

MAY '25

SOLID GROUND NEWSLETTER



Summer Update

As you may know, many of us at Solid Ground are farmers ourselves. We know that when the weather starts warming, and farmers markets start opening up, the chances of us being in front of the computer are pretty slim. That's why we decided (for our sake and for yours!) to turn our newsletter into a bi-monthly update for you over the next couple months. We have more time to get info together and highlight the really important stuff, and you have the opportunity to catch up on the latest newsletter whenever you find the time to do it!

Our next newsletters will be coming to your inbox **the second Thursday in July and September**. After that point we'll return to our monthly schedule, keeping you up to date on grants, events, and any other tid-bits that you should be aware of as you're going about running your farm business in CT.

Until then, be safe, stay hydrated, and remember to take a moment every once in a while to rest.

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BUILD A HIGH TUNNEL

Building a high tunnel is complicated. We've tried it, and had to ask for help... a lot. But what if you could spend a day, learning the ins and outs of building a high tunnel and then go and do it yourself, with a little more know-how and a little more confidence. CT Greenhouse is going to help with this as they run one of our Skill Shares this summer. This event will on July 21st at Brown Farm in Scotland and will include setting corners, ground posts, bow assembly, solar sides, hip boards and end walls, and lots more information!

SIGN UP COMING SOON!

MAY FARM TASKS: MANAGING INVASIVE PLANTS

SOLID GROUND Upcoming Events

Land Evaluation and Farmland Access Skill Share (2 sessions)

1st session-

Date: Sun, May 18th

Time: 10am-2pm

Location: Auer Farm, Bloomfield

2nd Session-

Date: Sun, May 25th

Time: 10am-2pm

Locations:

River Crest Farm, Milford,
and

Off Center Farm, Woodbridge

Building a High Tunnel

Date: Monday, July 21st

Time: 8pm-4pm (lunch included)

Location: Brown Farm, Scotland

Livestock Twilights- Rotational Grazing (2 sessions)

1st Session-

Date: Wed, Aug. 6th

Time: 5:30pm -8pm (pizza dinner provided)

Location: Hidden Blossom Farm, Union

2nd Session-

Date: Wed. Aug 13th

Time: 5:30pm -8pm (pizza dinner provided)

Location: High Silo Farm, New Hartford

Every year, when we head out to our fields to prepare for spring planting, the same thing happens- we see new areas that invasive plants have found their way into. It's a frustrating when mugwort shows it's face in a place you've never seen, or the Japanese knotweed has found it's way onto your property. Not to mention the bindweed, bittersweet, multi-floral rose, etc etc.

However, there are tools available to help you! The CT Invasive Plant Working Group out of UConn came up with a "[Invasive Plant Management Calendar](#)," developed by Emmett Varricchio and CIPWG collaborators. This seasonal guide helps you understand steps you can take to combat the top 10 invasive plants including the best times and methods to manage these species effectively.

The calendar outlines Best Management Practices (BMPs) for each species based on growth cycles and seasonal timing. Management strategies are divided into mechanical (cutting, pulling, mowing) and chemical (foliar sprays, cut-and-paint, stem injection, and pre-emergent herbicides). Each method is matched with optimal application windows and specific plant vulnerabilities, such as flowering or seed dispersal periods. And because we don't want these invasives taking root anywhere else, disposal recommendations are included, stressing the importance of preventing re-rooting or unintentional seed dispersal.

Though this guide can help you act in the windows that are most effective for combating invasives, it still encourages you to take steps at any time of the year. Whenever you act however, please consider pollinator activity when applying herbicides (even organic ones)!

We know some invasives you all are facing haven't made this list, but there is still help for you. If there is a specific invasive that you are struggling with, feel free to [sign up for a free consultation](#) with our IPM specialist, Shuresh Ghimire. He can help you make a plan to manage whatever is finding it's way into your fields. Happy Farming!

- The Solid Ground Team



This project is supported by USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Award 2023-49400-40870 supported by USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Award 2023-49400-40870

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Upcoming:

Partner Events

[In-Person eFMNP Application Training and SNAP Authorization](#), May 15th, UConn Storrs, - 4 separate sessions at 10AM, 11AM, 1PM & 2PM

[Webinar: Protecting Your Farm Crew from Extreme Heat](#), May 22, online - 5pm to 6:30pm

[Field Walk with American Farmland Trust](#), May 27, Stone Acres Farm, Stonington- 4pm to 7pm

[Two-part Live Animal Carcass Evaluation Workshop](#), May 30, Plymouth Meats, Terryville- 1:30PM to 4PM

[Composting 101](#), June 14, Common Ground High School- 10AM to 11:30AM

[Pasture Based Systems for Sustainable Livestock Production](#), June 17, Mayapple Hill Farm, New Milford - 9:30AM to 11:30AM

CT Pomological Society Summer Field Day June 17, Rogers Orchard - more info coming soon

Northeast Farm Transition Survey

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD) and its collaborators are seeking farmers in the Northeast U.S. to complete a survey about farm transition, succession planning, and generational change. This survey is an opportunity to share your insights on the challenges and successes of farm transition, succession planning, and generational change. Your feedback will directly impact programs and policies aimed at supporting farmers through transition processes.

