

# SOLID GROUND NEWSLETTER



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## Meet our Consultants

Meet Dr Amelia Magistrali!

Amelia is the new Soil Health Educator with UConn Extension. She grew up in Torrington and spent the past 10 years in North East England, studying and working at Newcastle University, including an MSc in Organic Farming and Food Production Systems and a PhD assessing alternative fertilizer impacts on spelt and rye production and quality.

I'm excited to bring my passion for regenerative and agroecological farming to UConn extension. She is focused on developing new soil health-focused programs and support existing ones (including Solid Ground).

She is ready to come out to your farm and help you understand how you can better care for your soils, so [sign up for a consultation with her](#) today to make a more concrete plan on improving your soil health.

Find out more about our consultations on [our website here](#).



## PREPPING FOR WINTER

It's hard to imagine, as we are still bringing in crops from the field, that our farms eventually need to be prepped for the winter season, but between our late season harvest and tasks, it's always a good idea to try and get some parts of your farm taken care of before the chill of winter sets in.

Last month we talked about cover crops, but there is so much more that can be done to help preserve your soil, make it harder for pests and diseases to overwinter and to ensure the health of perennial plants. And of course- it's a great time to take a soil test to see the nutrients that your farm needs.

## Irrigation Pond Help

UConn Extension is seeking farmers who want to be part of a grant funded project for Irrigation Pond Integrated Pest Management. Your involvement can include receiving consultations about pond IPM, weed and algae control options, invasive species management information, water quality testing, native plant buffer planting, and other irrigation pond IPM approaches—all for free! If interested, email [lauren.kurtz@uconn.edu](mailto:lauren.kurtz@uconn.edu) by Nov. 1st.

In addition to the planting you might be doing for cover crops and/or winter growing in high tunnels, preparing your farm for winter could include:

- Removing/composting crop residues in growing spaces. Taking care of it helps to prevent disease and insect pests, from over-wintering.
- Remove and store poles, trellises and portable frames.
- Mark perennials for emerging location in the spring.
- If you till, turn heavy or compacted soils, then add organics.
- Dig in a top dressing of compost for raised or deep beds.
- Harrow pastures to break up manure and spread out nutrients and make parasites more susceptible to sun and freezing temperatures.
- Put away hoses and sprinklers. Drain completely.
- Plant bulbs. Fall planting allows time for root development so that the bulb can produce and push forth leaf growth as soon as spring soil conditions allow.
- “Winterize” perennials. This includes watering, pruning to remove dead, damaged or diseased parts, and mulching to provide insulation over the root area. Dividing and replanting some perennials may also be required.
- Prune raspberries, currants, gooseberries and other berry bushes.
- Sharpen and repair hand tools.
- Insulate pipes and/or consider installing frost-free faucets- especially if you have livestock! They should have 24/7 access to unfrozen water.
- For livestock- make sure you’re stocked up on feed and they have adequate shelter from the elements
- Bring in soil, sand, compost and flats to use for starting seedlings the following year. Pasteurize starting media and screened compost by heating to 180°F for one-half hour.

Of course, these are just some of the tasks that could benefit your farm, but there are plenty more! Have questions about what that might be? Schedule a consultation with one of our UConn Extension experts to help you navigate what is best to prepare you for next season.

Information adapted from these articles (<https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/smallfarms/getting-livestock-farms-ready-winter> and <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/publications/database/gardening/an-alaska-gardener-to-do-list.php>)

## SOLID GROUND

### Upcoming Events

Sign ups coming soon for:

- Fall Ag Mechanics Trainings
- Accessing Grant Funding For Your Farm -  
Session 1: Nov 19, Hartford County Extension Office: 9AM to 11:30AM  
Session 2: Dec 3, online: 9AM to 11:30PM
- How to Use Enterprise Budgeting: Dec 5, Farm Credit East, Enfield 9AM to 1PM



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## Upcoming:

### Partner Events

[BCS Tractor Training & Compost Tea Making on the Farm](#): Oct 10, Artza Mendi Farm, Sprague - 1PM to 5PM

[CT NOFA Soil Health Field Day: No-Till Farming Practices](#): Oct 12, Sub Edge Farm in Farmington, CT - 10AM to 1PM

