



UNADILLA  
COMMUNITY  
FARM

2022

# Annual Report



# About & Mission



## UNADILLA COMMUNITY FARM

Unadilla Community Farm is an off-grid fruit & vegetable farm and non-profit permaculture education center, situated on 11.35 acres in West Edmeston, NY. 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 and natural building, 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, heavy mulching, on-site composting, crop rotation, and high tunnels.

Gold  
Transparency  
2022

Candid.

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



# Board of Directors



**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** is the farm's Board President & Treasurer. 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.



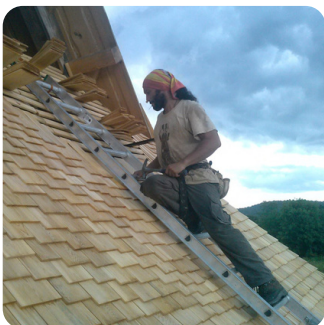


**Bari Zeiger** is the Director of Development and Administration at Providence Farm Collective. She is also the Farmer Representative of NE SARE's Administrative Council, a grant reviewer for the New England Grassroots Fund, the Women Affinity Representative on the Federal Policy Committee for the National 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.



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.

## Advisor



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.



# Programs:

## Beginning Farmer Training Program

2022 was our 9th season welcoming interns for our accredited beginning farmer training program, teaching skills related to no-till organic farming, regenerative agroforestry, permaculture design, natural building, food preservation, plant-based cooking, and more. We offer an immersive residential program with a minimum stay of 1 month, focused on hands-on experiential learning. This season, we hosted 27 interns from across the country and around the world, including from the countries of France & Lebanon. At least 4 interns received academic credit at the undergraduate or graduate level through academic institutions, such as Bowdoin College in Maine, Kalamazoo College in Michigan, and École d'ingénieurs de Purpan in France, for completing our program.

This season we expanded our capacity by hiring staff and scaling up our programming to include 24 hands-on training hours a week plus 10-12 classroom hours per week. Thanks to grant support, the program is offered at no cost to participants, covering classes, trainings, and room & board.

Hands-on training took place from 8:00am-12:00pm Monday-Saturday. During these hours, interns worked alongside staff and peers in the field, in the wash and pack station, or in the farm kitchen, learning skills from seeding & transplanting all the way through to harvesting, packing veggies for delivery, and cooking & preserving fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and herbs. In this way, interns participated in the whole process from seed to plate, to prepare them for a wide range of career paths related to food & agriculture.





# Programs: Beginning Farmer Training Program

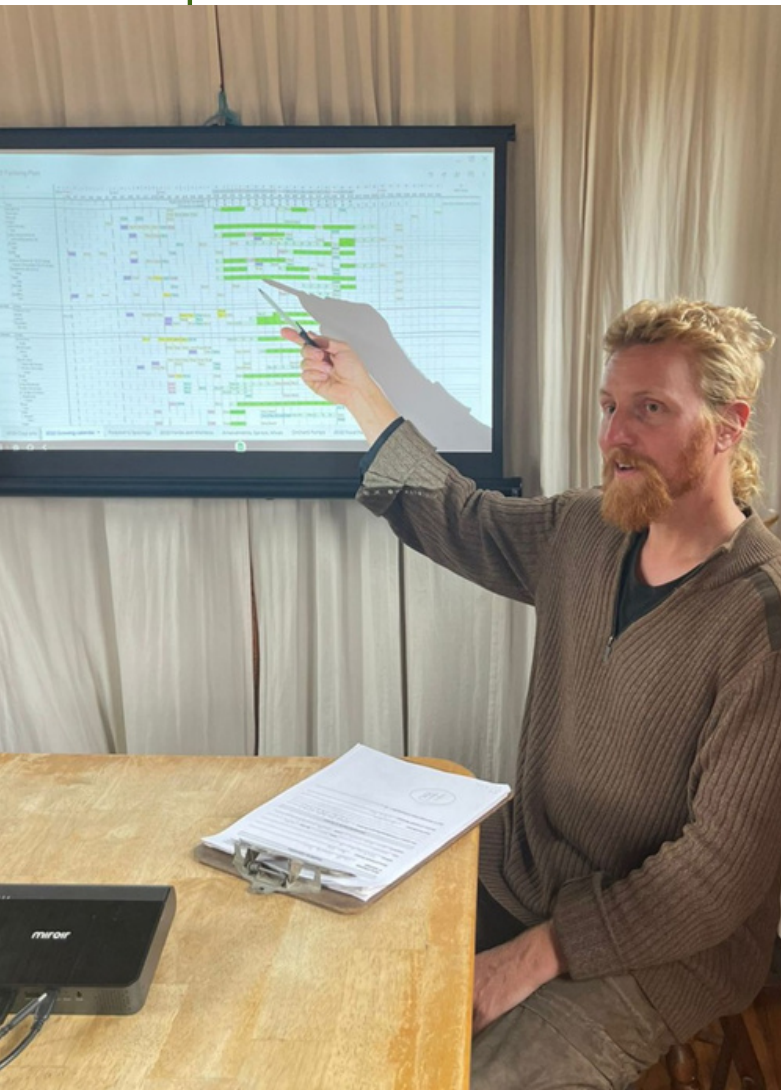
Classroom hours were from 2:00pm-4:00pm Monday-Friday and included two classes a week with staff, one peer-to-peer learning opportunity a week, and two Zoom classes a week with guest instructors, thanks to our newly-built solar-powered off-grid classroom.

