

APPALACHIAN BEGINNING FOREST FARMER COALITION

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AUTUMN 2023

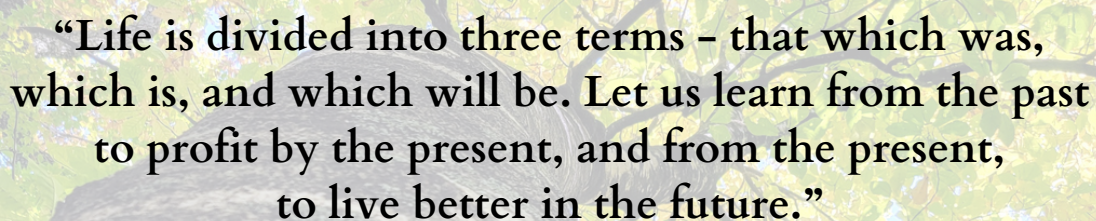
Dear Forest Farmers and Coalition Members,

As the forest prepares for its winter slumber and the harvest season comes to a close, we pause to reflect on the past year with deep gratitude. Across our beloved woodlands and within our forest farming community, the coalition continues to plan, plant, steward, and harvest. This unwavering commitment is a cornerstone of our growth and transformation. On the horizon are new programs and opportunities and we are humbled by the coalition's accomplishments and unified resolve as it enters its 10th year. Those who were present in the earliest days and those who have joined along the way constitute a force of energy, expertise, and fidelity that form an immovable forest farming foundation. Now is the time to honor the past and shape the future, and we could not be more excited.

The forest farming coalition continues to grow, as do local and regional resources, opportunities, and initiatives. Recognition and investment in our collective effort remains on the rise and considering how we envision our future is warranted. The question is have we begun and the answer is yes. We celebrate our 10th year of existence. Seasoned farmers and new farmers as well as deeply committed service organizations, industry partners, and universities and colleges stride together into the next decade. The best is yet to come.

New programs and resources abound. The Appalachian Regional Commission recently awarded an ARISE planning grant focused on scaling local processing and distribution services, access to affordable planting stock, workforce development, business planning, and experiential tourism. The Edwards Mother Earth Foundation provided additional funding to continue supporting the Catalyzing Agroforestry Grants Program and, along with USDA SARE, expanding the farmer-to-farmer Agroforestry Regional Knowledge (ARK) Exchange. The Point-of-Harvest program is growing with future programs forthcoming in 2024. Efforts are underway to develop a framework for an American Forest Farming Association that will lead beneficial change and recognition at the national level. And last but not least we invite you to join us at Gather to Grow, a forest farming conference in Roanoke, VA, March 22-24, 2024 (read more about the conference in this newsletter).

With deep gratitude and season's greetings,
ABFFC Team



**“Life is divided into three terms – that which was,
which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past
to profit by the present, and from the present,
to live better in the future.”**

William Wordsworth

NEW FOREST FARMING VIDEOS



Q&A with Jeannie Dunn,
Director of Red Moon
Herbs

Gather to Grow
Conference:
Honor the Past,
Shape the Future
March 2024



Forest Farming Video Library

With over 180 videos, 25k subscribers from around the world, and almost 4M total views, eXtension Forest Farming and ABFFC have created this forest farming video library to educate, inspire, and connect forest farmers. This channel provides detailed information on forest farming basics, a variety of non-timber forest products, as well as a few of the markets, products, and business models surrounding sustainably harvested forest farmed crops. Along with exploring this video library, we welcome you to dive into the many other forest farming resources on the ABFFC website, join our online community and learn more about regional groups and forest farming partners in your area.

FORESTHER NC MOUNTAIN REGION GATHERING WITH THE APPALACHIAN BEGINNING FOREST FARMER COALITION

In September 2023, ForestHer NC (FHNC) and the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition (ABFFC) came together for the ForestHer Mountain Region Gathering to bring a special event to forest owners, forest stewards, and forest professionals in Western North Carolina. Combining the missions of Engaging Women in Woodland Stewardship and Growing Opportunities Beneath the Canopy, this event focused on Appalachian Cove Forests and their stewardship and available economic opportunities for landowners and technical service professionals in an area that heavily relies on natural resources.

This workshop was made possible thanks to a partnership with the [Forest Stewards Guild](#) and support from Domtar, PactivEvergreen, and Georgia-Pacific.

Read the full [article](#) by Sara Jackson and Margaret Bloomquist on [ForestHerNC.org](#).



Dakota Wagner, FHNC and event organizer giving an introduction to Appalachian Cove sites.



