



UNADILLA
COMMUNITY
FARM

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



ABOUT & MISSION

Founded by millennial first-generation farmers who met through the international WWOOF network, Unadilla Community Farm is an off-grid fruit & vegetable farm and non-profit permaculture education center, situated on 12 acres of field and forest in West Edmeston, in central New York State. Our mission is to provide a space for the teaching and practice of sustainable skills. Our work centers on providing education and training in sustainable agriculture, natural building, and food equity, and providing access to fresh produce for low-income and low-access communities.

We are showcasing a range of cutting-edge sustainable agriculture practices. Our off-grid center grows 200+ varieties of annual and perennial cold-hardy fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and herbs. We are regenerating the land after decades of conventional monocropping, transforming an abandoned corn field into an edible food forest. As a center for sustainable education and a member of USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program and New York State's Climate Resilient Farming Program, we showcase a diversity of USDA NRCS recommended conservation practices, such as rainwater collection, multi-story and alley cropping, no-till management, wildlife habitat planting, mulching, on-site composting, crop rotation, and high tunnels.

Founded in 2014, Unadilla Community Farm Education Center Inc became incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 2020.



ENERGY GLOBE AWARD
2021 National Award (USA) Winner

Gold
Transparency
2022

Candid.

BOARD



Nina Buxenbaum was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY to a politically active, multi-racial household. She received her MFA in painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art and her BFA from Washington University in St. Louis in drawing and printmaking. She is a Tenured Professor of Painting at York College, CUNY as well as a member, and current faculty, at The Silvermine Artist Guild in New Canaan, CT, and Adjunct Art Faculty at Western Connecticut State University. She and her husband, Roberto Zapata, have been building a Food Forest and hosting classes at their home and have begun a larger scale project at York College, in Jamaica, Queens.



Tianna Kennedy (Vice President) has been farming and organizing in the Catskills for a decade now. She is co-owner of Star Route Farm with Walter Riesen and owns and operates the 607 CSA, a multi-farm CSA, from the Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties. She also co-organizes with Bushel Collective to operate a mixed-use art space in Delhi, NY. Tianna founded the National Young Farmers Coalition's Greater Catskills Chapter and runs special ops with the Greenhorns to round out her (Agri)cultural undertakings.



Greta Zarro (President & Treasurer) is the farm's Internship Coordinator. Prior to joining Unadilla Community Farm, Greta worked and WWOOFed at organic farms and vegan retreat centers across North America. She also previously worked as New York Organizer for Food & Water Watch, campaigning on issues related to fracking, genetically engineered foods, climate change, and the corporate control of our common resources. In addition to her current work with Unadilla Community Farm, she is the Organizing Director for World BEYOND War, a global anti-war non-profit.



Bari Zeiger is the Director of Development and Administration at Providence Farm Collective. She is also the Farmer Representative of NE SARE's Administrative Council, a grant reviewer for the New England Grassroots Fund, the Women Affinity Representative on the Federal Policy Committee for the National Young Farmers Coalition, and a member of the Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute's Board of Directors. Formerly, Bari managed the farm at Frost Valley YMCA, optimizing and expanding production, educational programs, and community relationships. In 2020, Bari began the process of building her own agricultural small business, Healing Poem Farm, in Java, NY.

BOARD



A practitioner of permaculture and owner and manager of Let it Grow Landscapes, **Vic Ziminsky** (Secretary) creates and installs edible and ecological landscape design plans for community and home gardens. He became certified to practice permaculture design through the Center of Bioregional Living, in New York City. Let it Grow Landscapes is an Organic Landcare company, certified by NOFA-CT. Vic also studies at the New York Botanical Gardens School of Horticulture and Landscape Design.

ADVISORY BOARD



Born in Norwalk, CT, **Roberto Zapata** is a first generation son of Mayra, from Costa Rica, and the late Roberto Zapata Sr., from Colombia. He has had a long history of wood working and construction. Roberto is a passionate builder, designer, and creator. He apprenticed with an arborist for three years. He has independently pursued the study of tree, plant, and mushroom medicines. In 2015 Roberto started a community garden project, Meadows Garden Pride, in the public housing complex where he lived. From 2017-2018 Roberto led campers ages 8-18, and adults of all ages, in foraging, plant identification, and medicinal plant harvesting classes at Holmes Camp & Retreat Center. In 2018 he earned his permaculture certification. La Jolie Journet is a mobile community outreach program that Roberto, along with Nina Buxenbaum, are currently building, and invite all those interested to link up.

