



## Annual Report 2012





The Duke Campus Farm is a production farm and educational facility dedicated to providing the Duke and Durham communities with fresh, sustainable produce and creating a living-learning laboratory around all things food and agriculture.

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Front and back cover: Summer interns and volunteers harvest sweet corn to sell at weekly Farmers' Market on campus.

# Duke Campus Farm

## Annual Report

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The Duke Campus Farm thrives on rain and sunshine, on the sweat of interns and volunteers, and on the dedication and work of its many supporters across the University and its Durham community. As 2013 begins, we thank you for everything you’ve done for DCF in 2012.

**DUKE CAMPUS FARM STAFF**

Emily Sloss, *Farm Manager*  
Sarah Parsons, *Fellow*

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Duke University Green Grant

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Jennifer Molnar  
Michael and Gretchen Morrissey  
Brock Phillips  
Cate Smith



**A LETTER FROM THE FARM MANAGER**

I will always remember 2010 as the year of an idea whose time had come: a campus farm that feeds, educates and inspires the Duke Community. In 2011 that idea took root as we hired a farm manager, brought on interns, tilled the earth, delivered thousands of pounds of food to Duke dining halls, and partnered with a handful of classes across the University’s myriad disciplines. But none of that compares to 2012; this year, roots firmly planted, the Duke Campus Farm blossomed.

The Farm’s tendrils have been busy exploring new terrain. Our single acre grew over 100 different varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs and mushrooms. The farm launched a workshop series that sold out every one of its 20+ events. Duke faculty used the farm for class projects in ways that I could never have foreseen a year ago. Student volunteers flocked to the farm in ever-growing numbers; Duke students aren’t afraid to get their hands dirty. Site improvements continue, and work began in earnest to create a pavilion that will further multiply our educational and community-building potential.

There is too much to do—winter greens to harvest, spring crops to start, a high tunnel to build, workshops to teach, festivals to plan—to dwell long on the memories of 2012. But I offer you this annual report as a retrospective, that you may enjoy revisiting a wonderful year at DCF even as you imagine all the possibilities for 2013.

I am so grateful for all the people who have graced the farm this past year with their talents, energy and laughter. Know that this project flourishes on your support.

See you at the farm,

Emily Sloss





7,400 pounds of our produce, from over 130 varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs and mushrooms, appeared in Duke dining halls in 2012. Featured here are our famous beets including Chioggia, Early Wonder, Bull's Blood and Detroit Golden varieties.

# GROWING FOOD

Growing healthy food for the Duke Community remains the heart of our mission. As campus farms spread across American higher education, DCF distinguishes itself by its firm commitment to bring student-grown produce directly to campus dining halls. Every week, dozens of student, faculty and staff volunteers “close the loop” between the corporeal origins of food and the prepared meal on their plate. The goal is not to produce a force of Duke-degree-holding farmers. The goal is to instill a mindfulness about food within a population of future leaders.



Increased Production for Campus Dining Halls

From Day 1, DCF’s business model and philosophy prioritized the connection between students and their food by putting a fully functional food system at their fingertips. In order for students to appreciate the “full circle,” it’s critical that when they sit down to meals at campus dining halls, they can expect to find produce they had a hand in growing. At Duke, the farm is lucky to have partners like Duke Dining and Bon Appétit Management Company who actively support our mission to provide fresh, sustainable food to students.

At the beginning of every season, the Farm Manager meets with the dining hall chefs to discuss what crops to grow in the coming months. Crop selection is a balancing act between climate and soil conditions, student preferences, and financial sustainability. Each season since our launch we’ve been able to increase the amount of DCF produce in campus dining halls, with a record 7,400 pounds finding its way directly to student dinner plates in 2012.