2023 FOREST FARMING WEBINAR SERIES

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
Forest farming approaches and crops

THURSDAY, MARCH 30 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
Ramps/wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*)

THURSDAY, APRIL 20 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
Wild mushrooms: Morels (*Morchella* spp.)

THURSDAY, JUNE 22 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
Ghost-pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26 (7:30-9:00 PM EST)
Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)
& medicinal root crops

In this 2023 Forest Farming Webinar Series, Eric Burkhart, Director of the Appalachian Botany and Ethnobotany Program will provide a detailed overview of 5 popular non-timber forest products. Each webinar will discuss forest farming opportunities and approaches for each of these species, along with the uses, identification, biology, foraging, forest farming, habitat management, markets, and economic opportunities.

[HTTPS://EXTENSION.PSU.EDU/FOREST-FARMING-SERIES-ANNOUNCEMENT](https://extension.psu.edu/forest-farming-series-announcement)

In case you missed the Penn State Extension webinar series it is now available online! Each webinar discusses forest farming opportunities and approaches for several key non timber forest species.

<https://extension.psu.edu/forest-farming-series-announcement>



PennState Extension



Over the past year, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) and Virginia Tech have partnered on a pilot project currently called Point of Harvest (PoH) to provide free education to wild harvesters and dealers of forest roots, herbs, and barks. Training topics included plant identification, sustainable harvest practices, post-harvest handling methods, safety, regulations, marketing and more. To date, 74 people have been certified through the PoH program!

ASD's Appalachian Harvest Herb Hub is working with participants to sell PoH certified botanicals to premium priced markets seeking high quality, sustainable supply. We are in the process of developing an official brand for the certification.

We need your input on a brand name to ensure it resonates with both consumers and harvesters alike! By completing this short two question survey below, you'll help us choose a new, permanent brand name for this PoH pilot. Thank you for your input!



Vote Today!



FOREST FARMING OFFICE HOURS WINTER 2023/2024

JOIN NC STATE EXTENSION AND FRIENDS
OF THE ABFFC FOR Q&A, UPDATES, AND
CONVERSATION ABOUT FOREST
FARMING. ALL REGIONS AND
EXPERIENCE LEVELS ARE WELCOME!

REGISTER VIA ZOOM ON WEBSITE
OR EMAIL FOR QUESTIONS AND LINK
MARGARET.BLOOMQUIST@NCSU.EDU

FRIDAYS FROM 12 – 1:30PM EST

DEC 8TH

JAN 19TH

FEB 16TH

APPALACHIANFORESTFARMERS.ORG/OFFICE-HOURS



NC STATE
EXTENSION

appalachianforestfarmers.org/office-hours

CATALYZING AGROFORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM

The opportunity currently known as the Catalyzing Agroforestry Grant Program (CAGP) will continue in 2024 as the Agroforestry Grant Program with thanks to the Edward's Mother Earth Foundation (EMEF) and regional partners.

Direct financial support is available to farmers who seek to join EMEF's effort to mitigate climate change through use of agroforestry practices that sustain productive and healthy farms and forests, sequester carbon, protect water quality, regenerate soils, and enhance biodiversity. Producers who receive support will share lessons-learned with other farmers as part of the growing ARK (Agroforestry Regional Knowledge) Exchange.

The application process is open and rolling, though you'll see some updates to the applications soon regarding the name change and expanded scope of the opportunity. The next round of projects for funding is expected to occur in spring 2024. Up to \$1500/acre for agroforestry projects

This project is managed by Virginia Tech in partnership with Appalachian Sustainable Development, Rural Action, North Carolina State University, and SilvoCulture.

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/emef>



Edwards Mother Earth Foundation

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION'S APPALACHIAN REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR STRONGER ECONOMIES (ARC-ARISE)

Accelerating Forest Farming in Central Appalachia: Strengthening Market Connections and Collaboration for Long-Term Sector Impact and Sustainability is a regional and multistate project designed to support continued expansion of the ABFFC work and prepare for ARISE implementation funding. The work will result in long-term transformational goals all critical to establishment of the Appalachian forest farmers as leaders in this global market.



Proposed Work – Planning into Implementation

The ARISE Project uses a multifaceted strategy to support Appalachian forest farmers, traditional wild harvesters who implement sustainable forest farming methods, and associated regional stakeholders. The planning work prepares for a five-year project to accelerate technical assistance, value-added market and technology development, sector capacity and efficiency initiatives, as well as efforts to raise industry investments and consumer awareness all of which underpin the economic viability of individual and collective business ventures across Central Appalachia and increase the long-term sustainability of a value-added NTFP supply chain.