STAFF



Ben Tyler is the farm's Project Manager. He has over a decade of experience in permaculture design, sustainable housing, organic farming, and community development projects. He has worked with local governments, NGOs, non-profits, organic farms, and intentional communities in North America, Latin America and Europe, and teaches permaculture design certification courses, natural building workshops and organic farming seminars.



Greta Zarro is the farm's Internship Coordinator, overseeing the recruitment and application process for the internship, as well as on-site management of the program. She also serves on the farm's Board of Directors.

PROGRAMS

BEGINNING FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

2021 was the 8th season welcoming interns for our accredited beginning farmer training program, which teaches practices such as organic farming, regenerative agroforestry, permaculture design, natural building, food preservation, plant-based cooking, and more, to prepare interns for careers in food and farming. In 2021, we hosted 34 interns, a 30% increase from the previous year. A number of graduates received academic credit at their college/university for completing the program.

As part of the program's focus on workforce development, participants assisted in all aspects of the farm's veggie box program to address food insecurity in Central New York State. Participants gained experience with a range of skills, including no-till bed preparation, seeding, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, pruning, trellising, integrated pest management, plant propagation, composting, seed saving, mulching, food preservation, use of hand and power tools, harvesting, and packing CSA boxes — all with a focus on growing cold-hardy fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and herbs in a Northeast zone 4+ climate. Through classes/workshops, participants learned concepts such as: food safety basics, introductory marketing strategies, crop rotation, farm planning, food forest design, permaculture design, and more.

Looking ahead, through the support of a \$63,000 capacity-building grant from the Chobani Community Impact Fund of the Community Foundation for South Central New York, we will be creating three new paid seasonal staff positions and expanding our educational programming. This added capacity will enable us to host more interns, offer more classes, and provide a more enriching, customized learning experience for beginning farmer training program participants.



PROGRAMS

VEGGIE BOX DELIVERY PROGRAM

Key to Unadilla Community Farm's mission is providing access to fresh produce for low-income and low-access communities through our veggie box delivery program — grown, cared for, harvested, and packed by the beginning farmer training program participants. The veggie box program addresses the need for fresh, accessible produce for the greater Edmeston area — a USDA low-income, low-access food desert. We work to fill the gap by growing healthy fruits and veggies for the community. Our veggie boxes are offered on a sliding scale — starting at \$0, no questions asked — so families pay what they can afford.

In addition to delivering directly to families from June-October, the veggie box program consists of partnerships with local food banks across Central New York to provide free produce for their clients. In 2021, we partnered with the Edmeston Community Cupboard to provide free fresh produce for 80 food boxes delivered to families weekly from June-October. Additionally, we forged new partnerships with the Cooperstown and Utica Food Pantries to provide produce for their clients this season.

**3,936 pounds of
veggies produced
in 2021.**

**85% donated to
food banks;
15% distributed
at sliding scale.**



PROGRAMS

RESEARCH

As an education center, Unadilla Community Farm is a site for experimentation and learning. We showcase a wide variety of sustainable farming techniques and conduct on-farm research to trial new methods, offer recommendations, and provide replicable models for our interns and the broader farming community. From collecting soil samples to measuring the pH of liquid fertilizers, interns gain hands-on experience to prepare them for future careers in agricultural research.

In 2021, we wrapped up a 2-year Northeast SARE-funded study on dynamic accumulators, which are seen as a promising closed-loop nutrient management solution that converts farm waste into valuable nutrient sources, while reducing the need for purchased fertilizers and amendments. The first phase of our research was to establish clear criteria for identifying dynamic accumulator species, and create an online database of all known plants that qualify. The second phase involved 2 years of field trials for 6 promising species, tracking nutrient levels in the soil, plant tissue, “chop and drop” mulches, and liquid fertilizers made from these plants. The full findings were compiled in a 35-page report available at

unadillacommunityfarm.org/dynamicaccumulators and an article was published through The Permaculture Research Institute announcing the results.



A new study has shown Russian comfrey to be a dynamic accumulator of both potassium and silicon. Image provided by authors.

