

FROM PLACE-BASED LEARNING TO REGIONAL:



LUSCHER FARM'S LEGACY



Photo by Marci Krass

OEC instructor Andy Parker (kneeling) leads a workshop at Luscher Farm, one of over 100 such classes offered at this urban farm learning center.

By Colleen Lockovitch
and Chris Schreiner

We started as a place.

For the past 16 years, Oregon Tilth's Organic Education Center has been firmly rooted in the soil – the OEC had a physical home at the historic Luscher Farm in Lake Oswego, Oregon. We value and respect

this home where we helped change people's eating and gardening habits, introduced organics to the consumer and donated over 12,000 pounds of organically grown produce to people in need. There is no doubt – the OEC's presence at Luscher Farm helped change behaviors for present and future generations.



CAN'T KEEP 'EM ON THE FARM

As we leave the demo garden in the capable hands of the City of Lake Oswego, we plan to share the bounty of organic curriculum with a wider audience.



Photo by Kathy Dang

During the last 16 years, the OEC donated over 12,000 lbs. of produce to local people in need.

Like many organizations, each year we evaluate our programs, review outreach impacts and pay careful attention to our invested resources to deliver programming that meets the community's interests and best serves our mission. For several years, we've seen a trend of decreasing interest and participation in organic gardening education offered at the Luscher Farm demonstration garden. Meanwhile, demand and participation in organic gardening education has increased in other areas, such as Portland and Corvallis. As a result, Oregon Tilth determined that maintaining the demonstration garden at Luscher Farm is no longer the best use of resources to meet educational goals. Oregon Tilth is departing from the 6,000 square foot demonstration garden we installed and have managed since 2001.

The OEC Program will continue to exist. New opportunities are ahead as we focus our energies and resources on

building a mobile education-delivery program locally and regionally.

Demo garden grew plants and organic curriculum

The OEC program was created as a collaborative project with the City of Lake Oswego, and we are grateful for the original vision, passion and determination that helped make this happen. "For over a decade, the OEC program delivered many hands-on classes, workshops, tours and special events relating to sustainable, organic agriculture and food systems," said Colleen Lockovitch, OEC Program Manager.

Oregon Tilth's demo garden allowed OEC staff to create an array of diverse curriculum that was grounded in the soil and plants cultivated at Luscher Farm. Much of the existing curriculum was created in coordination with OSU

Extension and the City of Portland's Urban Growth Bounty classes. Each multi-week course, workshop and tour group helped inform and refine our current menu of hands-on curriculum with topics ranging from "Starting Seeds Indoors" to "Growing the Most in Your Garden Plot."

As we leave the demo garden in the capable hands of the City of Lake Oswego, we plan to share the bounty of organic curriculum with a wider audience. "Moving away from maintaining the demonstration garden allows Oregon Tilth to focus primarily on a mobile and geographically diverse education effort," said Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth's Executive Director. "This change helps plant the seeds of the OEC's organic gardening curriculum throughout the region."

Many others will learn and benefit as the OEC takes our classes on the road.

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STAND-OUTS IN THE FIELD



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We are grateful that our home of 16 years incubated the curriculum and provided us with first-hand gardening experience and education. The Organic Education Center's future will move forward with continued education and growing partnerships. In 2013, we've partnered with the City of Portland Community Gardens program to offer 15 classes in spring, summer and fall. We have also coordinated with the Edible Corvallis Initiative in their first offering of a four-week Complete Organic Gardening course. We look forward to these and other new chapters ahead.

OEC Luscher Farm partnership built by people and relationships

The OEC owes special gratitude to early visionaries like Jane Heim, Kim Gilmer and Yvonne Frost—they worked

hard and thought creatively to establish a place where organic gardening could be a community resource. Thank you to all of the dynamic and talented program managers, who each brought insight and talent to the OEC: Andy Parker, Marci Krass, Kathy Dang and Colleen Lockovitch. Thank you to Oregon Tilth's Executive Director, Chris Schreiner and Lake Oswego Parks and Recreation Supervisor, Jan Wirtz, for believing in and growing the OEC.

Many more people played a signature role in the OEC who helped make it what it is today, including AmeriCorps service members, guest educators, hands-on volunteers, our talented Garden Coordinator, Conner Voss, and other gardeners and horticulture interns. All of them have left their footprints in the soil.



JANE HEIM

"Our first grant from Newman's Own for \$10,000! No strings! Yvonne chuckled like she knew all along it was going to work. The Organic Education Center at Luscher Farm was really going to be a reality!"

