
The Practical Horticulturist - Two more chances to join a Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up + Labor4Learning positions now open

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Equipping farmers to build resilient farms and communities.



Meet a CoHort: Wade Dooley

Wade Dooley farms around 200 acres in Albion, Iowa, where he raises and sells cover crop seeds and does custom seeding. He also grows popcorn and ornamental corn as well as pumpkins, which he plants into roller-cremped rye.

Why do you grow hort crops in five or fewer words: More exciting than row crops.

What is something you're excited about this year: I'm ridiculously excited about something that's totally silly. That's my new-to-me corn binder to make corn bundles. I'm going to use it to make ornamental corn bundles this fall.

What is one thing you would change about your industry: The insular nature of production agriculture in general makes it hard to focus on more than what's right in front of you. It would be great to see more cross-pollination between farmers growing different things, whether it's a horticulture farmer talking to a cattle producer or a field crop farmer talking with a flower grower.

Favorite PFI memory: Several years ago, after the banquet at the Cooperators' Meeting, a group of original PFI members and some of us younger folks went out for drinks and conversation. We stayed out to the wee hours solving all the world's problems. That's one of my treasured memories.

Your favorite crop and why: I don't grow watermelons anymore, but I still love them. They seem so easy to grow, but then there are a ton of challenges. If you do it right and get the right varieties, everyone loves the product.

PROGRAM UPDATES

2025 Commercial Apple Growers Workshop was a success



Orchardist and business owner **Paul Rasch** hosted more than 70 people at Wilson's Orchard and Farm in Cumming, Iowa, for this year's apple growers workshop.

Highlights included a presentation by Olivia Meyer, Ph.D. candidate at ISU; grower discussions about orchard floor maintenance, integrated pest management, disease-resistant apple varieties and more; and an orchard tour with demonstrations about training and pruning trees in a high-density system.

Apply for a position with our 2025 Labor4Learning trainers



Our 2025 Labor4Learning trainers are seeking employees to work on their operations while receiving mentorship and support for learning opportunities.

The Labor4Learning pairs beginning farmers seeking employment and additional training in farm management and production skills with experienced farmers seeking extra help on their farm.

[Explore the job postings.](#)

Increase beneficial insects on your urban farm with our cost-share



PFI and the Xerces Society are seeking urban farmers who want to plant beneficial insect habitat on their urban farm. Farms must serve communities with local produce or products such as fruits, vegetables, herbs or honey.

Through our beneficial insects cost-share, PFI funds native plants and costs associated with establishing them so you can create insectary strips or beetle banks. We want to help farmers support beneficial insects that can boost natural predation and pollination on their urban farms. **[Apply today.](#)**

IN THE FIELD

Research report: "Mizuna Variety Trial"



Farmer **Carmen Black** of Solon, Iowa, noticed that some varieties in the mizuna mix she grew in her high tunnel were bolting early, making them unmarketable.

Unable to pinpoint which varieties they were, Carmen conducted a research trial to hone in her mizuna growing practices and variety selection.

Learn which varieties she tested and what she learned in this research report.

Magazine: "Shifting Gears: Vegetable Farmers Adapt to Their Changing Needs"



Raising vegetables is hard work. It's physically demanding, runs on a rigid schedule and requires endless decisions. These strains lead many farmers to adapt their operations to accommodate changing needs.

In our winter magazine **Rob and Tammy Faux, Donna Warhover** and **Laura Krouse** shared their experience with transitions and adaptations they've made on their farms. **Read the full article.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

A few more Horticulture Farmer Meet-Ups on the horizon



Friday, Feb. 28 | 3-5 p.m. | Osage, IA

Join host, **Steve Strasheim**, at Limestone Brewers at 518 Main St. in Osage, Iowa, to meet fellow fruit, vegetable and flower farmers and chat about the season ahead.

To RSVP, email Jacqueline at jacqueline.venner.senske@practicalfarmers.org.

See the schedule of future Horticulture Farmer Meet-Ups.

Upcoming PFI events

All events listed in Central Time.

March 4: Webinar – Building Partnerships for Conservation: A Farmer-Tenant Collaboration in Northeast Iowa
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

March 18: Webinar – Building and Maintaining Fair Lease Agreements
Noon-1 p.m. | [Online](#)

March 6: Meet-Up – Horticulture Farmer Meet-Up
Hosted by: Danelle Myer
4-6 p.m. | Logan, IA

Friends of PFI events

Feb. 20-22: Conference – Marbleseed Organic Farming Conference
Hosted by: Marbleseed
La Crosse, WI

March 13: Workshop – Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
Hosted by: Iowa State Extension
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. | Hiawatha, IA

[View our events calendar](#)

[Contact our team](#)

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