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PLANTS SOIL

New findings further the study of dynamic accumulators

Unadilla Community Farm

0 8 minutes read

Authors: Ben Tyler & Greta Zarro, Unadilla Community Farm

As permaculture principles gain popularity, there is growing interest in “dynamic accumulator” plants and their potential



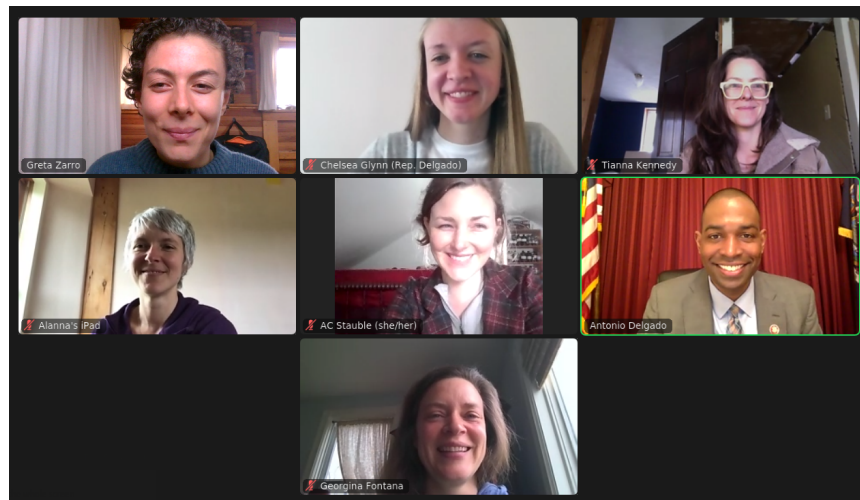
This material is based upon work supported by Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) in the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), under Award No. 2019-38640-29877. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

At its core, organizing is about relationship building — identifying local stakeholders for collaborative partnerships to work towards mutual goals, such as enhancing local food access and promoting policies that reduce barriers facing the next generation of farmers. Because community organizing involves public speaking, time management, leadership, conscious communication, event planning, coalition building, and more, it is a valuable skill for our interns to learn, whatever career path they choose to pursue.

Leatherstocking Young Farmers Coalition: Unadilla Community Farm is a co-founder & co-organizer of the Leatherstocking Young Farmers Coalition, a local chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition. As a farmer-driven collective, the chapter creates a platform for networking, skills and resource sharing, and advocacy to create a more viable climate for small-scale sustainable agriculture. In 2021, our chapter organized a virtual lobby day with Congressman Antonio Delgado (NY-19) to discuss young farmers' needs and challenges, including protecting farmland from development pressure, lack of broadband access for farmers, and lack of access to processing facilities.

