

FARMING NEWS



Spring 2023

Lincoln Agricultural Commission
Lincoln, MA 01773

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Lincoln Farms

Lincoln has, throughout the centuries, maintained its identity as an agricultural community. We currently have over 250 acres producing food for commercial use, community supported agriculture (CSA), food pantries, farmers' markets, and personal consumption.

Four of our farms raise livestock for fiber, food, and breeding stock; three keep horses for riding, training, and a special needs program. We have four nurseries raising flowers, garden plants, bushes, and trees; two orchards produce fruits and honey, and one non-profit orchard is working to restore the American chestnut tree. Six of our farms sell produce. Much of this still happens on our twenty commercial farming operations, but also important are our small homestead farms.



Homestead Farming

We honor the Massachusetts and Pawtucket Indigenous Peoples whose land we now call Lincoln. We acknowledge that much of this land on which we live and farm was forcibly taken from the countless leaders, communities, and elders who were here long before any settlers arrived.

Co-chairs: Ari Kurtz; Louise Bergeron
Members: Karen Seo; Nancy Bergen; Sherry Haydock; Linda Emanuel
Contact us: louise.bergeron@earthlink.net
For information about farming in Lincoln, visit the [Agricultural Commission | Lincoln, MA - Official Website](#)
The Agricultural Commission will be publishing three newsletters per year. Only electronic copies will be available for the summer and fall issues. If you are interested in receiving an electronic copy of Lincoln Farming News in the future, please send us your email address at: agcom@lincolntown.org

Family farms in Lincoln grow substantial amounts of food and are experimenting with varied sustainable and regenerative methods on small acreage. The diversity of production at these non-commercial operations is astonishing- eggs, honey, maple syrup, mushrooms, and a large variety of fruits, nuts, and vegetables, quite a few of which are unavailable in the general market. Backyard farmers keep animals such as chickens, ducks, guinea fowl, geese, sheep, goats, and horses, with some depending on working farm dogs. In addition, Codman Community Farms provides 2.5 acres of land to 102 gardeners. We feature here some activities of Lincolmites farming on their properties - their production, challenges, and problem-solving skills. The pandemic created an expansion of agricultural projects, with many new gardeners finding enjoyment and sustenance in food production.

Frank Clark (125 South Great Road) maintains a large organic garden that is continuously expanding. The Clarks typically plant vegetables in the upper garden near the house and corn mixed with squashes and pumpkins in the lower plot. As with all farmers, topsoil is their most



important asset; building and protecting it is required for success. The use of organic biodegradable paper and heavy layers of bark mulch protects the soil and prevents weeds from overrunning the garden. Developing agricultural techniques that preserve nature is an important goal in Lincoln and for the Clarks. The

Clarks are creating wildlife habitats surrounding their crops with native wildflowers, bushes, and trees that serve as shelter and food for bees, snakes, birds, and small mammals. One of the main challenges is rodents; fortunately, two redtail hawks have made their home in the Clark's backyard and are doing a marvelous job keeping the rodent population in check.



One of Lincoln's most diverse and innovative fruit orchards comes from the work of Nina Carmel and her daughter, Ruby (43 Old Sudbury Rd). They grow over 50 types of fruit trees, bushes, and vines. These include apples, pears, peaches, Asian pears, nectarines, pomegranates, persimmon, paw paws, grapes, kiwis, and berries of all kinds. Among the most unusual are goumi berries and quinces, and they have successfully grown almonds and hazelnuts. In addition, a rose garden of 75 varieties provides beauty and edible petals used in cooking, infusions, and flavored vinegar. Since fruit trees require pollinators, the orchard is bordered by viburnums and lilac, and the Carmel property includes a wildflower meadow. As with most fruit growers, various critters pose a threat to production. Most frustrating are the nocturnal beasts, probably raccoons or



fishers, who can empty an entire tree of about-to-be-picked fruit overnight. Trellises breaking under the weight of bounteous harvests of kiwis and grapes have posed a challenge. Some fruits, such as kiwis, require male and female plants to pollinate each other to generate fruits; however, only the female produces the fruits. So, farmers with limited space tend to keep only one male plant. Recently, that cost the Carmels their kiwi crop when the male failed to produce pollen. Another male was quickly planted but will take a few years to mature. Growing fruits organically is complex and requires controlling insects and diseases by spraying horticultural oils, choosing resistant cultivars, and accepting some imperfections.



Some homestead farming also exists; Linda Emanuel (18 Old Cambridge Turnpike) started her 1-acre domestic farm project in the fall of 2020. Her vision is a carbon-neutral, sustainable, regenerative, organic 'just-enough-of-plenty' project. Linda has diversified her



agricultural activities to include egg-laying hens and a rooster, milk goats, a fruit orchard, and a vegetable garden; she keeps bees and makes flour from acorns. Linda is learning about farming and experimenting as she goes. Of course, her operation would fail without the help of her farm dog; by sheer size he keeps the coyotes, who used to loiter around the chickens, at bay.

