

GROWING TO GIVE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023

30 E Coxon Rd | Brunswick, ME | 04011

www.growingtogive.farm

GROWING OUR ORGANIZATION

Implementing our strategic plan, improving farm infrastructure, and hiring a managing director

This past Fall, Growing to Give staff and board members developed our first three-year strategic plan. Committees are already implementing Year 1 goals and fine-tuning those for Years 2 and 3. The initial phase of this process began with updating our mission statement to more fully reflect the growing scope of our work. Our mission now reads:

Growing to Give's mission is to harness the power of our community to grow organic vegetables and give them to those in need while practicing, teaching, and promoting climate-friendly farming.

A highly anticipated development in 2023 has been the construction of a **new seedling greenhouse**. Using grant funds from the **George A. Ramlose Foundation** and the **Alfred M. Senter Fund**, Growing to Give was able to purchase and professionally install a



22' x 32' greenhouse with automated venting. Volunteers will be working this season to construct a new potting bench and rolling seedling tables to fill this new space.

As we begin our seventh season, we wish to recognize the founders who brought their vision into reality in April of 2017. **John Newlin, Patty Carton, and Theda Lyden** shared a vision for a farm: it included producing organic produce for those in need, a commitment to environmental health and regenerative growing, and a shared passion for building community. Together with the first board members, they worked tirelessly to establish Growing to Give as a nonprofit, obtain MOFGA organic certification, build collaborations with like-minded groups, and tell the story of food insecurity in Maine. Thank you to the founders, volunteers, and staff who continue to support this work. 🥕



Introducing Our Managing Director

We are excited to welcome **Ellen Rodgers** as the new (and first) managing director of Growing to Give. Ellen's awareness of Growing to Give started with a conversation with dear friends and neighbors over her backyard fence! She signed up to volunteer at our farm last fall through the Merrymeeting Gleaners, and raised her hand when she heard we were looking for a board treasurer.

Budgeting and financial oversight are two of Ellen's specialties and her financial acumen comes from years of working in finance and consulting in Hong Kong, Vietnam, and New York. She returned home to Maine in 2005 to open Purl Diva Yarn Shop in Brunswick.

"When I think of the wonderful interactions that have connected me to Growing to Give, I am reminded that when you follow your heart, the universe supports you! From the moment I turned down the farm's winding dirt road to glean leeks, I knew Growing to Give was special. The staff and volunteers are passionate, kind, and organized! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this new role, and excited to collaborate with everyone to grow this organization and continue our good work!"

From 2014 to 2022, Ellen managed administrative and financial activities for two nonprofits in Maine: Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

As managing director, Ellen will work collaboratively with Theda Lyden, our farm director, in developing and executing the strategic plan with staff and the board. Our plan identified funding this new position as crucial to ensuring our long-term sustainability in the years ahead. Ellen will transition from board member to managing director in May. 🥕



NEW PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Exploring new avenues for increasing food access and educational opportunities within Mid Coast Maine's diverse communities

Greater Portland Health

In 2022, Greater Portland Health became a new Growing to Give distribution site through our connection to volunteer Diana Lapp, clinical director of the clinic on Park Avenue. We strongly believe that food is medicine, and jumped at the opportunity to provide healthy foods for free access at the clinic, which provides integrated, culturally-inclusive, affordable healthcare to Portland's diverse community, including immigrant and refugee people living in Maine.

This connection kickstarted our initiative to expand



The staff at the clinic created this poster in 6 different languages to help spread the word

our crop repertoire to provide a broader range of culturally-preferred foods, such as amaranth leaves and African eggplant, an aspect of our programming that we are

continuing to build in 2023. As this sharing table became more popular, we sent one of our summer interns several times to help set up and explain to patients that the vegetables were free and they were welcome to take what they could use.

At the close of the season, we were thrilled to receive positive feedback and learn that our produce was always appreciated and nothing was ever left. This season we will be developing a similar sharing table at a second clinic in Portland. 🌱

MCHPP Community Kitchen

Growing to Give expanded our partnership with Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP) in 2022 by collaborating on a planning grant for MCHPP's new Community Kitchen. During the first year of operations at the Community Kitchen, Growing to Give supplied hundreds of pounds of fresh produce that the Merrymeeting Gleaners harvested and brought to this rentable kitchen for processing, preserving, and creating value-added products for MCHPP's distribution.

