

# Sustainable Agriculture Program Highlights & Prospects

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# My Program Areas

- Small farms/sustainable ag/commercial vegetable, fruit, herb, cut flower production
- Alternative ag enterprises
- Beekeeping
- Pollinator conservation
- Forestry & wildlife

# Sustainable Agriculture Program Goals

1. To improve the economic development of diversified farms
2. To enhance environmental quality by promoting sustainable agricultural practices
3. To help small farmers diversify into new enterprises and new markets
4. To help farmers meet the growing demand for locally grown agricultural products
5. To improve agricultural literacy by increasing awareness, appreciation, and support of local farms
6. To increase habitat to support pollinators important to our food system and natural areas

*These goals are all aligned with the Chatham County Comprehensive Plan!*

- Done in partnership with the Chatham County Beekeepers' Association
- 8-week school with 75 students
- ~30 hours of lecture and hands-on training
  - biology & life cycle of the honey bee; starting a new hive; equipment assembly; hive management; bee forage; pest & disease management
- 100% of participants rated the quality of the School as outstanding or excellent
- 100% of participants said they acquired skills and knowledge to make them a better beekeeper



# Enhancing Sustainability Workshops

- 14 workshops for 835 farmers, gardeners, and forest landowners



Forestry Pest Management Workshop



Produce Safety Farmer Workshop

# Industrial Hemp Workshop

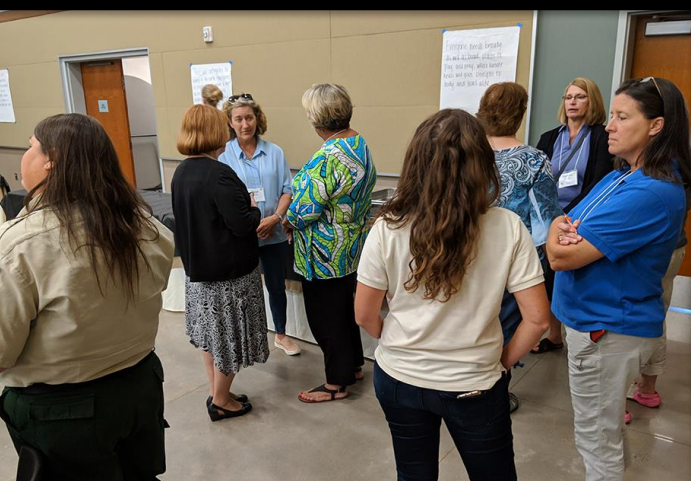
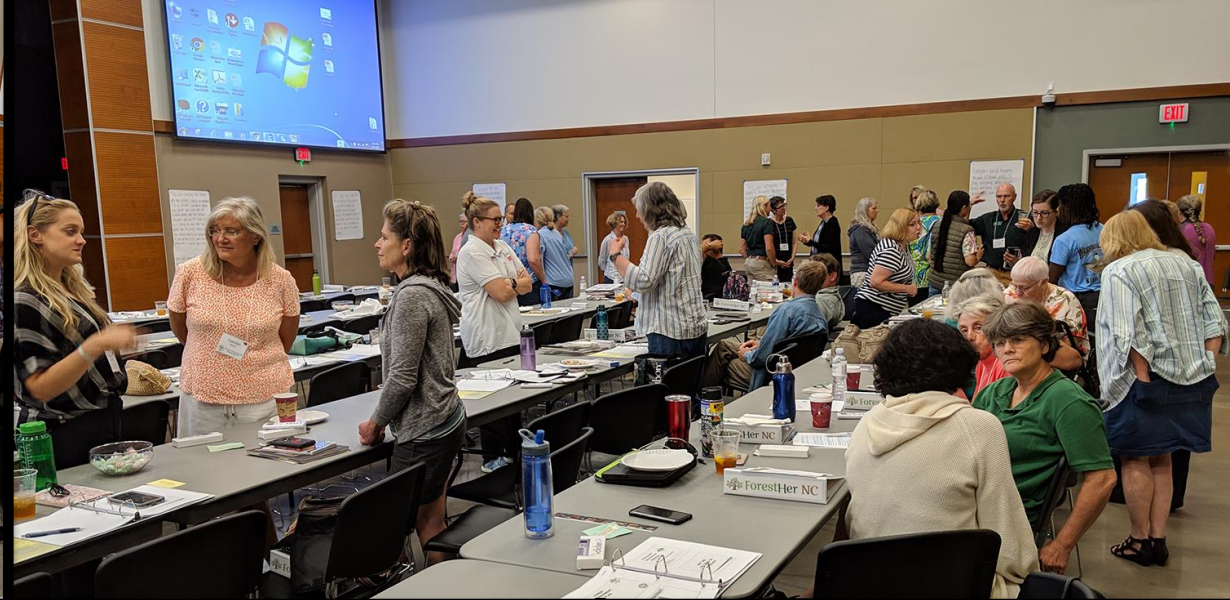
- Attracted ~300 participants and 13 exhibitors from 44 counties and five states
- 97% of participants said they had a better understanding of hemp production and regulations as a result of the workshop
- 95% of participants said that what they learned in the workshop would help them be better hemp farmers





