

Summary & Resources - Mountain Girl Provision Company August 2022 OAK Farmer Field Day



Flowers, Herbs, and Vegetables: Growing a Backyard Garden into a Small-Scale Farm Business

You don't have to spend much time with Kristi Ruggles to realize her dedication to growing plants as ecologically and healthfully as possible; to being a lifelong learner; to being a steward of the soil and of the mountain traditions of her Appalachian home. Visiting her farm in Greenup County, it's easy to understand her love of the beautiful rolling hills and green valleys of her home - and to grasp the related difficulties of sourcing necessary tools, amendments and supplies; securing markets and building an agri-business in a rural locale. These topics arose again and again in Kristi's story of creating [Mountain Girl Provision Company](#) to counter these challenges and increase success for her farm and regional, sustainable farms and gardens. The importance of collaboration and community with like-minded and peer growers is a strong theme and easy solution for Kristi's challenges. Her shift towards creating markets and growing her production business - which, for decades, was a hobby and backyard garden for her family - has involved connecting locally with Master Gardeners, farmers markets, local farm stores, and regionally/nationally with growers who offer resources, assistance and models of how to "market garden."

"It doesn't come easy for me; it's been hard to switch into production farming," Kristi explained. "I love the diversity of growing herbs, flowers and vegetables together. The Earthway seeder I've had for years is still in the box, because I don't naturally plant in rows!"

Yet the shift for Kristi is evident on her farm: high tunnel, silage tarps, landscape fabric, broadfork, stirrup hoes, OMRI-listed amendments and organic seeds, intentional pollinator plantings and native plant plots and cover crops are integral to Kristi's production. Learning from years of farming conferences, specialized farming courses, books by farmer-authors and the old-fashioned art of paying close attention have allowed Kristi to mirror and mimic the market gardens she aspires to while maintaining the personal flavor of her own style and preferences. She's well on her way to a successful market garden and agri-business of her own!

Resource Links:

- **OAK resources:**
 - [Join OAK today!](#)
 - It's a great time to join our community or renew membership: we have an upcoming [Member Social in Frankfort KY on August 21!](#)
 - **Any resources with an asterisk below offer OAK member discounts!*
 - [OAK YouTube](#) farmer resources / conference and field day playlists
 - [OAK Transition Trainer](#) - for assistance with, or info on certifying organic
 - [USDA's National Organic Program](#)
 - [OAK Field Days! Register NOW!*](#)
 - [Mountain Girl Provision Company](#) on Facebook
 - Grow Appalachia
 - Their [website](#) includes newsletter signup
 - Suppliers / Products
 - Grow Appalachia's [growing supplies](#), Berea
 - [Fresh Start Growers Supply](#), Louisville
 - [Farmer's Friend](#) silage tarps
 - [Earth Tools](#) broadfork and hoes*
 - [Vermont Compost](#)
 - Seed companies
 - [High Mowing Organic Seeds](#)
 - [Johnny's Selected Seeds*](#)
 - [Strictly Medicinal Seeds](#)
 - [FEDCO](#)
 - [Fruition Seeds](#)
 - [Fox Farm Big Bloom](#) liquid plant food on flowers
 - [Neptune's Harvest](#) fish and seaweed fertilizer on everything else.
 - [Organic Materials Review Institute \(OMRI\)](#) - list of products approved for use in Certified Organic production
 - Regional Market
 - [The Wild Ramp](#), Huntington WV farm store
 - [Greenup County Farmers Market](#)
 - [Boyd County Farmers Market](#)
 - Cover Crop References
 - [Cover Crop Chart](#)
 - [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#)
 - [Managing Cover Crops Profitably](#) from SARE
 - Readings recommended by Kristi:
 - From publisher Chelsea Green*:
 - Everything by Eliot Coleman, especially [Four-Season Harvest](#)
 - [The Living Soil Handbook](#) by Jesse Frost