We are continuing this collaboration into 2023, and are now growing crops specifically for processing at the kitchen. One of the

advantages of having a partner that can process food is that we have a channel for blemished (but perfectly edible!) vegetables that might go to our compost pile instead of being directly distributed to the end-user. 🌱



Continuing the Farm Skills Collaboration

Last year was the first year of the **Farm Skills Training Program**, a collaboration designed and carried out in partnership with the **Merrymeeting Food Council** and **Goodwill Industries**. This unique program provides paid on-the-job training to up to 10 qualifying participants (people between 16-24 years old, or eligible for SNAP and/or WIC) around the skills and knowledge required for vegetable farming. Growing to Give serves as the main hands-on training site where participants engage in 40+ hours of farm work complemented by workshops, lectures, and local farm tours. With Goodwill Industries supporting participants in developing their resumes and setting up interviews with potential employers, participants emerge from this program well-equipped to find farm-related work and help fill an ongoing labor shortage that is affecting many small commercial farms. 🌱



Participants learn about seed starting as part of a regenerative farming curriculum

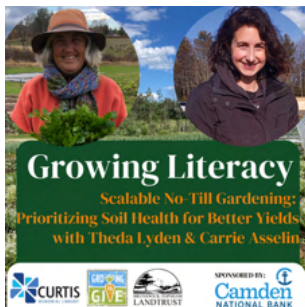
SOWING SEEDS THROUGH EDUCATION

Growing Literacy: Winter Garden Workshops

With education being a growing aspect of our mission, and expanding community partnerships an ongoing goal for Growing to Give, we were thrilled to partner with **Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust** and **Curtis Memorial Library** as a co-host of the annual *Growing Literacy: Winter Workshop Series* early in 2023. Community members led six separate seminars that educated over 500 attendees about various aspects of sustainable growing, including native plant propagation, seed starting, biodynamic growing, and other topics, via three Zoom seminars and three in-

person sessions. Growing to Give's own Theda Lyden and Carrie Asselin led one of the workshops, titled **Scalable No-Till Gardening: Prioritizing Soil Health for Better Yields.**

Recordings of these sessions can be accessed through the Curtis Memorial Library website. 🥕



Welcoming Students Back this Spring

Growing to Give is finding a new role in the community as a local farm classroom

This Spring, Growing to Give is working on a regular basis with Maine Coast Waldorf School's third and fourth grade classes, and is also partnering with two groups of students from **Morse High School's Credit Pathways Program (CPP)**, which supports students in achieving the necessary credits to graduate. CPP's final unit of study is Food Systems, in which students are learning about nutrition, food production and manufacturing, nutritional disparities, consumption, and the impacts of food and beverage industries on families in the U.S. To complement their work around how different food-system models affect human, soil, and planetary health, the students are engaging in hands-on learning at Growing to Give on a bi-weekly basis. 🥕



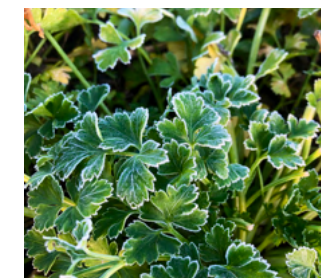
Meet Parsley! *Putting a spotlight on this nutritional powerhouse*

Prioritizing soil health is a fundamental aspect of Growing to Give's farming philosophy. The relationship between vegetable nutrition and soil health is complex, but studies have shown that soil depletion is a key factor in why crops grown today are significantly less rich in vitamins and minerals compared to decades ago. We believe that access to food is a human right, and that increasing availability of **healthy, nutritiously-dense vegetables** in particular is critical to building a healthy community.

Many of you who volunteer at the farm are already well-versed in our companion planting approach to increase yield and build soil biodiversity. One of our star companion plants is parsley. Resilient to both cold and heat, this easy-to-grow herb is full of antioxidants, essential oils, and vitamins C, A, and K. As a bitter plant, parsley offers detoxification benefits to the body, and

because it is rich in flavonoids, also helps protect cells against oxidation. One such flavonoid is called luteolin, which supports healthy carbohydrate metabolism and blood sugar. With a chlorophyll content that rivals spinach, this herb can serve as a blood-builder, deodorizer, and inflammation-fighter.