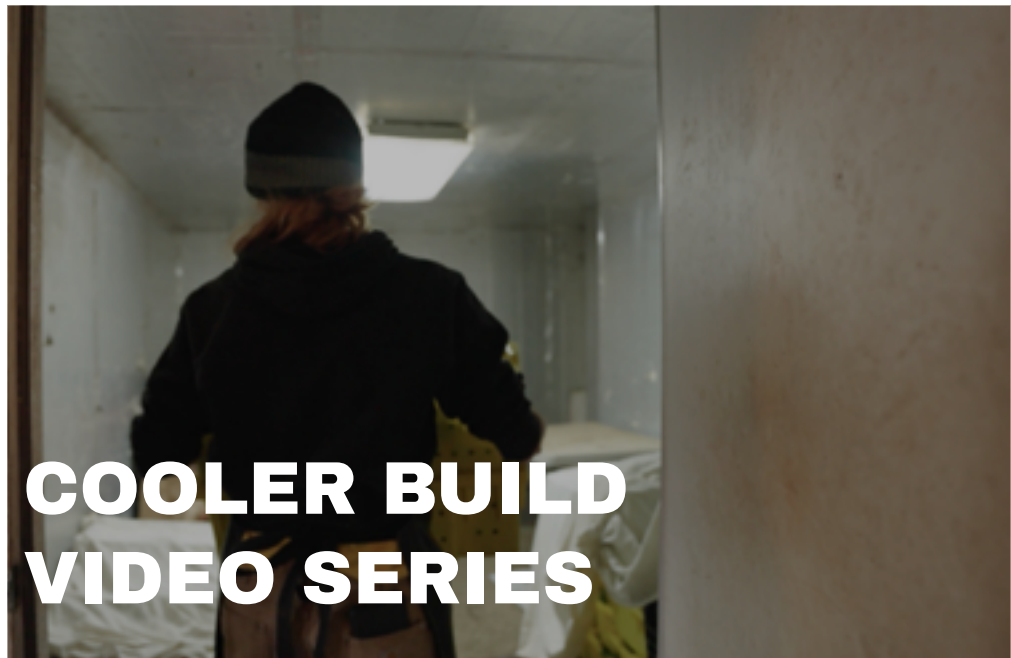
[Fill out the survey here](#)



Want to know more about TOPP and how it's been helping farmers? Lucky you, they recently came out with a report on their 2024 impact. The Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) focuses on mentorship, technical assistance, community building and market development to help U.S. farmers meet growing domestic demand for certified organic food.

So far in 2024, TOPP's impact is substantial, having helped certify 3,863 new operations and more than 260,000 new organic acres across the nation as part of a growing organic ecosystem. The program has connected 327 transitioning producers with 237 experienced organic mentors and delivered technical assistance through nearly 1,500 events reaching thousands of producers and agricultural professionals in every state and several U.S. territories. Though these statistics are nationwide, the farms here in CT are part of that, and you could be too! Check out the report and learn more about their program below

2024 Impact Report



Video Highlight

Farmers have a never-ending list of projects,. One of the ways we want to help you with those is through our DIY video series on our website and youtube. This month, we're highlighting Coolers built using the Cool-bot system. Each video shows a different way that a space can be used for a cooler and all of them are fitted with AC units that utilize the cool-bot system to help store crops. Give them a look, especially if this is a last minute project this month before the crops start coming in mass!

[View the Videos here](#)



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ONLINE LIVESTOCK FORUM

NORTHEAST LIVESTOCK & GRAZING LINK

Ready for a brand new resource for Livestock farmers?: The Northeast Livestock & Grazing Link online forum, [NELGL.com](https://nelgl.com) has launched! This forum is designed by and for Northeast livestock farmers, with the goal of building a stronger regional community through shared resources and knowledge.

NELGL aims to create a vibrant space for sharing crucial information, innovative practices, and valuable connections. By collaborating and networking, we can strengthen our individual operations, promote sustainable livestock farming, and build a more resilient livestock industry across the Northeast.

Here's how you can get started on NELGL:

- Create an account: head to [NELGL.com](https://nelgl.com) and make a new account
- Read the [Welcome Topic](#): It provides a great overview of the forum and its features.
- Introduce Yourself in the [Intros/Icebreakers](#) topic: We want to build a real community where we know each other, not just another impersonal listserv.

Find Out More



*For questions surrounding this newsletter,
please reach out to rebecca.toms@uconn.edu*

Have thoughts about Organic Farming?

In 2024, CT DOAG received a USDA Grant through the Organic Market Development Grant Program. As part of our project, UConn Extension is partnering with them to conduct a baseline survey in partnership with GreatBlue Research to better understand the needs and experiences of wholesalers, retailers, producers, and handlers involved in certified organic and CT Grown agriculture.

Your input is essential in shaping future initiatives to support organic farming and the broader agricultural community in Connecticut. The survey will take just a few minutes to complete, and all responses will remain anonymous. You do not have to be certified organic to complete the survey. All data is good data!

[FILL OUT THE SURVEY HERE](#)