BY THE NUMBERS

quantity of produce sold **7,400 lbs** \\\ unique varieties grown **134**  
**\$15,700** in sales FY 2011-12 \\\ **67%** increased sales from previous year  
growing space added **1800 ft<sup>2</sup>** \\\ inaugural CSA members **15**

Launch of Summer CSA

“CSA” stands for community supported agriculture, a system that requires customers pay in advance for a weekly box of produce, with a promise to deliver a variety of vegetables, fruits and herbs during the following season. DCF believes in the traditional CSA system where the consumer shares in the risk and reward of the farm by paying for a “share” of our harvest. Crops that did well were abundant in the share, while crops that suffered were less abundant. We never bought produce from other farms or wholesale distributors to fill our boxes each week. Instead, members received a true reflection of what we were producing on the farm—in 2012, they shared equally in the bounty of spring rains and the hardships of August drought. Our sold-out 15-member CSA connected us with many new community members who were wonderfully supportive and appreciative of all the hard work that went into delivering them fresh produce each Tuesday afternoon.

Vendor at the Duke Farmers’ Market

Every Friday afternoon, April through September, the Duke Farmers’ Market sets up shop on the medical campus sidewalks. A bounty of produce, flowers, and prepared foods arrive from across the Triangle. DCF was pleased to join the ranks this summer and experience the communal atmosphere of market, the joy of earning the loyalty of regular customers, the heat of the southern sun at 1pm in July, and the many marketing lessons that come with instant customer feedback. Selling at the market was also a great opportunity to connect with Health System employees wandering the stalls during lunch break.

Emily McGinty, our summer intern, reflected on her experience at market:

*“I enjoyed sharing the farm’s story with new and sometimes disbelieving customers: Yes, the produce was picked an hour ago only a few miles away; yes, I chose to work here because the farm stretches my intellect as much as it does my muscles, and yes indeed, this is good, hard, paid work.”*





# INTO THE CLASSROOM

As a living-learning laboratory, the farm enriches the University's academic offerings with opportunities to engage any topic outside the classroom walls. Our conviction is that the farm has something to offer every academic discipline: inspiration for creative writing; physical challenges met by innovative engineers; experiential education for sociologists studying migrant farm workers; a laboratory for plant biologists; and food safety statutes for law students. We're committed to helping all students follow their passions at the farm.



During a freshman orientation event, Faculty Outing, 20 freshman toured the farm and shared a meal they harvested together. Student uses iPhone app "Melon Meter" to test ripeness of watermelon.

## Academic Coursework

Each semester the farm works with a handful of classes across the Triangle. Here are a few of the highlights from 2012:

### North Carolina State University

Landscape Architecture Master Thesis Studio: LAR 679

Advanced Agroecology: CS 430, Dr. Michelle Shroeder-Moreno

### Duke University, Trinity College

Documentary Photography: DOCST 450, Dr. Lisa Satterwhite

Diet and Nutrition: PE 110, Prof. Franca Alphin

Environmental Studies Senior Thesis: ENV 393 Dr. Charlotte Clark

### Duke University, Nicholas School

Master's Project: ENV 899. "Creating Educational Curriculum for Duke Campus Farm," Dr. Chantal Reid

Community Based Env Management: ENV 755, Dr. Liz Shapiro

## Student Internships

Our two summer interns spent three months learning the intricacies of growing for CSA and market, waking every morning before dawn, and developing muscles, callouses and tans from long days in the field. In addition to production responsibilities, they took weekly field trips to local farms and learned preserving techniques such as canning and pickling.

During the school year, four undergraduate and graduate students put in their work-study hours at the farm. They do it all, from daily chores to planning and leading workshops, blogging and facilitating community workdays. Interns also have the freedom to spearhead projects that reflect their own interests. For example, our compost system, mushroom logs and outhouse are all direct results of student intern projects. In October, the entire student staff attended the Carolina Farm Stewardship Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Greenville, SC.

## University Certificates in Sustainability

Over the past several years, both demand and supply of food- and agriculture-focused courses have increased dramatically. In 2012, the university made steps toward formalizing this growing interest with two proposed certificates: a graduate-level Sustainable Food Systems and an undergraduate Sustainability Certificate. In the meantime, Duke launched the campus-wide University Course and chose Food Studies as its first topic.