While we often think of parsley as a garnish, consider



Frost? No problem! Parsley is tolerant of temps down to 10°F. Overwintering in a cold frame or greenhouse can allow for re-growth in the spring

incorporating this herb generously into vegetable and meat dishes, salads, pastas, spreads, and broths. 🥕



Spring re-growth after overwintering in our greenhouse



Parsley often attracts Swallowtail caterpillars. We are always happy to share with these beautiful creatures!

EXPANDING OUR TEAM AND SUPPORT NETWORK

New Board Members

Sophie Halpin grew up in Portland and studied Environmental Science at the University of Vermont, where she also minored in Green Building and Community Design. She is now an independent financial advisor and Certified Financial Planner™ professional at Back Cove Financial in Falmouth. Her business is focused on sustainable, responsible, impact investing to help clients align their wealth with their values, while promoting better business practices on a large scale.



Jamie Pacheco works for the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust and the Merrymeeting Food Council in agriculture-focused roles. She and her husband co-founded and own Flight Deck Brewing in Brunswick. Jamie previously worked for MOFGA on the Common Ground Fair team, worked in local agriculture, and spent years working in the veterinary and hospitality industries. She volunteers with the SNAPMatch Program at the Bath Farmers' Market, serves on city committees in Bath, and volunteers with a handful of other non-profits in the area. She and her family live in North Bath. 🥕

Farm Staffing

We are pleased to welcome **Genevieve Davis**, a 2022 graduate of the Farm Skills Program, and **Carol Gillespie**, regular volunteer and gleaner, to the team this year as part-time farmhands. 🥕



Business Partner Highlight



In 2019, Morning Glory Natural Foods came on board as one of Growing to Give's most generous business partners. Their support continues to increase, and their dedicated staff help tell our story. In addition to their generous financial support, Morning Glory allows us to bring flower bouquets for direct donation from mid-summer through fall at the checkout counter, even though space there is at a premium!



We wish to congratulate Susan and Craig on their retirement and honor their dedication to bringing organic and local food to our community for over 40 years. We are grateful for their son Toby's commitment to Growing to Give heading into the future! Help us show our gratitude for all that Morning Glory Natural Foods does to support a healthy and vibrant community. 🥕

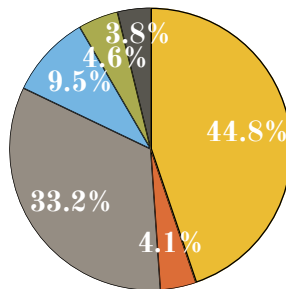
Interested in becoming a Business Partner? Contact us today!

SPRING 2023 WISH LIST

If you are able to donate any of the following items (new or used) to help support our program, please contact Patty Carton at patty@growingtogive.farm

- Felco pruners
- Adult and kids' gardening gloves
- Hand trowels
- Taproot weeders
- Hand soap
- Stamps
- Printer paper
- Whiteboard markers
- Photography and video services
- Colored duct tape
- 1020 trays
- Wheelbarrows
- Flexible plastic harvest buckets
- Long-handled shovels
- Fireproof safe

2022 Revenue Sources



- Individual Donors
- Programs
- Restricted Grants
- Events
- Other
- Business Sponsors

THANK YOU!

2023 Foundation Support Thus Far

*Bangor Savings Foundation | Libra Foundation
Mark Baumer Sustainability Fund*

2022 Business Sponsors

Morning Glory Natural Foods | Tami Goodrich, Maine True Home—Keller Williams Realty | Curry Printing | Wicked Joe Coffee | EJP Renovation & Design | Hotel Vermont | Canopy Hotel of Portland | Back Cove Financial | Norway Savings Bank | Doherty's North Freeport Store | David Matero Architecture | Allagash Brewing Co. | Bath Savings Bank | Healing Harbors | Good Group Decisions | Maine Pines Racquet and Fitness | Maine Tick & Mosquito | Flight Deck Brewing | Wild Oats Bakery and Cafe | Gelato Fiasco | Seacoast Tours of Freeport | Maine Ocean Farms | Moderation Brewing Co.