



Trailside Organic Farm Update: April 2025

New Perennial Fruit on the Trailside Organic Farm! Submitted by Mia Bucher, Trailside Intern
Here at *Trailside Organic Farm*, we are excited to

be adding raspberries and strawberries into the mix of produce we will provide. These popular plants provide many dietary benefits such as antioxidants, manganese, vitamin C and potassium. When incorporated into one's diet, overall heart health increases and inflammation and blood pressure are lowered.

Once these crops are started, they grow extremely well in Pennsylvania's climate with raspberries plants providing fruit for up to 20 years! However, starting them can be an involved process.

Raspberries require full sunlight and are not to be planted in low-lying areas receiving a lot of water. It is also recommended to avoid planting these in areas previously hosting potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, or peppers because of a root rot fungus they can potentially carry and transmit to berry plants.

Red raspberry varieties are best for Pennsylvania as these are the hardiest and can withstand harsh winters compared to black or purple varieties. They are planted in early spring, and the harvest will follow in late summer or early fall.

Strawberry plants also provide challenges for organic farmers as traditional methods include many pesticides and plastic use that can be less sustainable and damaging to environmental and human health.

Raised beds are preferred for strawberry crops in either a narrow or wide bed arrangement with the use of black plastic covering to prevent excessive weed growth and reduce the use of chemical treatments.

The June-bearing varieties are best suited for Pennsylvania because they will form buds as day lengths decrease over the fall and harvest will follow in late spring or early summer. Original plants will produce fruit for up to five years, but it is suggested to replant every three years for maximum yield benefits.

These delicious berries are worth the work and make a great addition to breakfasts, afternoon

snacks, or your favorite baked goods. We hope you will enjoy this new addition to the farm. These perennial plants will be planted to the farm in the coming weeks, and their first harvest will be expected in 2026. They will be available at the weekly farm market.

Engage with the Farm this Spring: Submitted by Ian Frederick

Spring Open House

The *Trailside Organic Farm* will be offering an Open House event on **Wednesday, April 23** from 11 AM-3 PM. Residents, employees, friends, and family are welcome. Please feel free to stop by any time during this open house event for the following:

- Tour the greenhouse, check out the hoop house crops, take a tour of the barn, and get a first look at plants that will be available at the Blooms & More Festival.
- Farm staff will be available for Q&A and gardening tips and will speak about growing plants organically from seed.
- 'Gator tours' will be offered for residents with limited mobility.
- Light refreshments will be provided.
- Transportation will be available. Please contact farm staff at 717-220-8106 to arrange transportation.

Volunteer Program

With spring's arrival, farm staff will begin to offer weekly volunteer opportunities every Thursday from 9 AM- 10:30 AM and on Fridays at the farm market. A variety of work is available. No previous experience is necessary to volunteer. If you are already a *Trailside* Volunteer, we will contact you with opportunities for sign-ups this month. If you would like to sign up as a registered *Trailside* Volunteer, please contact Stacia Layser, Director of Communications/Volunteer Coordinator and you will be placed on our email list.

Friday Farm Market

Farm staff expect to offer a limited selection of cool season crops at the market on select dates during the month of April. Please keep an eye on your email for information on when the markets will be held and what produce will be available. Farm markets will be held on Fridays at 11 AM-12:15 PM in the Freeman Community Center. We hope to see you there!