worked with a few other notable organizations such as Brooklyn Grange, the Queens County Farm Museum, and GrowNYC.

In her new role as an Urban Garden Specialist, Karen will be supporting gardens in the Bronx, Staten Island, and Queens, providing technical assistance and educational resources aimed at increasing community building, nutrition awareness, and sustainable growing methods.

Welcome Karen!



## Resilient Gardens Symposium in NYC

The first New York State Resilience Garden Symposium was held on August 10, 2024 in New York City in partnership with Barnard College Office of Sustainability. In response to the needs identified in the 2023 Seed to Supper participatory research project, this conference brought together Master Gardener Volunteers, Community Garden leaders and Seed to Supper participants from 16 counties across the state to connect with one another, share resources and learn from experts on gardening topics geared toward increasing community resilience and food sovereignty via community gardens. This event was also the first official application launch of the new [Community Garden Leadership program](#) which is a state-wide certificate program sponsored by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and an additional resource for community gardeners to leverage within their communities.

Organized by Ashley Helmholdt-Miller, Cornell Garden-Based Learning, Ainsley Rothschild, Seed to Supper program and Makela Elvy, Community Garden Leadership, Harvest NY, the symposium featured a keynote speech from Community Leader, DK Kinard, and a combination of educational workshops, table presenters, a bus tour and a walking tour of local community gardens. The all-day symposium had over 60 participants who reported an increase of understanding in 7 of the 12 featured topics in the post event survey. Feedback from survey respondents also included:

“I learned to expand my usage of a community.”

“Everything content wise was high caliber.”

“I learned to think about the space as different for everyone and how I interact with it.”

# USDA's Inaugural National Urban Agriculture Conference

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted a conference in Detroit, Michigan from August 4 – 6 celebrating and discussing urban agriculture. This was the first such conference hosted by the USDA, intended to increase awareness of USDA program support for urban growers, to facilitate networking between urban growers and federal employees, and to build USDA employee knowledge around critical urban agriculture topics.

The conference was organized by the National Urban Agriculture Initiative (NUag), a collaboration between Virginia State University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, and To Improve Mississippi Economics (TIME, Inc). 591 policymakers, non-profit organizers, academics and urban farmers attended the conference in person, with 104 people joining online.

Kyle Karnuta, Urban Agriculture Curriculum Development Specialist of Harvest NY, facilitated a workshop for a group of between 30 and 40 USDA employees on the first day of the conference. The workshop introduced the fundamentals of stakeholder engagement. Participants then considered their own stakeholder networks and brainstormed who their stakeholders may be. The workshop emphasized reciprocity in relationship-building, cautioning against tactics that could be extractive and detrimental to relationship building. Feedback from the session was positive and will be used to develop a formal "Stakeholder Engagement" module in the urban agriculture curriculum that Karnuta is developing for the USDA as part of NUag. Harvest NY educator Mallory Hohl presented a case study from Buffalo, NY as part of this workshop.

CCE educators Judson Reid and Kwesi Joseph presented urban agriculture case studies from New York City in a separate, well-attended session in collaboration with NYC urban farmer Yemi Amu. Executive Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Urban Agriculture, Qiana Mickie, and New York farmer and advocate Karen Washington also presented on conference panels. Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Senator Debbie Stabenow, presented a keynote address at the conference.



## Rock Dust Benefits Shared at the National Urban Agriculture Conference

On August 6 at the National Urban Agriculture Conference, CCE Harvest NY Urban Garden Specialist Kwesi Joseph gave a presentation that focused on the benefits of using rock dust, particularly basalt, to improve soil health and promote sustainable urban agriculture practices.

During his session attended by 88 participants, Joseph highlighted the critical role that rock dust plays in providing essential micronutrients to plants and enhancing soil health. By explaining how soil microbes convert the trace elements in basalt into biologically available forms, he demonstrated the potential for rock dust to support nutrient-rich produce and increase plant resilience. He also discussed the role of rock dust in carbon sequestration, emphasizing its capacity to lock up atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and contribute to climate change mitigation.

Participants showed strong interest in Joseph's research, with many expressing enthusiasm for exploring the application of rock dust in their own urban farming operations. This engagement underscores the growing relevance of natural soil amendments and sustainable solutions in the context of urban agriculture.





## 716 CSA: A Success in Its First Season!

Buffalo's collaborative community supported agriculture box had a successful first season as the 716 CSA. Provided by a 2-year grant awarded to Fair Share WNY, in collaboration with Groundwork Market Garden, this CSA share box was distributed across Buffalo in some of the most underserved areas. Over 10 weeks, with 50 produce shares each week, 500 seniors and families were provided local, fresh produce this summer. City of Buffalo communities from South Park to the East Side received 8 to 10 freshly harvested items each week, ranging from herbs to tomatoes, greens to mushrooms, and more. The boxes were stocked by 6 different Buffalo urban farms, each contributing produce each week.

An important component of this collaborative CSA was education around new and culturally relevant produce items and how to cook with them. Mallory Hohl, Urban Garden Specialist of CCE Harvest NY, in partnership with CCE Erie SNAP-Ed nutrition educators, created the logo, info, and recipe cards to go along with each share. Each week, an easy, low-cost recipe showcased a few items from the share, in addition to tips on how to store the produce. Some example recipes included zucchini pizza boats, cucumber and tomato salad, and a bell pepper smoothie.