Another, more longstanding example of homesteading on one acre is Craig Furman and Louise Bergeron's property (244 Lincoln Rd). They grow a variety of produce not found in local



markets. Among their favorite crops are pawpaws, which form a beautiful grove, small candy-like kiwis, and a variety of grapes eaten fresh or made into raisins. In the fall, persimmons hang from a tree like Christmas ornaments. Late-season corn and many kinds of shelling beans are staples. Hazelnuts are also a favorite crop, and Louise produces mushrooms in quantities by inoculating logs. Using goats to mow the grass



and quickly transform vegetable matter into manure has helped build the soil on their property.



Lincoln passed an amendment to its zoning bylaws that allows commercial, livestock and greenhouse production on less than 5 acres plots of land, and some are moving in that direction. Some of Lincoln's backyard farmers keep livestock and are developing small commercial operations. The Silvestros are transforming their property into a farm with their flock of about 70 hens.



Bernadette Quirk and Mark Elliot of Lucky Lane Farm (259 Lincoln Road) have 13 Ouessant sheep, a small breed being brought to the U.S. from Europe by Karen Seo. Bernadette intends to enter the wool market this year. In addition, they have an old apple orchard that they are replanting with a pollinator meadow along the trees. Their property, visible from the road, contributes

to the beauty of Lincoln, as do many of our other small farms.

A serious Lincoln plague reported by backyard farmers is the infamous woodchuck or groundhog. These critters are not deterred by buried or tall fences and have a limitless appetite. Electrified netting can work but can be circumvented by burrowing. A well-fenced garden can provide a perfect oasis for a groundhog family. Guard dogs, hawks, and foxes are helpful, but one of our gardeners, Brooke Hargreave (24 Sandy Pond Rd.), decided to give up and move the garden into containers on her third-floor deck. As an added advantage, this south-facing deck generates a microclimate that extends the season. This results in the plentiful harvest of tomatoes and peppers and colder crops planted in early spring or late fall, such as peas, kale, and greens. Our agricultural diversity of crops, farming knowledge, and enterprises, large and small, make Lincoln a unique town.



Photo by Rich Rosenbaum

Community Supported Agriculture & Local Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between members of the community and a farm. Members pay upfront for a share of the farm's products before the growing season, and in return for their "investment," they receive vegetables/fruit/flowers usually weekly. CSA is a model that helps the farmer with early funds needed to pay for supplies and crew before the vegetables are harvested and gives the members the freshest farm products. Lincoln is fortunate to have several CSA farms.



This season (2023), Drumlin Farm offers several CSA options – spring, summer, fall, and all-3-seasons. Produce is picked up weekly on Wednesdays from 12 to 6 p.m. There are optional pick-your-own and fruit share add-ons for additional costs for pick up at the farm. There are also shares for SNAP customers and workshares. Drumlin has expanded its agricultural activities, growing a large amount of diverse crops sustainably. For more information, see <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/drumlin-farm/csa-farming/drumlin-farm-csa>.



Photo by Rich Rosenbaum

Mohammed Hannan at Hannan Healthy Foods is offering spring and summer shares of different sizes from June 24 to October 28 for pick up at their farm stand on Route 117. Mohammed started farming in Lincoln in 2022 by licensing land from the Conservation Department. In addition to the usual staples that we grow in New England, Mohammed is also growing varieties of vegetables that are more common on the Asian market. For more information, see <https://hannanhealthyfoods.com>.

The Food Project (Rt.126 and Baker Bridge Rd.) is not offering CSA shares in the summer of 2023. They will continue to have spring seedling shares and plan a fall harvest CSA program. For more information, see <https://thefoodproject.org/>.



After 29 years, Lindentree Farm discontinued its CSA program in 2021. They still offer periodic "POP UP" shares throughout the spring, summer, and fall. If interested in being on the mailing list, please email lindentreecsa@gmail.com. Lindentree Farms was one of the first farms in eastern Massachusetts to offer CSA shares. Ari Kurtz and Moira Donnell have been pioneers in organic agriculture, CSA programs, and the exploration of new agricultural techniques.

Or enjoy fresh local produce this way: Visit Lincoln's Art and Farmer's Market, on the grounds of Lincoln Mall Saturdays from 10am-1 pm. <https://www.facebook.com/LincolnAFM/>



Baby Animals Around Town

Baby animals roaming in Lincoln's fields are always fun to watch and a delight for children and important contributors to our diversity of farming endeavors. Codman Community Farms has 11 calves expected this spring. Eight Heritage Mix pigs delivered piglets in March. In addition, the farm has baby chicks raised in the brooder barn until they are old enough to live outside.



Karen Seo's and lambs run around in fields on Farrar Road and Ellen Raja's lambs run around in fields on Old Sudbury Road.