## Core Classes taught by Staff:

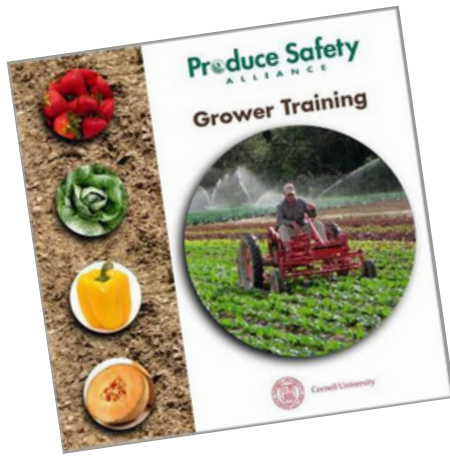
- Farm/Food Business Models & Funding
- Agroforestry & Food Forest Design
- Farm/Garden Design & Crop Planning
- Irrigation Models

## Elective Classes taught by Staff:

- Permaculture Design
- Foraging & Wildcrafting
- Mushroom Cultivation
- Food Preservation (Canning, Fermentation, & Dehydration)
- Natural Building 101
- Tiny Home & Skoolie Construction
- Solar 101
- Grassroots Organizing 101 & Activism
- Grant Writing 101
- Studying Indigenous Microorganisms







New in 2022: We partnered with the National Young Farmers Coalition Food Safety Fellows to offer FSMA training for the interns, a federally-recognized food safety training that is required by law for many farms, to equip interns with the skills they need to manage a farm or start up their own. This was a win-win train-the-trainer opportunity for the Food Safety Fellows, who were undergoing training to become food safety instructors through the National Young Farmers Coalition.

Additionally, new this year, thanks to grant support, we were able to hire trainer Miles Sherts to offer 4 hours of conscious communication training per month throughout the season. These critical communication skills can be applied to any type of workplace or community living, helping interns thrive in whatever path they choose.

Other guest instructor classes offered this season included: Native Plants and Plant Propagation with Alyssa Wisheart of Wild Ginger Farm, Herbalism with AC Stauble of Traveling Herb Farmer, and Fundraising 101 with development professional Alex McAdams.

A big thanks to the many donors who made the Beginning Farmer Training Program possible, including the OCIA which provided a Micro Education Grant to support this year's internship!

## Programs: Beginning Farmer Training 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. This season, we expanded the coverage of our veggie box program. We donated to pantries in Otsego, Oneida, and Herkimer counties, partnering with the Utica Food Pantry, Cooperstown Food Pantry, Edmeston Community Cupboard, Herkimer Salvation Army Food Pantry, and Ilion-Frankfort Food Pantry. The food pantries we serve frequently tell us how grateful they are to have fresh produce, which many of their clients rarely receive. The COVID pandemic and current economic downturn have only exacerbated food insecurity issues in our region, underscoring the importance of our work.

## **Programs: Veggie Box Delivery Program**

**2,443 lbs of veggies  
produced in 2022.**

**53% donated to food  
pantries in Otsego,  
Oneida, & Herkimer  
Counties.**

**"The Utica Food Pantry cannot thank your program enough for helping us provide nutritional food to the community. Many families don't get to eat or try fresh produce. You brought lots of smiles!"**

**-Heather Wasielewski, Executive Director, Utica Food Pantry**





# Programs:

## Veggie Box Delivery Program

In addition to delivering to food pantries, we also delivered weekly veggie boxes from June-October directly to families in the Edmeston area — a USDA low-income, low-access food desert, meaning an area with high poverty rates where the nearest supermarket is over 10 miles away and a significant number of households don't have a vehicle. Boxes for families are priced on a sliding scale — starting at \$0, no questions asked — delivered directly to families' doorsteps at no cost.

**“I eat more veggies  
because they’re  
delivered fresh and  
beautiful right to  
my door!”**

**~2022 Program  
Participant**





# Programs: Research

This season, Matt Bedeaux, Unadilla Community Farm's 2022 Research Fellow, conducted on-site research funded by Northeast SARE on indigenous microorganisms.