## Overcoming Food Safety Barriers in NY Plain Communities

In December 2010, Congress passed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) which became the most comprehensive food safety legislation since 1937. The creation of FSMA was due to the increase of foodborne illnesses at that time which had led to illness, hospitalization, and death. The intent of the legislation is to prevent foodborne illnesses through education, recordkeeping, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and inspections.

New York State is home to the fastest growing Plain population in the country. Around the state, Plain populations consist of many different settlements of Amish and Mennonites that differ in their acceptance of technology, customs, and agricultural practices. Due to the implementation of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, many of these growers need to adopt food safety practices and create standard operating procedures. Cornell Cooperative Extension has been providing educational outreach tailored to the culture of these communities but, due to FSMA, additional outreach was needed.

In 2022, Lindsey Pashow of CCE Harvest NY, Elisabeth Hodgdon of the CCE Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program, and Robert Hadad of the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program were awarded \$205,000 from USDA NIFA Food Safety Outreach Program (FSOP) to support "Overcoming Food Safety Barriers within NY Plain Communities". The project focused on working with the various communities across the state to establish and implement food safety practices. These programs help farmers prepare SOPs that can be used daily to meet FSMA requirements. From September 2022 to September 2024, the educational outreach was very well-received with over 600 participants having attended an on-farm twilight meeting, and/or off-season grower meetings.

In March 2024, a professional development workshop was held via Zoom for food safety educators throughout the United States that work with the Plain Community. Over 100 food safety educators from 24 states participated in the training. The training highlighted educational information reaching the Plain Community in New York and Pennsylvania from educators and FSMA inspection.

Although this grant is ending, the work will continue as Hodgdon, Pashow and Hadad received another USDA NIFA FSOP of \$150,000 "Building Foundations of Food Safety for Beginning Produce Growers". This grant will continue to focus on outreach for the Plain Communities and urban growers.





## 2024 High-Cannabinoid *Cannabis sativa* Hemp Field Day a Great Success!

This year's high-cannabinoid *Cannabis sativa* field day, organized by Dr. Daniela Vergara of Harvest NY, was a tremendous success, and saw a 55% increase in attendance. The event began with presentations from Cornell researchers who shared their findings on Good Manufacturing Practices, controlled environment agriculture, tissue culture, economics, and post-harvest practices.

We also hosted a CBD panel featuring industry leaders: Ashley Baron, ([Snowbelt Cannabis](#)) Sylvia Bengochea ([Sylvia's Salud](#)), Glenna Colaprete ([Glenna's CBD](#)), Melissa Gibson ([Hemp and Humanity](#)), and Patrick Weinert ([Jane's Garden](#)).

The event was supported by sponsors [LPC Naturals - Prime Superior](#), [Tap Root Fields](#), [New York Farm Bureau](#), [Cirona Labs](#), [Rimol Greenhouses](#), [Crystal Creek Organics](#), [IPM Labs](#), [Bristol Extracts](#), [Cannabis Farmers Alliance](#)

This diverse event brought together farmers, educators, entrepreneurs, and representatives from the NYS cannabis community. It concluded with a fireside chat by the NYS Office of Cannabis Management (OCM), introduced by Harvest NY's Judson Reid, where Brian Farmer welcomed the new OCM Director, Felicia Reid.

Finally, at this event, we introduced a new [guidebook](#) and the [translated production manual into Spanish](#).





## ***Cannabis sativa* Production Manual Released in Spanish**



We're pleased to announce that the [\*NYS Cannabis sativa L. Production Manual\*](#) is now available in Spanish! The manual provides data and findings about sustainable hemp cultivation to growers and members of the Cannabis industry to achieve a high-quality, profitable, and compliant yield.

Made available free online in July 2024, the Spanish hemp production manual has 270+ previews and has been downloaded by 108 readers!



## **Honeyberry Conference Highlights a New Emerging Fruit for New York State**

The first New York State Honeyberry Conference was held on June 29, 2024 in Mexico, NY. The event showcased the latest advances in breeding, harvesting, and processing of honeyberries (also known as haskaps), a small, dark blue fruit crop. What makes the fruit unique is that it ripens from the middle of June through early July. This allows the fruit to sit comfortably between the strawberry and blueberry season. When fully mature plants can produce 6 to 10 lbs. of berries, which can be eaten as a fresh fruit or made into value-added products.

Organized by Joshua Vrooman, Agriculture Community Educator, CCE Oswego County, and Anya Stansell, Small Fruit Specialist, Harvest NY, the all-day conference featured Dr. Bob Bors, honeyberry breeder from the University of Saskatchewan, as well as commercial fruit growers from Minnesota, Virginia, and New York. Attendees were able to taste four varieties of fresh fruit, shelf-stable juices and syrups, jam, and gelato.

This event drew a crowd of 60 people, a combination of not-for profit growers (38% of respondents) and for-profit producers (42%, a combination of fruit growers, nursery operators, and value-added producers).





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Growing New York's Farm and Food Industries

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