

Living Energy Farm May 2011 Newsletter

Growing Season in Full Swing

It's only early June, but it feels like high summer at Living Energy Farm, with temperatures in the high 90's already becoming normal. Lucky we're concentrating on growing crops that love the heat-watermelons, squashes, muskmelons, corn, tomatoes, and beans, among others.

Living Energy Farm's crew of volunteers spent most of the month of May planting out our seeds and vegetable gardens. Besides having to replant the corn, almost everything came up and is growing very well. We are keeping weeds under control in our gardens by using wheel hoes, scuffle hoes and other hand tools; and sporadic thunderstorms have kept the gardens watered while we work on setting up an irrigation system. Weeding and watering will keep us moderately busy for the next few months, and in early August we will begin the more intense work of harvesting and processing seeds.



Harnessing living energy: our volunteer crew keeps the garden tidy and productive using hand tools.

Growing crops for seed means having to plan for isolation distance- that is, keeping different varieties of the same species far enough apart from one another that they will not cross-pollinate. For that purpose we are cultivating two seed plots at Living Energy Farm, about a half mile apart, each just over a half acre in size. We are blessed that our 127 acres of land can provide us enough space for two or even three grow-outs of crops that need a large isolation distance, such as corn and cucurbits (vegetables in the cucumber family), and many more grow-outs of crops that don't need such a large

isolation, such as tomatoes and beans.

Interns!

We're very lucky to have three interns spending the growing season with us at Living Energy Farm. Ben, from Columbus OH, has been with us a few months. He is an avid biker and student of primitive skills, and is especially enthusiastic to be helping us out with orcharding and natural building. Ben has been a huge help in making our outdoor kitchen and camping area more comfortable.

More recently we have been joined by Sarah and Kevin, a couple from the Hudson Valley area of New York. Sarah and Kevin are experienced farmers and builders; they spent several years operating a CSA (community supported agriculture) near New Paltz, NY which fed dozens of families using only hand tools and no-till methods. We are very glad to have them lending their experience and enthusiasm to LEF.

Our First Model Residence: From Vision to Reality

Living Energy Farm's first residence, which will model many of the technologies and methods we will employ for living without fossil fuels, has been slowly forming in the minds of many of us who have been involved with the project for years. That vision is one step closer to a reality this month, as our slow, piecemeal improvements to the road have finally culminated in a decent dry-weather access to the back part of our land, where we plan to build the first residence.

We have been generously offered thousands of dollars worth of donated building materials. Now that we have access to the site, we will be building sheds and other structures to store these materials in anticipation of beginning construction in the next few months. We are also pouring energy into fundraising, in order to secure the funds we will need to purchase the materials that we will not be able to obtain through donation.

Living Energy Farm still needs your support to breathe our vision of a post-fossil fuel future into a reality! Donations of tools, materials, labor, and funds are all graciously accepted and tax-deductible. For more information see our website www.livingenergyfarm.org, or contact us at livingenergyfarm@gmail.com or 434 409 6006.