## Visits from Partner Organizations

- Children of Eastern Carolina farmworkers visited through *Rural Advancement Foundation International* program

- *International Affairs Council* brought visiting Burmese high school students

- *Carolina Friends School* visited regularly: middle school gardeners and various class field trips

- *University of Michigan* and *Kentucky Christian University* students toured for research to launch their own campus farm and garden

- Consulted with *Durham Public Schools* in preparation for a county-wide student farm initiative

- *Duke School* toured to brainstorm community garden improvements

- *Johnson C. Smith University* freshman bio students discussed links between farm operations and curriculum

- *Environmental Justice Workshop* participants toured farm and harvested crops for shared meal





Workshop participant learns the “ins and outs” of poultry production during our Chicken Processing Workshop, as part of our wildly successful “Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse” skill-building workshop series.

## CREATING COMMUNITY

*“The shared meal elevates eating from a mechanical process of fueling the body to a ritual of family and community, from the mere animal biology to an act of culture,”* writes Michael Pollan. Truer still, DCF believes, we should share not only the meal but also the preceding acts of growing the food and learning how to prepare it. Our workdays, workshops and festivals embody this vision of a community drawn closer by a unified investment in the food we share. It is a community built on sweat equity, creative pursuit, active listening and, of course, mouthwatering meals.



Skill-Building Workshop Series

2012 marked the launch of our wildly popular workshop series, “Surviving the Zombie Apocalypse.” The idea for the series was born out of our desire to acquire a certain level of self-sufficiency and everyday skills. After all, we don’t know how or where it will begin, but with the power grid down, global trade halted and brain-loving zombies roaming the countryside, we want the Duke community to be prepared. Workshops were taught by student interns, staff and local experts. Every class offered sold out, and some were so popular they were offered twice.

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mushroom Log Inoculation | Beekeeping 101                   |
| Beer Brewing             | Juicing                          |
| Cheese Making            | Kombucha and Kimchi Fermentation |
| Foraging and Fire Making | Jam and Preserve-making          |
| Basic Cooking            | Chicken Processing               |
| Basic Bike Repair        | Medicinal Herbs                  |

Speed Weeding

In collaboration with NC State’s Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), DCF hosted two “alternative” socials this summer where participants were encouraged to “meet their match in the weed patch.” Graduate students gathered to help us keep unwanted plants out of the vegetable rows, but they primarily showed up to meet new friends and enjoy a farm-fresh meal with interesting people. This new take on networking and dating has since popped up across the country. As hopeful leaders in the sustainable food universe, we’re always pleased to see trailblazing ideas spread across the landscape!

Community Workdays

Every Sunday and Thursday afternoon a group of volunteers arrives at the farm--no matter the season--to work on projects ranging from planting to harvesting and everything in between. Thousands of volunteer hours were logged by the hundreds of unique visitors. Some were experienced gardeners, some self-described “first time vegetable eaters,” but all were eager to learn a little bit more about their food and how it’s grown.

Beet Festival

Beets have consistently proven to be one of our most productive and beautiful crops. To celebrate the harvest season and our official vegetable mascot, we threw our First Annual Beet Festival in October. To prepare, we grew six different beet varieties across the color spectrum to ensure the meal would feature them prominently. Festival-goers enjoyed beets in everything from beer, kombucha and soda, to coleslaw and beet green pesto, to beet chocolate cake and ice cream. The sunny afternoon brought a record number of visitors to the farm, with over 100 guests in attendance.



Over 100 people gathered to celebrate our First Annual Beet Festival and fall harvest. All 12 dishes featured beets, including beet beer and beet ice cream.



# BUILDING A FARM

Demand is growing for DCF's produce, educational programs, and community events, and the farm continues to build a physical infrastructure to meet these needs. We undertake each new construction project with three principles at heart: make it functional, make it beautiful, and whenever possible make it with our own hands (so we get to learn something along the way). The farm views structures as the physical embodiment of our values and our vision. We build things with purpose, care and a touch of quirkiness. When is an outhouse more than a bathroom? When it's a library, a vista, and a refuge.