LUSCHER FARM TIMELINE

1998 - Jane Heim initiates partnership with support from Oregon Tilth Board and City of Lake Oswego Parks & Recreation Department.

1999 – First gardening classes started • \$10,000 Newman's Own Foundation grant received
• Luscher Farm Community Gardens and Demo Garden Design contest

2001 – Andy Parker hired and demonstration garden installed

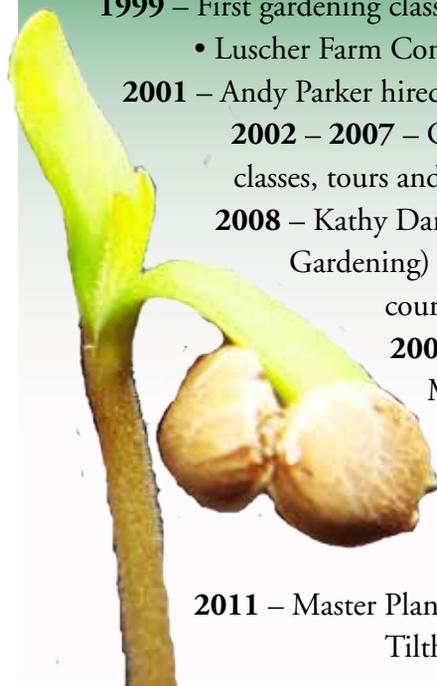
2002 – 2007 – Community Garden plots expand on site to reach total of 180; organic classes, tours and volunteer opportunities offered in diverse topics and formats

2008 – Kathy Dang, Program Manager hired • COG starts (Comprehensive Organic Gardening) course in collaboration with Seattle Tilth. Four-week hands-on course at Luscher Farm

2009 - Tilth builds greenhouse on site • OSU Extension partnership with Master Gardeners first-ever gardening course focused on organics: the Organic Gardening Certificate Program

2010 – Centennial Festival of Lake Oswego at Luscher Farm • Colleen Lockovitch hired as Program Coordinator (Program Manager in late 2011)

2011 – Master Plan begins for City of Lake Oswego, including Luscher Farm; Tilth and others advocate to retain and enhance ag focus of the site





ANDY PARKER

“Free weekend workshop potlucks were always the best! We got so much work done and everyone was thrilled to share their culinary creations. It truly felt like the best of Tilth community: food, farming and camaraderie.”



COLLEEN LOCKOVITCH

Oversaw tremendous growth of the Organic Education Center.



KATHY DANG

“I’ve never seen crops grow so big and luscious. At our classes we always talked about how the key to successful gardening was growing healthy soil, which in turn grew the plants.”

CONNER VOSS



Garden Coordinator, Conner Voss leads a workshop at the OEC. Over 10,500 participants in workshops, classes and outreach efforts were based at the Center.

Presented by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
East and West National Technology Support Centers



2013 Understanding Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Webinars

3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern ~ 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Pacific

Date*	Topic	Presenter
February 5	Multiple-Species Grazing for Sustainable Farming	Gregg Brann State Grazing Lands Specialist USDA NRCS - Tennessee
April 2	Integrating Livestock into Cropping Systems on Sustainable Farms	Jay Fuhrer District Conservationist USDA NRCS - North Dakota
June 4	Orchard Floor Management in Organic Systems	David Granatstein Sustainable Agriculture Specialist Washington State University
August 6	Crop Rotations on Diversified Farms	Charles Mohler Senior Research Associate Cornell University
October 1	Pastured Poultry and Conservation Planning	Terrell Spencer Poultry Specialist National Center for Appropriate Technology
December 3	Sustainable Production Using Year-Round High Tunnels	Michael Kilpatrick Producer Kilpatrick Family Farm

*Audio/video information to join a webinar is released approximately three weeks prior to the scheduled event at the NRCS Science and Technology Training Library. Visit <http://conserve.sanwebinars.net>.

Visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/wc/printable/choice/technical/series/> to join our webinar announcement email list and have event information sent directly to your inbox.

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GROWING FOOD ALL YEAR LONG

SAT. JULY 27

Rigler Community Garden
5401 NE Prescott St.
9-10 am or 11-noon



Explore season extension techniques, from cloches to cold frames, enabling you to extend the garden season beyond the fall and into next spring.

\$12/\$10 for Tilth Members
oec@tilth.org
503.638.0735
See tilth.org for registration.




Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland