



# Cornucopia

*Network of New Jersey, Inc.*

**May 2012**

## May tour – gardens, chickens, and bees!

by *Pat Kenschaft*

Among the seven gardens open on the Saturday, May 19, CNNJ organic vegetable garden tour, you'll find two raising chickens, another raising bees, and one raising both. Five gardens will be open from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., but mine will close at 4:00. There will be environmental displays in my front yard that will be available well beyond 4:00. The first two gardens below (both including chickens) are in easy walking distance from my home.

**Sachi Tripp** and her family at 8 Waterbury Road, Montclair, are now in their third year of gardening. "We have seven raised garden beds in which we grow all of the vegetables we eat over the summer and much of what we will eat into fall and winter. We have nine blueberry bushes (but the birds still get most of our berries), some raspberry plants, and two apple trees. Our garden also houses some hens (four grown and five chicks). The latest additions to our backyard are two honey bee hives. Come visit!"

**Andrea DelleChiaie**, at 20 Chester Road, Montclair, has been gardening a few years and has 4 hens. Her front yard has 2 raised beds, 5 blueberry bushes, and

strawberries. In the back she has another raised bed, blackberries, and a long row of sugar snap peas, and "a very cool grow camp (a mini greenhouse — more like a large raised bed with a top)." In the spirit of "no space left ungardened," she's also "planted potatoes and other things (including an apple tree) in buckets and spices on the deck railings." This year she started a CSA with 8 other families, hoping they can together grow



enough veggies to share throughout the summer.

**José German and David Wasmuth** at 69 Grove Street, Montclair, have a small property, certified as a Wildlife Habitat, that is a bio-intensive urban farm yard. There are more than 175 different native plants from the Northeast. "The vegetable garden is very productive year around, even during the winter. We produce some fruits, like blueberries, grapes and strawberries, and an extensive list of vegetables, including lettuce, tomatoes, collard greens, garlic, potatoes and carrots among others. We have had solar power since 2002, and we are sustainably generating our own electricity. We also have a hydroponic system to grow vegetables, and a bee



*Sachi Tripp with her peas at last May's Open Garden. photo by Lisa Rosen*

*continued on page 8*

# Gardeners know what is going on

by José German, Certified Master Gardener

I have been gardening in New Jersey for almost 20 years but was born in the Caribbean. In Puerto Rico we have two seasons, spring and summer, and can easily grow vegetables and flowers year round. Here in the Northeast it was a different story — but maybe it's not so different anymore.

When I moved to Montclair in 2000, we found a mature butterfly bush in the backyard. For years, that bush did not propagate. Butterfly bush is considered an invasive species in the South but is not supposed to be invasive in the Northeast. Three years ago, the bush started multiplying throughout our yard! We decided to remove it.



*José German's garden is lovely in Spring... but not "normal."  
photos by José*

In 2004, I planted snapdragons, an annual flower. Since that time, one plant in particular has been returning every year and is now a perennial. Our quince bush, which used to bloom in early April, now consistently produces flowers in December or January, as does our Cherry Laurel. Sound familiar to you?

Due to my work, I see that this phenomenon is not isolated; it is happening all around. Last fall I noticed that daffodils in several Montclair homes were ready to bloom in November! At the same time a lot of trees were blooming, even in New York City.

We usually end the gardening season by the end of November or first week of December. Last year we were able to work until December 21st because of the unusually high temperatures. The winter

was so warm that we had almost no snow. I left my vegetable garden without protection for the whole season. Even our cold frame remained open all winter long. Last winter was the most productive winter ever for our vegetable garden.

As gardeners, we know that something is going wrong. We spend long hours in our gardens and have the knowledge that only years of gardening can provide. This year, my landscaping company began the gardening season on February 20. Garden preparation in February in northern New Jersey? Yes, it is true. By the second week of March we had finished spring clean-ups for our regular customers. For the past 12 years, I have religiously counted all the plants blooming in our garden. This year everything is different. Some daffodils were blooming early; others were late. The same happened with the tulips. Some native plants are at least three weeks ahead of their "normal" blossoming time.

