



Dear ##[Name | First]##,

The leaves are changing, the nights are getting cooler, and fall is officially upon us. We hope you get to celebrate the bounty of this early fall season! We might even argue that late September and early October are the best times for local food sourcing in Kentucky. Make sure to check out the [OAK Find-A Farm Directory](#) to find more local, organic farm products in your area.

As we gear up for October, we are also excited for our [Cook with a Farmer Class](#) at The Food Connection on the University of Kentucky's (UK) campus with Hickory Grove Farm - Tuesday October 10th from 6:00-7:30pm. We will hear from Farmer Ryan Burnette about their certified organic produce operation and prepare a seasonal dish with Chef Tanya Whitehouse using ingredients from the farm. There is still space available and if you are interested we encourage you to sign up today!

In this month's issue, OAK highlights [Cedar Ring Greens](#)' on-farm solar and sustainability initiatives, a series of butternut squash recipes, and tips for planting garlic this fall!

Happy Leaf-Watching,
The OAK Team

Farm Feature...

Cedar Ring Greens: Advancing Solar Energy

For nearly twenty years, [Cedar Ring Greens](#) has been a part of the Franklin County local food scene. As year-round producers of certified organic greens, herbs, peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, and more, Connie Lemley, Andy McDonald, and Mehera Baugher have contributed to the fresh, healthy food offerings available to community members and market customers. Mehera is currently the trio's full-time farmer, supported by the landowners Connie, who has passed the torch of full-time farming to serve as the farm-to-school coordinator for Frankfort Independent Schools, and Andy, who works full-time as a sustainable energy advocate.

Cedar Ring Greens has cultivated a firm commitment to sustainability throughout their many years of farming. During OAK's Farmer Field Day this June, participants got to see their renewable energy use and creation, complemented by their organic, low-input, minimal-till farming system. Andy McDonald showcased his family's home which was renovated to be net zero, with grid-tied solar panels for electric and water needs, passive solar elements, intentional insulation and design, and

energy-efficient systems. Mehera Baugher then highlighted the farm's vegetable beds, featuring natural mulching, cover crops, biointensive tools and practices, and season extension.



Their Cedar Ring Greens adventure started when Connie and Andy purchased their 12-acre farm in 2009. From 2009 to 2015, Andy McDonald stayed busy retrofitting their existing house to use wood heat, a passive solar Trombe wall, a composting toilet, a green roof, a greywater system, a nine-panel solar PV array, and a solar water heating system. The results allowed them to produce more energy than they used.

These renovations have enabled the house to make the best use of the passive solar design for heating, complemented by the wood stove, offering the primary heat during the cool months. Cedar Ring Greens' active solar energy system has grown as the family's needs have grown, increasing from an original array of 5 solar panels (which at 1400KwH/year provided 100% of the family's energy needs in 2011) to 9 panels in 2017 and then 29 in 2020, which now produces more than the family needs (even with an electric car). These current arrays are grid-tied to the Kentucky Utilities system, allowing the family to receive kilowatt-hour credits for energy fed back into the grid, via a net-metering agreement.





Along with a solar hot water collector, the passive solar design, wood heat, and the absence of an air-conditioner allow the family to avoid the use of the three primary consumers of electricity in the average American home: air conditioning, electric heat, and electric water heaters. (Andy noted that 75% of a family's hot water needs can be supplied with a solar hot water system - although these are not commonly used in the US as solar electric photovoltaic systems have become much cheaper.)

These efforts are closely aligned with Andy's off-farm work with [Apogee- Climate & Energy Transitions](#), a program of Earth Tools Inc, where he serves as a consultant, educator, and advocate for renewable energy solutions.

One of Andy's other off-farm projects is helping organize [Solarize Frankfort](#), a bulk-purchasing program of the [Kentucky Solar Energy Society](#). that makes it easier and less costly for people to install solar. If you are curious about solar energy opportunities and resources in Kentucky we encourage you to read the [OAK June Field Day Summary](#) AND learn more about [Cedar Rings Greens](#).

Seasonal Recipes...