This research project provided a comparison of purchased and farm-produced soil amendments. Specifically, the soil amendment Indigenous Microorganisms (IMO), a recipe for which is given in Korean Natural Farming, was compared to hot compost, municipal compost, and the mycorrhizal inoculant MycoGrow® Soluble (Fungi Perfecti, LLC). Chemical nutrient analysis, soil food web microscopy, and identification of plated bacteria and fungi cultures were conducted to provide a general overview of each amendment's properties and conditions. Labor and costs for each of the three amendments were compared to assist farmer decision-making. Wheat bran-derived IMO was also compared to the traditional rice bran in order to adapt the Korean methodology to the Northeastern US.

Throughout this project, 17 interns in Unadilla Community Farm's Beginning Farmer Training Program participated in the on-farm production and preparation of lab samples of hot compost and IMO. Additionally, the interns were provided with an in-depth seminar on the motivations, methods, and results of the project.

Matt's work was featured on the Plant Cuning Podcast and published by the Permaculture Research Institute. An article is also slated for publication in Garden Culture Magazine's February 2023 edition.





# Programs: Research



Led by Matt, interns participated in the 4 steps of producing IMO.



Interns were also trained in making and sampling hot compost on site.





## **2022 Research Fellow**

**Matt Bedeaux** is Unadilla Community Farm's 2022 Research Fellow. Born and raised in the Sandia Mountains of central New Mexico, he graduated in 2020 from the University of Colorado with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Matt is a 2021 alumnus of the farm's Permaculture Internship. During his 2-month internship in 2021, he took a strong interest in on-farm research, assisting with Unadilla Community Farm's Northeast SARE-funded study on dynamic accumulators. This inspired him to come back to the farm in 2022 to lead his own Northeast SARE-funded research project, studying beneficial microorganisms. He also has a background in public speaking, philosophy, high school and collegiate teaching, and academic research (including an undergraduate publication on alternative cement chemistry).

# **Programs: Research**

## **Key Findings**

- Compost offers a more balanced soil ecosystem, higher nutrient content, and cheaper cost than IMO.
- Control of high moisture content may have progressed anaerobic qualities of IMO, such as the presence of oomycetes.
- Biological conditions vary throughout the IMO production process, and conditions at the IMO collection site appear not to be reproduced by the IMO product.
- Commercial inoculants may not include their advertised material and will necessitate experimentation to find an effective application rate.