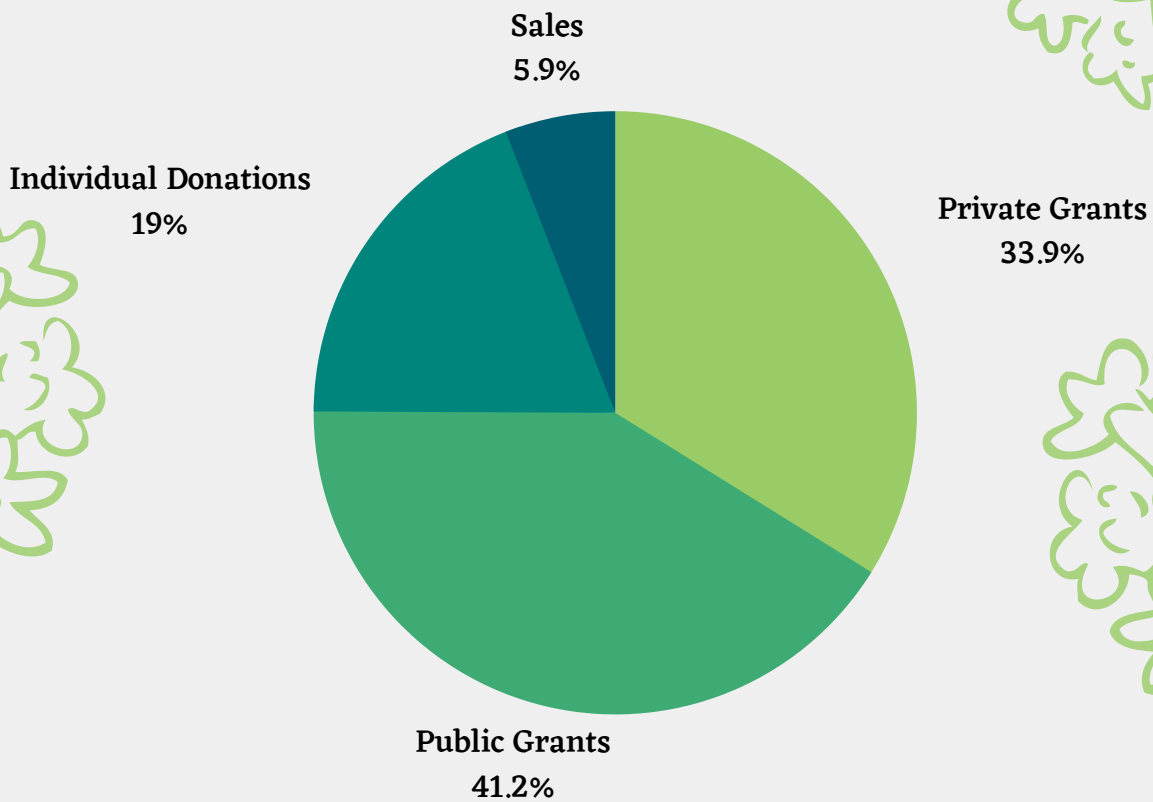


Agricultural Committees: Unadilla Community Farm is represented by our board and staff on a number of agricultural advisory committees in the region, including: Agriculture Advisory Committee - NY's 19th Congressional District; Otsego County Ag and Farmland Protection Plan Implementation Committee (AFPPIC); & American Farmland Trust's Farmland for a New Generation New York Advisory Council.

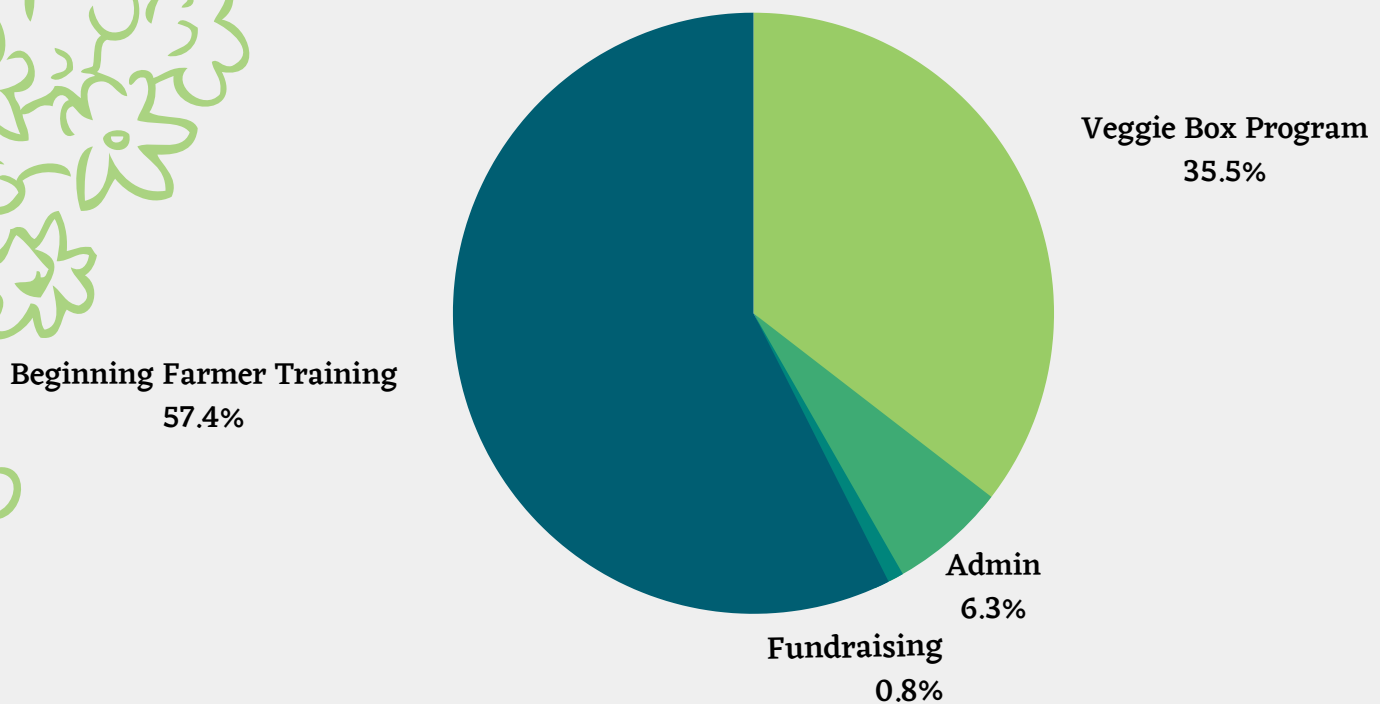
Compost Pick-Up & Local Waste Upcycling Program: Unadilla Community Farm collaborates with local farms, natural food stores, saw mills, refuse services, mechanics, and other businesses in the area for our composting and upcycling program, a win-win relationship where we receive local waste, divert it from going to the landfill, and transform it into usable farming or building materials. Through partnerships with local natural food stores, we divert approximately 1 ton of food waste from the landfill every year.

2021 FINANCIALS

TOTAL INCOME: \$47,994.67



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$35,868.76





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