Butternut Squash 5-Ways



Are you looking for new ways to use winter squash this fall? OAK did a collaborative cooking class with Flik Hospitality Group and Rootbound Farm this September called Butternut Squash 5-ways!

You might have guess it from the title, Amanda Veneman, Flik Wellness Manager and Registered Dietitian, showed off five different butternut squash recipes including: **roasting butternut squash, butternut squash and kale quesadillas, butternut squash hummus, butternut squash mac n cheese, butternut squash lentil soup, and a bonus recipe for butternut squash queso!** Give these a try at home and feel free to substitute butternut squash for another winter squash that is available and let us know which dish is your favorite!

[View Recipe Handout](#)

In the Garden...

What Garlic Types to Plant this Fall

Did you know that October is the ideal time for planting garlic in Kentucky?

Garlic is one of those unsuspecting vegetables that takes longer than most to reach maturity. Normally, it stays in the ground from October through June and is harvested once the outer leaves start to turn yellow in June or July depending on the variety.

The first decision, as with anything in the garden, is deciding which type to grow. There are a few main garlic types: hardneck, softneck, and elephant garlic (technically a leek but planted like garlic).



We recommend sourcing seed garlic from a local farm because the varieties available will already be more acclimated to the area's growing conditions. Generally, it's best to avoid planting garlic from the grocery store because it might be treated with growth inhibitors to discourage sprouting, and the overall garlic head and clove size tends to be smaller.



If you are new to growing garlic, a nice type to start with is hardneck. This type produces a garlic flower called a scape, which is something growers will remove from April through June, when it should put more energy into the bulb. Scapes are delicious to eat and farmers often harvest these in the spring for customers to use like green onions. The benefit of growing hardnecks is that these varieties are hardier and do better in colder temperatures. One of the most commonly grown types is known as Music Garlic, which is a German white extra hardy variety. It is very popular with chefs because of its strong flavor, easy-to-peel cloves, and consistent size.

On the other hand, soft neck garlic doesn't produce a garlic scape and therefore puts more energy into producing the bulb. This type is fairly easy to grow and stores longer (6-8 months versus 2-4 months for hardnecks), however, it's not as popular due to the smaller cloves. One of the perks of soft neck garlic is that their stems can be easily woven together in a garlic braid and beautifully displayed on a wall prior to cooking with the cloves.

Lastly, "elephant garlic" is a bit of a misnomer as it is not technically a type of garlic, but rather is closely related to a leek or onion. Regardless of the classification, this plant is sewn at the same time as garlic and is often used for roasting. It produces the largest cloves of any garlic-like head and it is easy to cook and use.

Never fear, if bed space isn't available this fall, gardeners can still plant in the spring. Less growing time will result in smaller heads, but the taste will still liven up your cooking, so give it a try!



Resources for Growing Garlic:

[Almanac Garlic Planting Tips](#)

[UK Fayette County Extension Garlic Planting Video](#)

[Rutgers Garlic Type Comparison](#)

Upcoming OAK Events & Resources

Cook with a Farmer: Prepare a Local Recipe with Hickory Grove Farm

Join us at University of Kentucky's (UK) The Food Connection for an ***in-person*** cooking class on **October 10th from 6:00 - 7:30 pm** with **Ryan Burnette from Hickory Grove Farm!** During this event, participants will learn more about the farm and prepare a seasonal dish with Chef Tanya. Advanced registration is encouraged. Registration is \$5 for members of the Organic Association of Kentucky and \$10 for non-members. Contact katie@oak-ky.org with any event-related questions.



[Learn More & Register](#)

Explore Fall CSA Offerings from Kentucky Farmers Near You

There are a lot of ways to subscribe to a local farm from October through November if you are looking for convenient ways to find veggies, meats, eggs, and other products. Check out our [What is CSA?](#) video to learn more about this direct food-purchasing model and check out the [KY Proud Fall CSA Week partner farm guide](#) to find fall offerings in your area.





Learn How Your Workplace Can Promote CSA!

Are you looking for ways to help your employer promote local farms and healthy eating habits? Encourage them to explore ways they can offer and [incentivize CSA \(community supported agriculture\) programs](#) as a new wellness offering for employees.

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