The project strengthens existing partnerships and programs in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Proposed programs and services will deliver a broad spectrum of market-centered opportunities for Appalachian residents and localities to transform a deeply rooted, traditional economic sector and create a sustainable platform for continued growth as the marketplace evolves.

For more information please see the webpage:

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/arc-arise>

2023 – 2024 AMERICAN FOREST FARMING ASSOCIATION AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The American Forest Farming Association (AFFA) is envisioned as part of a natural evolution of the Appalachian Beginning Forest Farmer Coalition (ABFFC).

Our current goal between is to gather input and ideas. We intend to draft a professional and inclusive association and operational template that will be open to public comment. The AFFA will likely resemble other professional groups, with sub-committees focused on topics such as science and technology, external advocacy, and member services. There will also be unique programs, goals and regions. And a public review process to look forward to in 2024.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Jim Allen | Northern Arizona University |
| Margaret Bloomquist | North Carolina State University |
| Victor Harris | Minority Landowner Magazine |
| Hannah Hemmelgarn | Center for Agroforestry at the University of Missouri |
| Missy Moyer Jarrels | Laurel Fork Sapsuckers |
| Eric Jones | Oregon State University |
| Kate MacFarland | National Agroforestry Center |
| Michael McGuffin | American Herbal Products Association |
| Nils Mueggenburg | Appalachian Herbal Company |
| John Munsell | Virginia Tech University |
| Chris Parker | Forest Pharmacy |
| Anna Platner | Wild Hudson Valley |
| Karam Sheban | Yale University |

Biographies of the committee and more information on the webpage:

<https://www.appalachianforestfarmers.org/affa>

GATHER TO GROW CONFERENCE

GATHER TO GROW FOREST FARMING

MARCH 22-24, 2024

A CONFERENCE
TO HONOR THE
PAST & SHAPE
THE FUTURE OF



HOTEL ROANOKE
& CONFERENCE CENTER
ROANOKE, VA

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS, THEMATIC PRESENTATIONS, EXPO, GREAT FOOD, AND
LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT PRE-CONFERENCE FIELD OPPORTUNITIES,
ARTWORK, NETWORKING, AND STRATEGIC
PLANNING THAT WILL SHAPE THE
FUTURE OF FOREST FARMING



APPALACHIANFORESTFARMERS.ORG/2024-CONFERENCE

The Gather to Grow multi-day Forest Farming conference is taking shape for March 22-24, 2024.

Keynotes by Olivia Watkins of Oliver's AgroForest and Black Farmer Fund, and Dr. Jeanine Davis of NC State, will share the theme of "Our Roots, our Shoots, and our Growth" to the 2024 Gather to Grow Forest Farming Conference audience!

We look forward to welcoming speakers and visionaries from diverse regions and backgrounds of the forest farming tapestry.

In addition to the pre-conference field extravaganza, thematic presentations, the Forest Farming Expo, and local entertainment, there will be networking and strategic planning sessions that will shape the future of forest farming.

APPALACHIANFORESTFARMERS.ORG/2024-CONFERENCE

GATHER TO GROW CONFERENCE SUBMISSIONS AND ART



Calls for submission are currently open for selected tracks with a deadline of December 1, 2023:

Strategic Sessions - 1 hour

Forest Farm Share Stories - 25 minutes

Art submissions for the printed program and for display at the Hotel Roanoke during the conference deadline is December 15, 2023.

Theme Art Submissions



[APPALACHIANFORESTFARMERS.ORG/2024-CONFERENCE](https://appalachianforestfarmers.org/2024-conference)

FOREST FARMING CLASSIFIEDS

Accelerating Silvopasture Adoption and Carbon Sequestration through Emerging Markets and Technologies (ASSETS)

Unlock the future of farming with Working Trees, in partnership with Virginia Tech and Appalachian Sustainable Development, by joining our silvopasture program for farmers in Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. <https://www.workingtrees.com/assets>

Agroforestry Funding Opportunities via Appalachian Sustainable Development

Need financial and technical assistance for your agroforestry project? ASD based in Virginia has multiple opportunities for you to explore. Learn about how ASD and partners can help support you and your agroforestry project at <https://www.asdevelop.org/programs-resources/agroforestry/>. Contact Stesha @ swarren@asdevelop.org or Emilie @ etweardy@asdevelop.org for more information.

Agroforestry Trainings for Natural Resource Professionals

Attention natural resource professionals! Do you want to learn more about silvopasture, alley cropping, and forest farming? If so, our “Agroforestry Trainings for Natural Resource Professionals” program is perfect for you! Online and in-person training opportunities. Learn more and sign up for our mailing list @ <https://www.asdevelop.org/agroforestry-trainings-for-natural-resource-professionals/>. Contact Stesha @ swarren@asdevelop.org.