Sugaring In Lincoln

Buckets appearing on trees around town are a hopeful sign of spring. In addition to syrup production activities at Codman Farm, Drumlin Farm, and the Flint Farm, many Lincolnites tap their backyard trees. So, look out for buckets in unexpected places!



At the Flint Farm on Lexington Road, Ephraim Flint and Nancy Bergen have been sugaring for over 25 years. Flint farm does not have many sugar maple trees, so Nancy depends on folks all over town to allow her to tap trees, collect the sap when it is running, and bring it to her sugar shack, where it is boiled down into syrup. The production of maple syrup is time-consuming since it takes about 40 gallons of sap to make approximately 1 gallon of syrup. In the beginning, the Flints boiled sap on a wood stove in their house, but as anyone who has tried this in their kitchen will have experienced, this often results in a volcano effect in which scalding syrup erupts all over the stove and floor, and sometimes, on those minding the kettle! These travails led them to improve the efficiency of the process with a modest outdoor



evaporator which was more efficient but left them exposed to the elements. Eventually, they decided to invest in a small sugar house that is on wheels and can be conveniently moved around. When the sap in the sugar shack's evaporator approaches the syrup temperature, they bring the syrup into the house to be filtered and canned under sterile conditions.

A portion of the harvest is given to the people whose trees they tapped, some is saved for family



and friends, and the rest is sold, with all the proceeds distributed to charities. Proceeds from the 2021 harvest were donated to Ukraine.

While the sugar maple is the preferred species for sugaring, red maples can also be used, but the sap has a lower sugar content, and 50 gallons are required to produce one gallon of maple syrup. Norway maples, considered an invasive species, produce sap with an even lower sugar content, making it an unattractive option. Even some birches can be used, but the taste is more like molasses, and 100 gallons



is required for one gallon of syrup.

Nancy also runs a program with 5th graders from the Lincoln Public Schools. The students tap trees on the school grounds and harvest the sap daily for Nancy, who picks it up and processes it back at her farm. To enrich this learning experience, the teachers created a curriculum involving science, math, and the history of sugaring.

Ephraim and Nancy join the classroom for a presentation about the syrup-making process. The program concludes with the tasting of a sample of the syrup the students have collected.

For information on maple syrup harvesting contact: Nancy Bergen nbergen@verizon.net



Water Resources Conservation

Last year's drought has been a serious challenge for all of us, with income losses for some of Lincoln's farms. Conserving water is essential whether the source is from surface water or the aquifer through a well. Information on water conservation in agriculture is available. [Agricultural Commission | Lincoln, MA - Official Website](#)



Photo by Corey Nimmer

Please Help Our Farms Feed Us By Protecting Our Pollinators

Insects provide a lot of services! Farmers depend on them to pollinate crops and many insects are predators that suppress pests, which are often invasive species. Lincoln farms strive to grow food in the most environmentally sound way possible; however, our efforts will be magnified with everyone's help in their own backyards. We recognize that spending time outdoors while serving as food for mosquitoes is unpleasant. However, there are alternatives for keeping mosquitoes at bay besides spraying chemicals that poison all invertebrates and many amphibians. Fortunately, mosquitoes do not venture far from home and cannot reproduce without standing water. Eliminating sources of standing water and an outdoor fan can do wonders. Beware of "eco-friendly" or "all organic" extermination or lawn care companies; beneficial insects cannot be spared. Here is a guide to deterring mosquitos and preventing bites:

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/65477/Mosquito-Prevention-Flyer>

While most pollinators fly and work in daylight, scientific studies have demonstrated that, similarly to humans and other animals, they depend on a dark night for survival. Please limit outdoor lights and respect Lincoln's ordinance for lighting at night.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/10290/Final-Lighting-Language-approved-by-TC-3242015?bidId=>

Here are some more resources on light pollution and its effects on pollinators, fireflies, and wildlife, including presentations sponsored by Lincoln Land Conservation Trust and Lincoln Common Ground.

- Handout on fireflies: https://www.xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/19-055_Firefly_Friendly_Lighting_FS_web.pdf
- Avalon Owens on Fireflies and Light Pollution: <https://youtu.be/PsGRN-XZWT0>
- James Lowenthal on Pollinators and Light Pollution: <https://youtu.be/HerjZKcuaQA>
- NY Times article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/11/science/firefly-light-mating.html>

In Memory Of Lynne Bower

Our friend and fellow member of the Lincoln Agricultural Commission, Lynne Bower MacDowell, passed away on March 19 after a short illness. Lynne was one of the original members and past Chair of the Agricultural Commission and was a passionate and dedicated advocate for agriculture in Lincoln. Lynne, and her husband, Bruce MacDowell, created and have run the beautiful Stonegate Garden Center on South Great Road in Lincoln. Lynne was an important voice for the protection of agriculture in Town, working to pass a Right to Farm bylaw and important zoning by-law changes that supported commercial agriculture, involving greenhouses and livestock, on parcels smaller than five-acres. Lynne was respected and listened to for her practical and positive approach to work and to life. We miss you, Lynne.

