



PROVIDENCE
FARM COLLECTIVE

The Collective

Newsletter Volume 1

Spring 2024



Grow the
Future of
Farming

Incubator farmer tending her crops

Growing the Future of Farming

By Beth Liepler, Farm Director

In agriculture, fostering a harmonious relationship among soil, seeds, fertilizers, and farmers is essential for the bountiful production of fresh and nutritious foods. PFC's holistic approach to farming shines a light on the pivotal role of selecting the right seeds, utilizing appropriate fertilizers, and equipping farmers with effective tools to combat pests. Ultimately, this approach empowers farmers to cultivate fresh and wholesome produce for our community.

Seeds form the very foundation of our food system, holding the promise of a future harvest. Every year, in early March, PFC and its farmers begin planting the first seeds of the year. As cool days linger, PFC farmers' tiny vegetable seeds begin to sprout beautiful bright green leaves in their greenhouses. A lovely preview emerges of the warmer, green-filled days ahead.

While seedlings grow and thrive in the cozy confines of the greenhouse, PFC's farm crew prepares the farmland for planting. In April, soil amendments like compost and lime are spread across the fields, as plowing is initiated. As weather permits, the crew creates raised beds covered in biodegradable mulch, effectively minimizing weed pressure. This results in less time spent weeding and more time dedicated to the fruitful harvesting efforts of PFC farmers. The farm comes to life as the fields are primed and ready for planting.

In late May, PFC's farming communities eagerly plant seedlings either started in March or provided by PFC. Once planted, farmers diligently protect and maintain their crops to ensure a healthy and bountiful harvest beginning in midsummer. Utilizing a white row cover that serves as a physical barrier, susceptible crops are shielded from insect damage. PFC supports farmers with innovative, eco-friendly pest control solutions, enabling them to sustainably manage pests and preserve the delicate balance of PFC's ecosystem, fostering a thriving agricultural landscape. Throughout the growing season, farmers care for their crops by keeping their farms pest- and weed-free, and providing plants with adequate water and proper nourishment. PFC and its farmers promote environmental sustainability by maintaining the soil's natural balance through the use of organic and eco-friendly fertilizers, including compost and organic poultry manure. PFC's commitment to responsible fertilization contributes to a healthier environment, supporting crops for consistent and fruitful harvests, while also prioritizing the health of the land.

With PFC's holistic farming approach, the enchanting journey from tiny seeds to fields full of vibrant crops to a bountiful harvest unfolds, emphasizing optimal soil health and empowering farmers to produce fresh foods for the community. Through careful seed selection, organic fertilizer use, and effective pest management, PFC farmers cultivate nutritious produce. This sustainable approach ensures resilience in agriculture and enhances the health of our environment and community. Soon our quiet farm on Burton Road will be bursting with life again!



Incubator farmer planting maize



BMICF Plants community members



Member of the Ethiopian Communities farm transplanting seeds

CSA Program at PFC

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) is a system in which farmers partner with community members to provide a local source of fresh produce throughout the growing season. At PFC, CSA members pick up weekly shares of unique crops and traditional vegetables grown by PFC farmers. Cultural recipes and members-only opportunities at the farm are added benefits of participation in the program, as well as a chance to learn more about PFC's farmers from Markets Manager Hamadi Ali.

Revenue generated by PFC's CSA is reinvested in the organization's programs that support beginning and under-resourced refugee, immigrant, and Black farmers in accessing farmland, education, and markets to build farm businesses. Our CSA Program is one of many PFC programs focused on empowering just and equitable access to food and farmland!

Details

Price: \$500 for 18 weeks, a \$25 value per week

Pick up: Mondays at the farm, mid-June through mid-October

Sign up at: <https://providencefarmcollective.org/csa/>

Meet a PFC Community Organization



Somali Bantu elders

Somali Bantu Community Farm

Year Founded: 2017

Size of Farm: 5 acres

Cultural Crops: African maize, amaranth, and cowpeas

why we farm

To practice and share the community's agricultural heritage across the generations; to grow culturally important vegetables and increase access to fresh foods in the community; to provide revenue for the programs of the Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY.

The Somali Bantu Community Farm has been awarded a USDA NRCS grant! This 3-year grant supports planting cover crops alongside rows of maize and provides for a farm manager dedicated to the project's sustainable corn cultivation. Drawing from their rich agricultural heritage, the Somalis practice intercropping, planting beans and squash amidst the corn, not only to manage weeds, but also to enrich the soil. The grant provides the dual opportunity for honoring agricultural traditions and supporting sustainable farming practices that nurture the earth.





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5701 Burton Road
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help us GROW

Support PFC's vision to Grow the Future of Farming in WNY. Help us raise \$8,000 by April 30 to equip our farmers with essential tools and supplies for the upcoming season. Your partnership fuels our mission to promote just access to food and farmland while empowering local communities.

Join us in cultivating a vibrant future for farming in WNY!



2024 Calendar Tours

Join us as our passionate farmers and staff share stories during a guided walk through the farm. The tour concludes with an opportunity to sample foods significant to PFC's traditions, providing a rich and engaging experience.

June 20 **Tour & Tasting**
History of PFC

July 8 **Tour & Monday Market Stand**
PFC's Sustainability Journey

Aug 1 **Tour & Tasting**
Food & Farmland Access

Aug 19 **Tour & Monday Market Stand**
Food as Medicine

Volunteer

Community Volunteer Days - May 18 and October 26
Come show your support and learn about PFC!

For more info: <https://providencefarmcollective.org/get-involved/volunteer/>