



**“Spring is nature’s way of saying, “Let’s Party!”**

**Robin Williams**

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a vegetable farmer is the people. The people we get to work with and those we serve. Sure, raising produce is satisfying all on its own; taking a plant from a tiny encapsulated form and bringing it forth in all its mature glory is something akin to motherhood. But without the people it just wouldn’t be the same.

Tending to our seeds and eventually our “teenagers” requires a lot of work. With the help of many, staff and volunteers, we are able to maintain the various cogs and wheels the farm consists of. If it weren’t for these folks loneliness, along with an overwhelming amount of work, would creep into a farmer’s life. Can you imagine if all a farmer surrounded oneself with was plants and never ending to-do lists? Plants have their own amazing energy that we personally couldn’t and wouldn’t want to live without but keeping that all to our selves isn’t fair. Harvesting sweet winter spinach does little for the soul if one can’t exclaim to their harvesting partners over the beauty and royalty-like qualities of the deep, green rosette of the spinach plant. Along similar lines is being the bearer of the harvest yield; handing over a bag or box of delightful produce to a recipient

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is most pleasing when one is on the giving end.

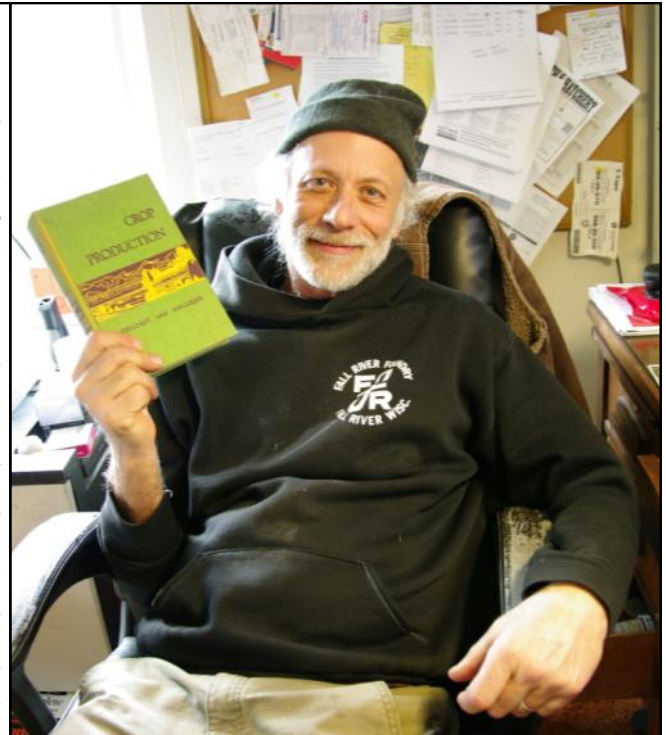
Steve and I marvel in the pleasure of sharing good, healthy produce with the world. The physical act of farming in Wisconsin may be mostly seasonal yet it is during the Winter and early Spring especially that we take some quality time to reflect on what a joy and privilege it is. During these quieter months we have more time to catch up personally with members. Write us a letter and we'll write you back. Want to meet for tea or dinner? You bet! We cherish real, concrete relationships with our fellow humans. It takes time and effort but if

farming has taught us anything it is patience and hard work. They are worth more than my words can express.

Not every type of farmer has this ability to build strong relationships with both the people that grow and consume the farm product. It is thanks to our CSA program and folks that take time out of this busy world to stop, prepare and share gratitude over real, whole food that allows us to live the farm life that we do. We are forever grateful and in debt to the many faces that help complete the CSA relationship here at Rare Earth Farm. Let's keep these human relationships growing!

## Gimme' that Ole Time Farming!

I just inherited from a friend of mine a book that was published in 1953 on Crop Production. I was about as excited as a pig in you know what when I received this one. Truly for me this was really one of the greatest treasures I ever inherited. What drew my attention to this book was the fact it was published in the year I was born. The book being a complete guide to crop farming back in the 50's, I soon realized the core contents of this book were virtually identical to our style of farming. As a matter of fact the principal foundation of our growing practices all originates to this time period when organic farming was the norm. Many farmers at the time when this book was published were being lured by all the propaganda from chemical companies boasting of higher yields using new synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. More farm operators began trending away from past and proven traditions, and began adapting their practice to this new style of farming in hopes of a more prosperous future. Ironically at this same time there was an equal amount of information in print to dispute the fact that farming with chemical based fertilizers and pesticides, would have long term negative affects on the soils they were used on. Obviously a majority of farmers took the advice and vowed never to farm again without chemical inputs. Some seventy years after the fact we're seeing the repercussions from poor farming practices in a lot of different ways. The quality of our food, the condition of the





soil on conventionally managed farmland, and the health of our population are all clear indications that a change back to using more sustainable and natural ways to grow food is vital to all of us. To reverse this trend it may require blowing the dust off these old books and farming the way our grandfathers farmed.

So now that mainstream agriculture has been on this counter productive path for over a half century is there ever a chance that we can return to a more natural and healthy approach to farming? The answer without a doubt we believe is a big "YES". It's farmers like us who believe there is a better way, and we have proof. We've been on this campaign for a long time and with that there has been a momentum.

The biggest player in making a change will be you as consumers. We are here because you are asking for our help to improve you food supply. We can do that but we need your help with your continued help and support our combined interest in whatever way you can. With that we'll grow some of the best food you've ever had! Let's all blow the dust off the old books on farming and let us reap the benefit's of that ole time farming.



## A New Orchard is Born

Just last year our friends Adrian Lee and Nichole Kloss started up their fruit tree nursery and are looking for customers to buy some of their first stock of trees they produced. **Elderflower Orchards** is a small, diversified fruit tree nursery and orchard in Fredonia, Wisconsin. Their farmstead, established just last year (2016), is located on a ridge near the Milwaukee River. Together their passion and focus is to graft, grow and care for fruit trees and shrubs that will thrive in this region. They currently have many old and new plum, pear, and apple tree varieties for sale. Additionally, they're offer fruiting shrubs;

elderflower, currants, and more. Learn more about Elderflower Orchards and what they offer by visiting their website at:

<https://www.elderflowerorchards.com/>

Congratulations Adrian and Nichole!