What is going on with the climate? As gardeners we know that we are experiencing the effects of global warming. We have to speak out about this and take action before it is too late. 🐦



## two great climate change /weather links



<http://climatesignals.org>

[www.climatedots.org/thingshapper](http://www.climatedots.org/thingshapper)

"THINGS HAPPEN" – WATCH THE VIDEO



# Food from Small Places: How to Grow Food without a Garden Plot

by Zoë Carpenter, *FRESH* blogger

Do you yearn for a bit of your own greenery, but live in an urban area? We've got good news: limited space doesn't have to keep you from watching your garden grow. Planting vegetables and herbs in moveable containers provides a solution around limited land, time, or poor soil. It's a simple way to feed your appetite for fresh produce and add life to a patio, porch, or even a fire escape.

Best of all, growing food in pots is quite easy. All you need are containers with drainage holes, a good soil mix, fertilizer, light, water, and the right plant varieties. Here are a few tips to get your garden growing.

## Vegetable Varieties

What you can grow depends on the size of your containers, the amount of sunlight that reaches the plants, and the season you plant in. Leafy vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, spinach, and radishes are the best bet if you're working with shallow containers and shadier areas. Give them at least a six-inch wide pot with eight inches of soil depth. Vegetables grown for their fruits, like peppers, tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers, broccoli, and eggplants need more light — six to eight hours of direct sunlight a day — and, in general, more room to grow. Spacing requirements can usually be found on the seed packet or plant tag. If you're planting seeds, remember to plant more than you'll need in each container in case some don't sprout. You can thin crowded young plants later.

Plants with a rapid maturation period are ideal if you're starting late in the summer, or in order to get several crops from a container. Herbs, small salad greens like oak leaf lettuce and mustard cress, silver beets, radishes, and cherry tomatoes are all quick-growing options. Using vegetable starts instead of seeds shortens the planting to harvest timeline.

## Choosing a Vessel

A vegetable container has two basic requirements: holes to allow for adequate drainage and a size large enough to support the mature crop, meaning at least eight inches deep. Clay pots, cement blocks, milk cartons, dish pans, and tin cans all work well for small plants. Larger ceramic pots, half barrels, garbage cans, bushel baskets, and redwood or cedar boxes will house vegetables that require more room. Use potting as an opportunity to be creative and recycle!

## Soil, Fertilizer, and Water

Use a lightweight, porous potting soil so that air and nutrients can circulate to the root system.

Nurseries and garden centers offer mixes that usually contain peat moss, organic material, sand, and pumice or perlite. Mixing compost or aged manure into commercial soil will give your plants a boost.

Potted vegetables generally require more water than those grown in the ground. Most vegetables and herbs prefer that the soil remain slightly moist. When the soil feels dry to the touch about one or two inches below the surface, it's usually time to water. You can use an organic liquid or soluble fertilizer every two to four weeks to replenish micronutrients in the soil.



Strawberries thrive in a container in José German / Dave Wasmuth's garden.  
photo by José

## The Harvest

In just a few weeks, you'll be able to gather bowlfuls of salad or vegetables to grill just by stepping out onto your balcony or deck. You won't have to worry about unused produce rotting in the refrigerator or whether you remembered to buy the fresh herb a recipe called for. You'll be eating locally and organically. And, you'll take pleasure in finding space for a bit of dirt in your life. 🍷

**Ed Note:** reprinted with permission from the *FRESH the Movie* website.



*FRESH* blogger Zoe Carpenter, a freelance writer, lives in Brooklyn.

# Synchronicity – conscious food choices

by Lesley Cecchi

If you're anything like me, cooking, eating and shopping for food is a paramount pleasure in your life. After all, they say there are two types of people, those who eat to live and those that live to eat... needless to say, I find the first category to be completely baffling.

But, these days, it's hard not to feel as though the health of the planet teeters in the balance with every fork of spinach you lift to your lips. Is that apple, crisp and juicy, of an heirloom variety? Is it organic? Or local? Or local and not organic?

Are the scintillating aromas wafting from your morning cup of Joe sourced in a fair trade manner, perhaps even from a women's co-operative somewhere, or not? (which makes us all the more susceptible to marketers and advertising... what is a "super food" anyway?)

My advice to all with a conscience who want to make conscious eating choices and still keep their sanity is that simple aphorisms apply again. So, if you live to eat it's important to remember, as in life, to take the good with the bad. In other words, look for synchronicity. If nothing else, it's an interesting game. What do I mean? Recently I found two things in the news.

Bad news first. A recent study by the FOA caught my attention: Unfortunately, according to this study "livestock production is one of the major causes of the



"Concentrated Animal Feed Operation" photo USEPA

world's most pressing environmental problems, including global warming, land degradation, air and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity." You can read the summary at: [www.fao.org/ag/magazine/0612sp1.htm](http://www.fao.org/ag/magazine/0612sp1.htm). The FOA is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The study, "Livestock's Long Shadow," is quite exhaustive and can be found here: [www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM](http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM)

On the good news front, in his *New York Times* article of April 12th, "U.S. Tightens Rules on Antibiotics Use for Livestock," Gardiner Harris reports about new prescription requirements which will cut the use of antibiotics in livestock production. From now on farmers are required to have a prescription to use antibiotics in animal feed and water. This is in the hope that the more judicious use of antibiotics will reduce "the tens of thousands of human deaths that result each year from the drugs' overuse." It's not a well known fact, but two million people are sickened every year by resistant strains of bacteria. This is an important regulation.

If you chose to eat meat, eat it just sometimes. Be mindful of these issues but remember progress comes in small increments. ☺

## The FOOD ISSUES Pages

### A Month Without Monsanto

by April Dávila

In January of this year, while procrastinating on Facebook, I followed a link to an article reporting on evidence that there may be health effects associated with consuming Monsanto's genetically modified (GM) corn. Clicking on that link was one of those moments on which I look back and laugh. I had no idea how my life was about to change.

#### Monsanto's Reach

The article I stumbled onto concerned a study done in 2009 by a group of French scientists investigating the safety of genetically modified food. Their results,

*April Dávila wondered what it would take to cut the GMO giant out of her family's life. She found that it was far more entrenched than she'd ever realized.*

as published in the International Journal of Biological Sciences, pointed toward kidney and liver damage in rats fed GM corn. I began to research where exactly Monsanto corn appeared in my family's diet. With a little online sleuthing, I learned that in addition to producing the genetically modified corn, Monsanto produces several other genetically modified crops such as soy, sugar beets, and cotton. Many of these crops form the foundation of our diets: 70 to 80 percent of American processed foods contain genetically engineered ingredients, according to the Grocery Manufacturers of America. A large percentage of the cotton in our clothes and homes begins in Monsanto's labs.

*continued on page 5*

## Monsanto... *cont. from page 4*

Probing a little deeper, I was surprised to learn that a company specializing in genetically modified plant crops also had an enormous influence on America's meat industry. Sixty percent of genetically modified corn goes to feed America's beef cattle. Additionally, Monsanto's recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) is used to increase milk production in many dairy cows.

### Tracing Foods Back to their Source

I decided to see if I could go the entire month of March without consuming any Monsanto products. I committed to an all organic, vegan diet, and reluctantly invested in a small organic cotton wardrobe. It was an experiment born of curiosity: I wanted to know just how deeply my life was influenced by Monsanto, a company I knew little about before that click of my mouse in January.

By day two of my attempt to remove Monsanto from my life, I realized I was in way over my head. For the past 10 years Monsanto has bought up seed companies around the globe. They now own a majority of the seed lines in America, including

a large percentage of organic seeds. For everyday purposes, a Monsanto seed that is grown organically is still organic, but in my attempt to avoid Monsanto, I was left without any easy way of knowing what foods fit my experiment. I retreated to subsisting on wild-caught fish while I dug deep to try to figure out where exactly my foods came from.

With the help of sustainable food advocate Cassie Gruenstein, I got in touch with dozens of health food stores and manufacturers to ask where they sourced their products. I spent hours at the farmers' market asking farmers what seed companies they bought from, googling on my iPhone before making purchases. It took several weeks, but I slowly built a somewhat normal Monsanto-free existence.

Unfortunately, with the exception of a few national brands (check out Annie's, Inc. Massa Organics, and Lundberg Farms for a good start), there is no easy way to avoid Monsanto. It requires talking with the person who grew your food — every ingredient of every bite.

### Good First Steps

While it's extremely difficult to entirely avoid Monsanto, there are some basic guidelines that

anyone can use to minimize the genetically modified organisms in their lives.

1. Avoid processed foods. In particular, eliminate High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) from your diet and be sure to read labels. HFCS appears in everything from sodas to wheat bread.
2. Consider going vegetarian, limiting your meat consumption, or buying grass-fed varieties. Over 60 percent of genetically modified corn goes to feed cattle on polluting concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in America.
3. Buy organic dairy products to make sure animals weren't given Monsanto's recombinant bovine growth hormone.
4. Buy organic cotton when you can. Monsanto is a major player in the cotton industry. Even though cotton makes up only 2.5 percent of the world's crops, it is doused with 16 percent of the world's pesticides. Cotton pesticides, most of which are listed as "extremely hazardous" by the World Health Organization, turn up regularly in water sources around the globe.

*By day two of my attempt to remove Monsanto from my life, I realized I was in way over my head. For the past 10 years Monsanto has bought up seed companies around the globe. They now own a majority of the seed lines in America, including a large percentage of organic seeds.*

What most amazed me during my month without Monsanto was the influence that one corporation had in my daily life — without me knowing anything about it. Once I started looking, Monsanto was everywhere. Once I started making the effort to avoid it, I found something else that surprised me: the confidence that comes from really knowing what I'm eating. 🐦

**Ed Note:** April Dávila wrote this article for YES! Magazine, a national, nonprofit media organization that fuses powerful ideas with practical actions. April is a freelance writer living and working in Los Angeles. Find out more about her at [AprilDavila.com](http://AprilDavila.com).

*It was originally posted Aug 24, 2010. Reprinted with permission.*

**for more information about Monsanto and GMO foods and what you can do, visit:**

<http://organicconsumers.org/monsanto>

or

[www.naturalnews.com/Monsanto.html](http://www.naturalnews.com/Monsanto.html)



# Film review: *Queen of the Sun*

by Pat Kenschaft

*Queen of the Sun*, the March 2012 feature in Montclair's environmental film series, included many gorgeous shots of bees on all types of flowers, many bee facts, a discussion of Colony Collapse Disorder (where a hive is suddenly found empty), footage of a pro-bee demonstration, and interviews with bee keepers on several continents.

## Facts include:

Bees are fuzzy. Yellow jackets are shiny, but their similarity damages the reputation of bees.

There are over 4000 types of bees.

Bees have existed for about 125 million years.

The ancient cultures of India, Persia (Iran), Babylonia, Greece, Rome, and Egypt are evidence that humans and bees have cooperated for about 10,000 years. Bees were often considered sacred.

Flowers and bees are co-evolutionary. Flowers give the bees food, and bees "are the legs of flowers," spreading around their pollen, thereby enabling them to reproduce.

Commercial cultivation of bees began in the late nineteenth century.

Each hive can be viewed as a mega-organism with its own personality and one queen bee. Occasionally she goes on a "marriage flight," followed by many male drones. She may mate with as many as a dozen in one flight, guaranteeing a variety of genes in the million eggs that she will then lay. Sometimes she lays her weight in eggs in one day. If a younger queen emerges in her hive, the established queen will lead away half the workers in a "swarm." They may gather in a tree and perhaps set up housekeeping there.

A hive has thousands of worker bees, infertile females who devote their lives to the good of the group, apparently with no individual ambitions.

Six thousand truck-loads of bees — about three quarters of our nation's bees from around the country — are driven to California's Central Valley to pollinate the profitable almond crop in season, but there is nothing there to nourish bees most of the year. A strong recommendation was made that flower-rich areas should be scattered among almond groves so bees would remain year round. That could eliminate the gathering of the nation's bees — with its inherent spread of viruses — and the long drive.



Bees and humans have similar odor taste in vegetative matter. We like the same flowers bees do.

One bee sting is not usually troublesome for a human, but if a person gets over 500 stings, it can be fatal.

## Colony Collapse

In 2002 about 40% of German bees succumbed to Colony Collapse. In 2006 about 60% of U.S. bees did so. One narrator opined that Colony Collapse is more urgent than climate change because we depend on bees to pollinate our food crops.

One reason for Colony Collapse is monoculture. The resulting habitat loss causes great "insect deserts." A century ago bees roamed freely from Pennsylvania to South Dakota, but now monoculture prevents bees from traveling naturally and finding appropriate food during different seasons.

Another cause of Colony Collapse is the use of lawn chemicals that often poison bees along with the weeds they are designed to kill.

