

Hilltop Community Farm, LLC
Mailing: 431 N. Baldwin St., Madison, WI
Farm Address: S850 Heidrich Rd., La Valle, WI
608-257-6729
e.schneider.hilltopfarm@gmail.com
<http://www.hilltopcommunityfarm.org>

News Release

Second Annual Currant Events Field Day at Hilltop Community Farm

For Immediate Release – July 1, 2013

Contact: Erin Schneider, 608-257-6729

(La Valle, WI) – Celebrate fruit, and build community while exploring ways to expand your palette for unique small fruits in Wisconsin. You're invited to a day of learning and celebration at Hilltop Community Farm, a small diversified community supported agriculture farm and orchard near La Valle, WI on Saturday, July 13, from 10 am – 2 pm. Discover and sample ways to use, prepare, grow, and market small fruits such as currants, saskatoons, honeyberry, and elderberry.

“I was inspired by the diversity of people who came together to admit their love for these fruits and the number of people who were already growing these fruits,” commented Bridget Holcomb, Associate Policy Director with the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute and panelist from last year's Currant Events. “This event clearly is a great opportunity for growers and eaters alike to get together and share their interest and love of different local fruits.”

Highlights for the day include an orchard tour, a chef panel and tastings featuring currants with Casey Bilyea of Eat for Equity in Madison and Marilyn Karbush with the Deli Bean in Reedsburg, a fruit inspired pie contest and live music from area bluegrass band, the Stompin' Radishes. Lunch and snacks provided. You will leave the day with resources on growing these fruits, ideas for use/preparation, and ways you can support growing Wisconsin's local food/fruit system. Dress for spending time outdoors.

Four years ago, beginning farm women at Hilltop Community Farm, Elsewhere Farm, and Mary Dirty Face Farm, who manage their small, diversified farms in different locations in Wisconsin, independently set out to grow unique varieties of fruits such as currants, saskatoons, honeyberry and elderberry using agroforestry techniques. Having discovered that they were growing the same fruits, in similar phases of production, and facing the same marketing challenges, they set out to work together. The farms jointly received grant funding to research direct marketing options for their unusual fruit from the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Farmer Rancher grant program (NC SARE, USDA).

The low-impact nature of these fruits, and their adaptability to local growing conditions at Hilltop when cultivated using agro-forestry techniques, should appeal to environmentally conscious consumers, and has sparked wide interest from other farmers. “We've led several orchard tours, hosted a handful of workshops and events since we planted our orchard in 2010,” says Hilltop Farmer Rob McClure. Demand for local food and fruits continues to grow in our region, yet at the same time we are seeing family farms disappearing. “We want to let both farmers and consumers learn about these novel, well-adapted, potentially high margin fruits, but also open a wider dialogue with the community about the changing nature of agriculture, its difficulties, and how we need to adapt and support each other in the next 10 – 20 years.”

For **event details and to RSVP**, contact Erin Schneider, Hilltop Community Farm, at 608-257-6729 or email e.schneider.hilltopfarm@gmail.com by **July 10, 2013**. **Space is limited, so RSVP today!**

Support for this event is provided in part by the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Farmer-Rancher Grant Program. Special thanks to the Wisconsin Farmers Union and all of our friends, CSA &

family members for your 'sweat equity' and support.