[NCTFA Fall Shindig](#): Oct 27, Chanticleer Acres, Litchfield - 2PM to 5PM

[Chop, Peel, Dice Networking and Training Event](#): Oct 30, CLiCK, Willimantic - 2PM to 4:30PM

[Common Ground's Farm and Garden Conference](#): Nov 2, Common Ground, New Haven - 9AM to 2:30PM

[Chop, Peel, Dice Networking and Training Event](#): Nov 6, Hunts Brook Farm, Quaker Hill - 2PM to 4:30PM

[2024 Connecticut Pomological Society's Annual Meeting](#): Dec 3, Middletown Elks Lodge - 8AM to 3:30PM

[NCTFA Town Hall with the CT Dept of Ag](#): Dec 5, over Zoom - 6:30PM to 8PM

[New England Fruit and Vegetable Conference](#): Dec 17-19, Manchester NH

### Grant Opportunities

[NRCS' First FY 2025 Deadlines Approaching](#)

[Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\) Farmer Grants](#)- DUE NOV 12

[The Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grants](#) DUE NOV 29

### Free Soil Health Testing

The New England Soil Health Survey is open until November 1! American Farmland Trust can offer farms of all kinds in CT, MA, NH, and VT access to free soil health testing services if they complete a social science survey. Interested farmers should complete [the online survey](#) and email [Kevin Antoszewski](#) with questions.



The [New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference](#) is one of the premier educational conferences available in our region for vegetable and fruit farmers. The conference is organized by Extension programs in New England and NY, plus the New England Vegetable & Berry Grower's Association and the Massachusetts Fruit Growers Association. It is held in Manchester NH every two years in December. This year, the 3-day conference will take place from December 17 to December 19.

This conference has traditionally had very few socially disadvantaged farmers or speakers in attendance, so it can feel intimidating, overwhelming, isolating and unwelcoming. UConn Extension Solid Ground Program will lead a small group of farmers to attend the conference and trade show as a mutually supportive cohort so that these farmers have access to an important educational opportunity. Priority will be given to first time attendees who can demonstrate that they would not otherwise attend. For 6 farmers from CT, UConn Extension Solid Ground will pay for registration, lodging at the hotel and a mileage reimbursement.

To apply to join this small cohort of farmers, complete the form below!

[APPLY HERE](#)



## Video Highlight

Many of us use high tunnels or greenhouses to keep growing our more valuable crops as the temperature starts to dip. But how do you get these set up on your farm- especially when you are trying to do the majority of the work yourself? This video series catches up with a couple different set ups and lets you see how each farm uses the person power they can to keep up with, or even build their own season extension structures.

[View the Videos here](#)

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## VENTURE FARMING INSTITUTE

### 2025 COHORT



A partner organization of ours, the Venture Farming Institute have applications open for their January to May 2025 program.

The Venture Farming Institute is a training program for aspiring BIPOC farmers in CT and RI. The program provides online trainings, field days, ag trainings and technical skills in a hands on environment, technical support to access resources, and grounding in advocacy and social justice.

The program will include both online classes and in person learning opportunities that are made to help farmers that are just starting in their farming journey. To find more info see the website here: <https://solidground.extension.uconn.edu/venturefarminginstitute/>

Applications are open NOW and are due October 31 to participate in this year's program.

**Apply Here** 

For questions surrounding this newsletter, please reach out to [rebecca.toms@uconn.edu](mailto:rebecca.toms@uconn.edu)

## CTRC&D New Resources

CT RC&D has some new resources that are available to farmers through an application process through Climate Smart Funding from CT Dept. of Ag. The first of these is the [Climate Smart Agriculture Equipment Sharing Hubs](#). These hubs are accessible to farms that are chosen through an application process and they are accepting new Equipment Hub user farms on a rolling basis until capacity is filled. Apply at the link above.

CT RC&D is also working with CT NOFA to offer an educational Compost Tea Equipment Mobile Unit to 5 farms interested in the practice for the 2025 growing season. This traveling educational unit will demonstrate to farmers how to brew, apply, and test compost tea. Applications for this new mobile unit will be accepted until November 30, 2024. Scroll to the bottom of the [webpage here](#) to find out more and to apply!

## SAVE THE DATE

UConn Extension  
Vegetable and Small  
Fruit Growers  
Conference: *January 9th*

2nd Annual Farm  
Manager Summit:  
*January 29th (snow date  
Jan. 30th) @ Chrysalis  
Center, Hartford*

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