**Learn more at  
[unadillacommunityfarm.org/IMO](https://unadillacommunityfarm.org/IMO)**

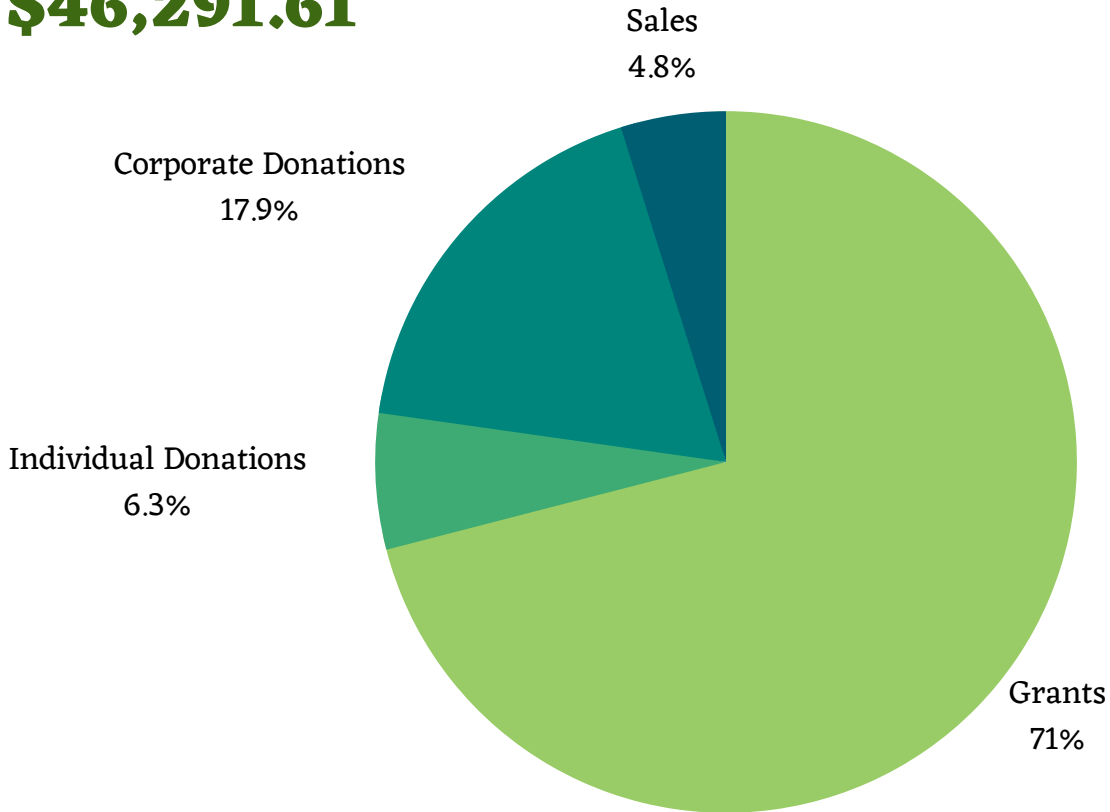


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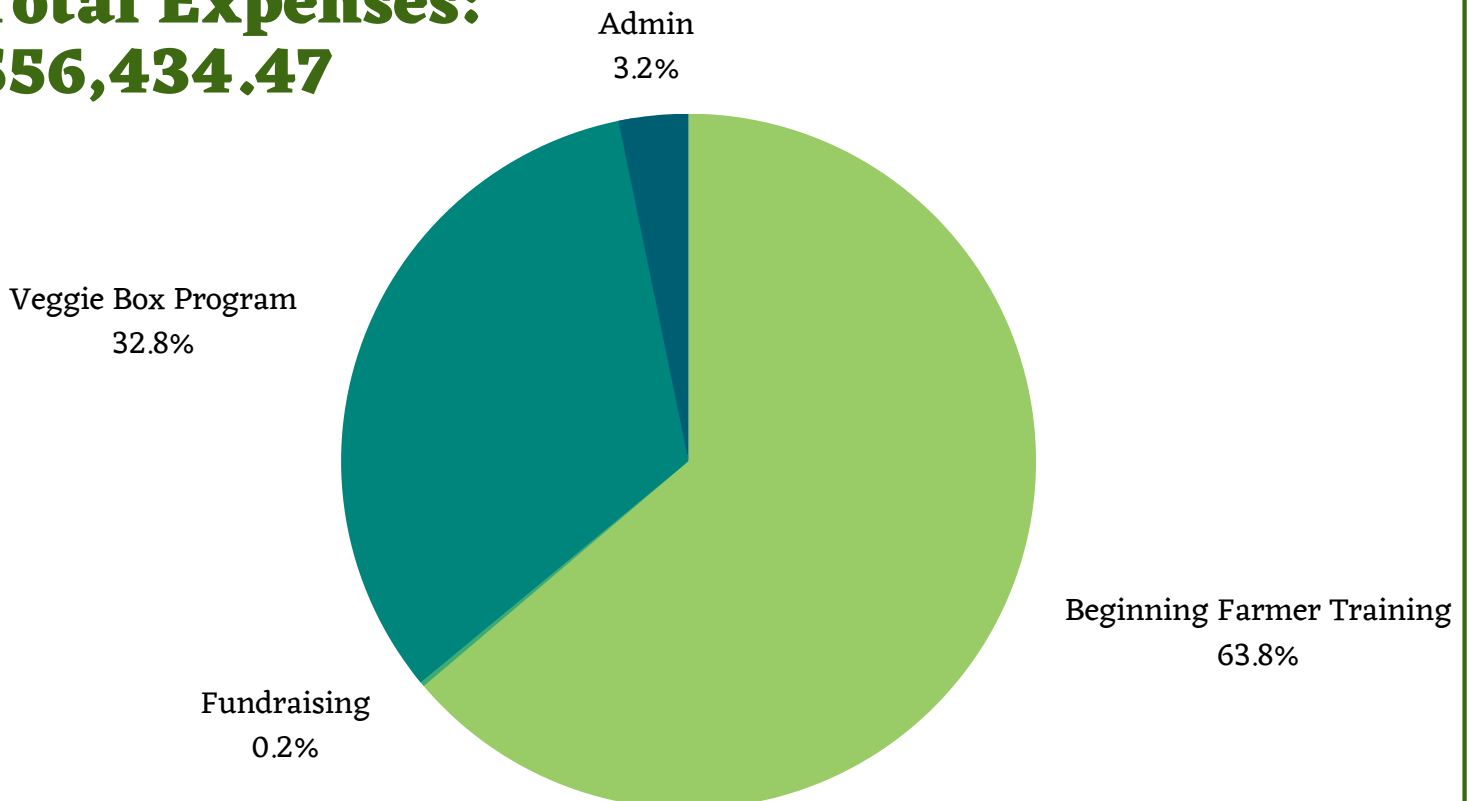


# 2022 Financials

**Total Income:**  
**\$46,291.61**



**Total Expenses:**  
**\$56,434.47**







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