Farm Fellow, Sarah Parsons, plants the first apple tree in our orchard. Our demonstration garden contains perennial crops and plots that explain the nuts and bolts of sustainable agriculture.



Our new cottage-style outhouse offers a library, comfortable seating, and a Dutch door, which opens onto a bucolic vista. The outhouse is one of our many 2012 site improvements focused on beautification and food production.



## The Duke Endowment

In Spring 2012, DCF secured a \$75,000 grant from The Duke Endowment (TDE) to meet growing production and educational program demands. In a precedent-setting collaboration, all four Duke Endowment schools (Duke, Furman, Johnson C. Smith, and Davidson) requested that grant money earmarked for on-campus sustainability would support food-related ventures. Simply put, as food culture gains traction across American colleges, we are proud to join TDE in pursuing cutting edge thought-leadership around sustainable food systems.

## Welcoming our First Fellow

Using the TDE grant, DCF moved immediately to hire local food systems advocate Sarah Parsons as the farm's first Fellow. Sarah assists with day-to-day farm operations part-time as she drives development of our educational mission, both present and future. Her key responsibilities include locating professors and researchers at Duke in the field of sustainable food systems; interviewing local farmers who follow sustainable production practices; compiling a list of potential research ideas for students and researchers at Duke; and finding innovative paths to share this research with farmers throughout Durham and North Carolina.

## Infrastructure Improvements Transform Farm Site

Relying primarily on TDE support, Duke Sustainability grants, and DCF's own operating budget, the farm completed myriad site improvement projects in 2012. Farm staff constructed much needed bathroom facilities in the form of a pit-privy outhouse.

Initiated specifically with TDE support, we've begun construction of educational garden plots around the perimeter of our humble acre. These plots will educate visitors about the inner-workings of a small sustainable farm, covering themes of crop rotation, soil fertility, and integrated pest management. For example, we planted apples, cherries, figs, mulberries, blueberries, muscadines, blackberries, paw paws, and hazelnuts at the farm in Winter 2012. Another example: our nascent herb garden demonstrates the different ways that herbs can be used, and features culinary herbs, herbs used for tea, and medicinal varieties. Other significant (and ongoing) construction projects include a system of permanent pathways, renovation of our existing high tunnel, and the transplantation of a second much larger high tunnel. If these projects are any indication, 2013 looks even brighter than 2012.



# LOOKING FORWARD

“If you build it, they will come” is the mantra of unproven ideas searching for funding. “They keep coming, so we need to built it” better describes our predicament. New community members arrive daily and in growing numbers, having heard our mission of experiential education, academic enrichment, and authentic community, or simply in search of a respite from their laptops and deadlines. Yet as we daily welcome new friends to our community, our needs have rapidly outpaced the physical capacity to provide the world-class experiences we envision. To further our mission of education, production, and community building, we’re thrilled to present the next great thing at the Duke Campus Farm.

Architectural renderings paint a vision of the farm in 2013, including a pavilion, pizza oven, walk-in cooler, shed and wash station. These additions will allow us to meet the growing demand for farm produce and programming.

## Barn-Raising

Pre-construction planning continues for an ensemble of new buildings in the coming year. The “barn” will become the heart of the farm, serving as an outdoor classroom, social gathering space, shelter from the elements and production center. Physically, it will comprise a pavilion, including a pizza oven and cooking area, a walk-in cooler, a produce wash station and much-needed storage space. In true barn-raising fashion, neighbors and community partners will play an integral role in sourcing the materials, labor and technical expertise. This strategy reduces costs dramatically and turns the whole project into an act of community.

## How You Can Help Us Succeed

In addition to the support and talents of our community, we’re still seeking financial support to ensure the farm’s continued growth and success. We welcome gifts to the farm at [www.sites.duke.edu/farm/giving-opportunities](http://www.sites.duke.edu/farm/giving-opportunities).





