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The 47th Ave. Farm

Laura Masterson of 47th Ave Farm has been growing quality organic vegetables for over ten years. Most of the produce grown at the farm is marketed through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. As Farmer Laura explains, "This means that we grow for a set number of harvest shareholders who join us at the beginning of the year. These households and families then share in the bounty of the harvest throughout the growing season. This provides financial support for the farmers early in the spring when it is most needed. In return, we share the fruits of an abundant and diverse harvest." 47th Avenue Farm also sells produce to several local restaurants in Portland.

Truly, an urban farm Laura explains, "we started on an oversized lot located on 47th Avenue in the Woodstock neighborhood of Southeast Portland. We still do our CSA pickup there but most of our vegetable production has moved to the outskirts of town". The 47th Ave Farm manages land in several locations including Zenger Farm, an urban agricultural park owned by the City of Portland and leased to a non-profit which is building an agricultural education center on site. Laura also works with the City of Lake Oswego to grow crops at the historic Luscher Farm. At both of these locations, the 47th Ave Farm works with non-profit partners to provide farming related outreach and educational opportunities to the community.



Farmer Laura and assistants puts final edits on poster at her field office



Field class on beneficial insects

The Experimental Beetle Bank at The 47th Ave. Farm

47th Ave. Farm raised their first beetle bank in September 2006 at Zenger Park. To prepare the beetle bank site, they cut and tilled an approximately 5' by 100' swathe through the summer cover of Sudangrass. Eight enthusiastic shovelers raised the bank about 12 inches high and measured out three even sections. The sections were broadcast seeded at a rate of 120 plants/sq ft with the native prairie bunchgrass, blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*), water foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*) and a mix of the two grasses. This was the first beetle bank raised by many helping hands instead of a plow.



There was initial concern that the weed-suppressive compounds emitted by some decaying Sudangrass might suppress native grass germination on the bank. This concern was dispelled the following spring as a healthy crop of broadleaf weeds totally smothered out the emerging native grass seeds. Undaunted, Farmer Laura plans to keep the bank structure as intact as possible, till in the weeds this summer, do a touch up reconstruction of the bank and cover it with black plastic throughout the summer. In the early fall the plastic will be removed. The weeds will be allowed to emerge and then flamed and the bank will be seeded and mulched once again.

Dwindling Habitat

Watching farmland dwindle in the urban surrounds of Portland, Farmer Laura has become a staunch supporter of farmland preservation as well as a leader in habitat conservation on the lands she farms. In addition to creating a beetle bank on her plots at Zenger Farm, Laura has created, with the help of the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, a conservation plan for her plots which includes annual plantings of insectary cover crops and insectary plants interspersed within scheduled crop plantings. Plans have already begun for installation of an insectary hedgerow with Luscher Farm.



Winter kale gone to seed provides early insectary block

Creating the Bank