# 2019 ForestHer Workshop Series

- I'm part of a team conducting this workshop series for women forest landowners around the state in the piedmont, coastal plain, and mountains
- Partners: NC Cooperative Extension, NC Tree Farm Program, NC Forest Service, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Audubon, U.S. Forest Service, Sustainable Forestry & Land Retention Project
- Chatham County Cooperative Extension is hosting all the piedmont workshops
- We did two workshops in 2019, in August and November, for about 200 participants from around the region



# 2019 BEES Academy

- Advanced beekeeping training done in partnership with NC State University
- 2 day training in September for 100 beekeepers from across the piedmont
- Included lecture and hands-on training



# Pollinator Conservation Programs

[www.carolinapollinatorgarden.org](http://www.carolinapollinatorgarden.org)

- Expanded the **Pollinator Paradise Demonstration Garden** at Chatham Mills
- Conducted **eight** all day workshops for participants from 30 counties
- 97% of participants said they felt prepared to design their own pollinator garden as a result of the workshop
- Conducted 35 garden tours for local farmers, gardeners, Master Gardener Volunteers, and beekeepers; many groups came from outside the county



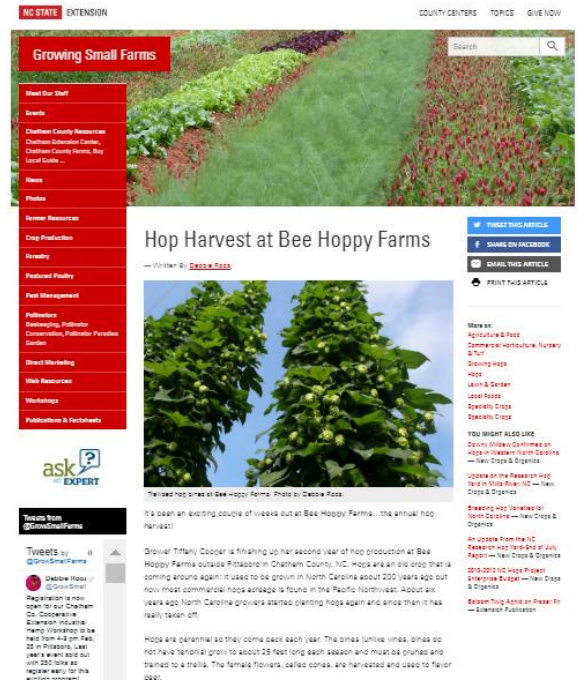
# Other Presentations

- NC State University Advanced Agroecology Class
- Franklin County Women in the Woods
- Randolph County Beekeepers
- Cullowhee Native Plant Conference
- NC Pollinator Conservation Alliance Field Day in Raleigh
- Birds, Bees, and Butterflies Master Gardener Symposium in Smithfield
- Cumberland County Master Gardeners
- 5 County Beekeepers in Zebulon

# Growing Small Farms Website

[www.growingsmallfarms.org](http://www.growingsmallfarms.org)

- Created in 2002 to educate farmers and consumers about sustainable agriculture and our local food system
- The website grew to 600 pages and averaged **~19,000 visits per month** in 2019