Commercial bee raisers use chemicals to kill bee mites, little insects that live on bees. The chemicals can kill bees too. A bee-keeping narrator said mites can be kept down by letting nature take its course.

There was a long piece including, "How can we know the dangers?" (of genetic engineering) — another cause of Colony Collapse.

In Europe and the United States there is great concern about Colony Collapse. It hasn't begun in Western Australia, presumably because some poisons are illegal there. However, some bees brought from Australia to the California almond groves carried a virus that bothered them little but killed off many less-resistant U.S. bees.

The film included comments from happy bee keepers/lovers from the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Germany with large readable subtitles in case you didn't catch their English words.

Backyard and rooftop hives are becoming quite popular around the world, even in Manhattan, where they are illegal. The film showed Manhattan demonstrators with signs chanting sayings like, "Give bees a chance." 🐝

**Ed. Note:** *Queen of the Sun* is available for purchase at the website [www.queenofthesun.com](http://www.queenofthesun.com). We especially encourage you to visit their "Ten things you can do to help bees" page.

# Happy Birthday, President Fred!

by Pat Kenschaft

April 7, 2012, was the 75th birthday of Cornucopia's president, my husband Fred Chichester. We had a festive party and received several comments about the remarkable state of his health and energy. Knowing that such things can change in an instant, it seemed reasonable to the CNNJ board to ponder why this is so.

His health is startlingly better than his parents and grandparents who reached 75, so we can't credit heredity, although the love in which he was raised surely is a contributor.

He has worked at it! Although not an athlete as a young man, he has cultivated the art of walking since middle age. He routinely leaves a car to be repaired at his favorite shop (Mac's Automotive) and then walks home. The next day he walks back to get it. This behavior is common in many (most?) countries, but not in the U.S. On a beautiful

day he sometimes drives a car to his favorite body shop (Tony's in Nutley) and walks the five miles back home, although often he will accept a ride.

I have worked at it too. I raise our family's vegetables year round without poisons or commercial fertilizers, and he appreciates eating them. He also brings the 100 or so bags of leaves each fall and many bags of grass that nourish our garden.

We are both very lucky to have found each other, and that luck certainly contributes to the health of both of us. My brother observed at the party that we share common interests in math, politics, and promoting peace and the environment — and we support each others' complementary interests: mine in gardening, and his in cars and investments. I feel very blessed. ☺



Fred – adorned by a Monarch butterfly at last September's Open Garden Photo by Una McGurk

## We'd like to hear from you!

[CornucopiaNJ@gmail.com](mailto:CornucopiaNJ@gmail.com) to let us know:

- what you care about
- articles you'd like to see or contribute
- if you would prefer to get the newsletter via email

### Ed Notes:

- The Newsletter is available online! [www.cornucopianetwork.org](http://www.cornucopianetwork.org)
- Pat Kenschaft's blog: [patsorganicgarden.blogspot.com](http://patsorganicgarden.blogspot.com)

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Can we send our Newsletter only by email?  Yes  No

**Open Gardens Tour...** *cont. from page 1*

hive. We do a lot of composting, including vermi-composting (worms), and compost tea. The garden has been featured in newspapers and magazines, including the national magazine *Bird Watching* (March 2012 issue)."

**Necole Fabris**, at 8 Prospect Place, West Orange, composts, uses leaves and grass clippings as ground cover, and uses natural pest control in her garden that provides much of her family's produce in the summer. She has had a rain barrel for several years. "From Montclair, take Harrison Avenue to the West Orange end (Main Street). Left on Main Street. Follow Main Street to the next light. Go through the light and bear right to stay on Main Street. Make an immediate right on Prospect Place. We are the second house on the left. We have dogs who are all bark, but that bark is loud."



My garden (**Pat Kenschaft**) at 56 Gordonhurst Avenue, Montclair, has provided almost all the family's vegetables year round for decades without any poisons, commercial fertilizers, or power machinery. I raise about 50 different types of vegetables and over 30 flowering plants. My friends will have a variety of environmental displays in the front yard (and these will stay open until 5:00), but my health precludes my showing the garden past 4:00 p.m. and nobody is allowed in the back yard without me. It is too easy to step in the wrong place, especially this time of year! 🐣

*Andrea DelleChiaie's hens in front of her raised bed and "very cool grow camp" (mini greenhouse) photo by Andrea*



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