Appalachian Sustainable Development Herb Hub Farmer Recruitment

Are you producing medicinal herbs? We can help you sell them! We’ve been helping producers process and sell sustainable, quality herbs for top dollar since 2017. Demand List, FAQs, virtual tour, and more @ www.asdevelop.org/agroforestry. Must live within 3 hours of Duffield, VA. Contact Robin at rsuggs@asdevelop.org.

Expanding Agroforestry Incentive Payment Program

Eligible producers in the United States are invited to apply beginning November 15, 2023. Over the course of five years, \$36 million will be paid out to producers in direct incentive payments to transform 30,000 acres spanning 30 states into agroforestry systems, thus building a foundation for expanding agroforestry practices nationally. Those interested in applying or learning more, visit: nature.org/ExpandingAgroforestry.

FOREST FARMING CLASSIFIEDS

Elderberry Cultivation Workshop at United Plant Savers, Rutland OH

May 4th, 2024, 9am - 12pm. Join us as we discuss how to grow elderberry shrubs in the garden and landscape. This workshop will cover basic propagation and management strategies, as well as an overview of value-added products. Pre-registration required. Visit www.unitedplantsavers.org to register or contact tanner@unitedplantsavers.org for more information. Registration will open 30 days before event.

Forest Farming at the Yew Mountain Center

In Hillsborough, West Virginia. The goal of the Yew Mountain Center's forest farming project is to provide support for small-scale, low-capital, ecologically-sound forest farming through study, demonstration, and training. More information: <https://www.yewmountain.org/forest-farming> Part of the West Virginia Forest Farming Initiative: <http://www.wvforestfarming.org/>

Mushroom Cultivation Workshop at United Plant Savers, Rutland OH

March 2nd, 2024, 9am - 12pm. Interested in growing and marketing gourmet and medicinal mushrooms from your forest? This workshop will cover basic woodland cultivation strategies, including inoculation methods, natural and force fruiting, harvesting, and marketing. Pre-registration required. Visit www.unitedplantsavers.org to register or contact tanner@unitedplantsavers.org for more information. Registration will open 30 days before event.

National Maple Syrup Day 12/17

From Future Generations University - #NationalMapleSyrupDay is back and better than ever! Kick off the holiday season December 17, 2023 with collaborations and partnerships across the state of West Virginia as businesses showcase the sweetest resource around! This yearly event celebrates the state's maple syrup producers and the community partners supporting our tree syrup industry! Be sure to check out <https://maple.wvmspa.org> for more information and a list of activities.

North Carolina Medicinal Herb Growers Groups

It has been a wonderful year of expansion with the Western NC and Piedmont Medicinal Herb Growers groups. Made up of NC Extension educators, herb farmers, and serious herb gardeners interested in gaining experience in growing medicinal herbs and learning more about them. Read more and connect with your NC county Extension agent to learn about opportunities in your area: <https://newcropsorganics.ces.ncsu.edu/herb/wnc-medicinal-herb-growers/>

FOREST FARMING CLASSIFIEDS

Ramp Cultivation Workshop at United Plant Savers, Rutland OH

April 6th, 2024, 9am - 12pm. Come learn about this iconic springtime herb as we discuss basic cultivation, management, and marketing strategies for forest grown ramps. Pre-registration required. Visit www.unitedplantsavers.org to register or contact tanner@unitedplantsavers.org for more information. Registration will open 30 days before event.

Translation for ABFFC website and resources

Efforts to provide resources in additional languages are underway for ABFFC website and forest farming resources. We are currently taking suggestions for specific needs for translation for you or your stakeholders. We currently have access to spanish language translation and closed captioning. Email info@appalachianforestfarmers.org.

Western North Carolina Woodland Stewards

Opportunities to join the 2024 WNC Woodland Stewards are open! This group is made up of beginning and advanced forest farmers that meet monthly for hands-on programming and mentorship at the demonstration woods in Mills River, NC. There are three new additional forest farming and conservation projects for stewards to volunteer for. More info at <https://newcropsorganics.ces.ncsu.edu/herb/wnc-medicinal-herb-growers/> Contact Margaret_Bloomquist@ncsu.edu

WildAmericanGinseng.org

Created in collaboration with United Plant Savers and the Wild American Ginseng Conservation Collaborative, WildAmericanGinseng.org is improved and updated from the original McGraw Labs website. This foundational website has been greatly expanded to the whole ginseng community and adapted to a broader audience in order to provide lay folk with information about American ginseng biology, threats to this important species and the science-proven story of stewardship. This website is designed to provide state-of-the-art scientific information to the public, researchers and to policymakers for the purpose of conserving American ginseng for the long-term.