# GSF Website: Ag Literacy



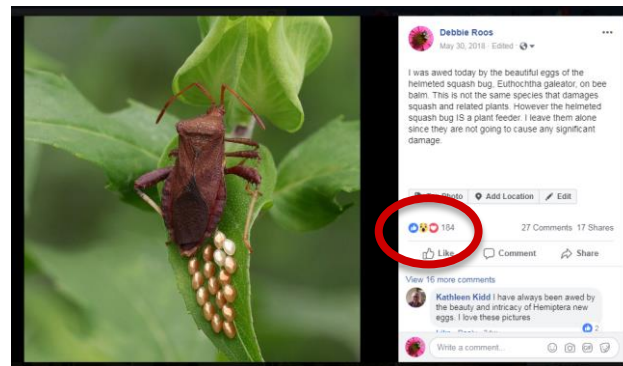
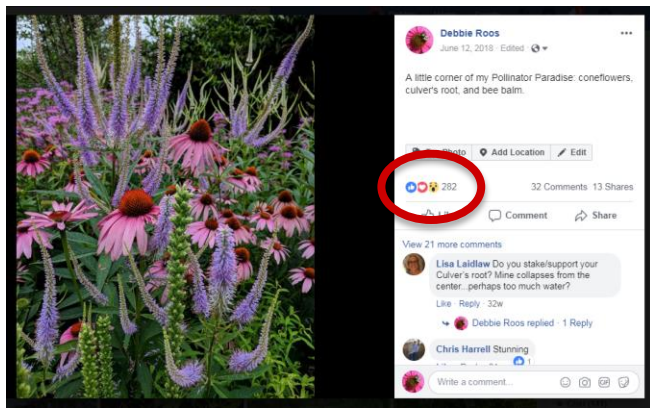
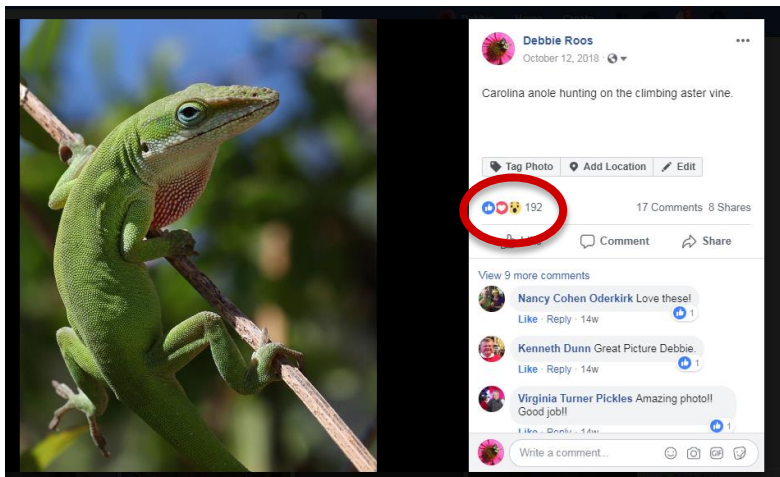


# GSF Website: Ag Literacy



# Social Media for Ag Literacy

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter



# Social Media for Ag Literacy

10:52 • LTE 43%

**Debbie Roos is with Stephanie Fay at Pittsboro Farmers' Market.**  
Oct 17 at 1:23 PM • Pittsboro, North Carolina

What a beautiful day to visit the **Pittsboro Farmers' Market!** The market is open **TODAY** from 3-6 pm at Main Street Station just east of the traffic circle and next to Walgreens. Here's a few pics from my visit last week!

4 Shares

Like Comment Share

10:50 • LTE 44%

**Debbie Roos added 12 new photos – with Anita Renee Kennedy.**  
Oct 22 at 7:33 PM

I did a visit to Larkin Hills Farm in Silk Hope this morning to consult on small fruit production. Farmer Anita Kennedy raises goats and ducks and hopes to soon grow small fruits. We did the visit in a light rain so the goats were hanging out in the barn with the livestock guardian dogs!

4 Shares

Like Comment Share

10:51 • LTE 44%

**Album October Flower Harvest at Perry-winkle Farm**

**Debbie Roos added 7 new photos – with Tajj Cotten.**  
Oct 20 at 9:58 PM

Many types of vegetables and cut flowers are grown at Perry-winkle Farm in northern Chatham County near Chapel Hill. These veggies and flowers are sold at the Fearington Farmers' Market and the Carrboro Farmers' Market.

4 Shares

Like Comment Share

11:10 • LTE 40%

**Debbie Roos**  
Oct 10 at 1:37 PM

Every year **Chatham County Cooperative Extension** organizes an all day farm tour for the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Chatham training. The idea is to teach these folks about all the different types of agriculture in the county, from small-scale diversified organic farms to livestock to nurseries. The first stop this morning was to **Granite Springs Farm** where farmer **Meredith Leight** talked about her diversified year-round production and marketing. They were enthralled and had lots of great questions!

1 Comment

Like Comment Share

# Boards & Committees: State & Local Partnerships

- NC Pollinator Conservation Alliance
- NCSU Climate Office Advisory Committee
- Chatham Conservation Partnership Steering Committee
- Chatham Community Food Council
- CCCS Sustainable Farming Program Advisory Committee
- ForestHer Committee



CCP Wild Mushroom Meeting

# 2019 Awards

- Governor's Conservation Achievement Award: Wildlife Conservationist of the Year – North Carolina Wildlife Federation
- Extension Agent of the Year – North Carolina State Beekeepers' Association



# 2020 Preliminary Program Plans

- Workshops:
  - Small Fruit Production
  - Weather & Climate Change
  - Industrial Hemp Fiber Production
  - NC Farm Link
  - Pollinators
  - ForestHer & other forestry topics
  - Crop Pest Management
- Educational Videos: Pollinators and Local Farms
- Continue Engaging through Website & Social Media

Questions?

