

# Trailside Organic Farm Update: March 2025

*Submitted by Mia Bucher and Katie Landis, Trailside Organic Farm Asst. Manager*

With thoughts of spring in our heads, we are wrapping up our winter to-do lists. Ian spread stone on the greenhouse floor to help with drainage and to keep it from getting slippery. Katie built a few more greenhouse tables and some raised beds that we will use for herbs. Our awesome volunteer team has cleaned and sanitized our planting trays and have begun sowing the first seeds of 2025. This winter, we are grateful for the help and insight of Mia Bucher, an intern from Lebanon Valley College. Read on to hear what Mia is interested in, what she is helping with at the farm, and her report on what it takes for beekeeping start-up: Something that the *Trailside Organic Farm* may explore in the future.

## **Introduction to Mia Bucher**

Hello! I am Mia Bucher, a senior at Lebanon Valley College and I will be graduating with a degree in environmental science. This spring I am interning with Ian and Katie at the *Trailside Organic Farm* where I am completing an array of projects such as soil sampling, observing farm management practices and contributing to these newsletters. After graduation, I am looking to begin my career as a soil scientist. I am thrilled to be here, and I look forward to seeing some of you at the farm. For this month's edition of the newsletter, we will be looking at the basics of beekeeping.

## **Exploring Beekeeping**

The benefits of bees are seen at all points throughout the year. As you walk through and admire flowering gardens in the spring and summer months, the air is abuzz as these busy workers hop from plant to plant drinking up nectar and transferring pollen. The next time you eat a bowl of berries, drizzle honey in your tea, or enjoy a plate of comforting roasted vegetables in the frigid winter months, you can thank the bees! Because of the multitude of benefits bees provide, farmers and enthusiasts look to start apiaries...so where does one begin?

There are many complexities that arise with beekeeping, so seasoned keepers recommend that beginners get involved with a local beekeepers association and take courses before buying any supplies. Memberships for beekeepers associations are valid for one year and can provide tools,

knowledge, and community to ensure thriving hives.

Once equipped with the knowledge to move forward, beekeepers will need to acquire a hive with bees, a bee brush, a bee smoker, and protective gear. Under the Pennsylvania Bee Law, it is also required that all hives be registered to boost inspection efficiency, control bee movement, and prevent disease. The inspections provided under the Bee Law are imperative to maintaining the colony's health as 30% or more of honeybee colonies die over winter due to improper management. Caring for the bees through their first winter is the most critical, tedious step of starting your apiary and requires chemical treatments to prevent disease. After the first winter, you will be on your way to a strong hive, but it is important to continue chemical and/or organic treatments.



Starting an apiary takes many years before the bees are strong and established and there can be frustrating days whether it be due to lost swarms, harsh weather and other worrisome moments. Experienced beekeepers advise to consult help and keep going! The starting costs can range from \$400-\$650 depending on the starter packs purchased. Although this hobby can take a lot of time and financial investment, the benefits for the surrounding ecosystem are enormous; plus, you can harvest delicious honey with numerous health benefits.

## **Dried Flower Bouquet Workshop Tuesday, March 25 at 2 PM Trailside Organic Farm Barn**

Join farm staff for a hands-on session to create your own dried flower bouquet, or everlasting bouquet. No prior experience is needed. Farm staff will provide a tutorial and all flowers, vases, and supplies to ensure a beautiful and unique bouquet (that will never need water!)

If you would be interested in joining, please sign up with us by leaving a message at 717-220-8106 to ensure we have enough supplies.