

ALL THINGS FOOD

FOOD STUDIES PROGRAM, MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE, VT



All Things Food: The Knoll Edition

MOLLY ANDERSON, ACADEMIC DIRECTOR,
FOOD STUDIES

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Students,

Happy spring! I was in Milan for 4 days and returned to find that everything looked even greener and leafier than when I left --- spring happens very fast in Vermont!

Good news on our potential Food Studies minor proposal: we presented it to the April faculty meeting and got a positive reception. We held an open Discussion Meeting (only for voting faculty, unfortunately) on May 10 and will vote as a full faculty in May. If the proposal is approved, we'll organize a meal, discussion and celebration for students, faculty and staff early next fall.

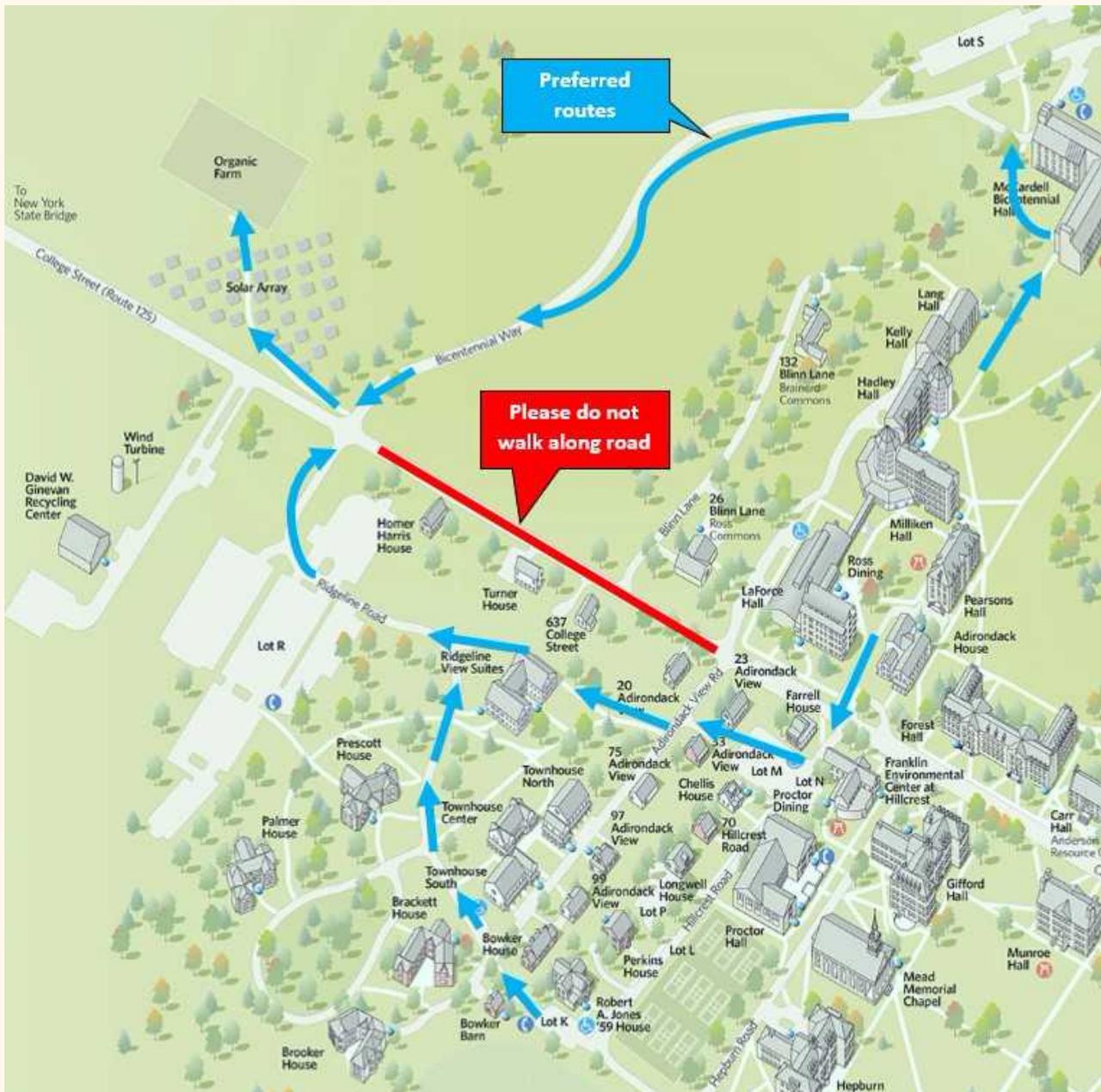
Now that the growing season is beginning, there is a wealth of events. I've been putting announcements on AllThingsFood as I learn about them (and others have been posting announcements too). Check past announcements to make sure you haven't missed anything, and please let me know if you aren't on AllThings Food yet so that I can add you!

And finally, many thanks to Laura Dillon for creating lovely Food Studies newsletters this year! They wouldn't have happened (or at least, not nearly as comprehensively) without her.

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How to get to The Knoll:



The Knoll is in the field a half-mile behind Bicentennial Hall. To get there, walk or drive down the hill from the college west on College Street (Rte. 125) for a half-mile. Take a right at the wooden sign that reads "The Knoll". If you are driving, you can leave your car at the sign or at the corner of Bicentennial Way (at the solar field) and walk the short dirt road to the garden.

Welcome to The Knoll

BY MEGAN O. BRAKELEY '06, FOOD AND GARDEN EDUCATOR &
SOPHIE ESSER CALVI '03.5, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE GLOBAL
FOOD & FARM PROGRAM

The Middlebury College Knoll and Global Food and Food and Farm program uses food as a medium to cultivate wellbeing in people, place and the planet.

The Knoll provides opportunities for individuals and groups to interact in many different ways. Our three main program areas are: The Educational Garden, the Outdoor Kitchen and the Serenity Garden. Equally important, the Knoll serves as a space on campus to connect with the landscape and each other, to feel the sunshine, listen to the birdsong, and pause to consider the pasture grasses.

We partner with individual classes and on-campus and community organizations to sponsor research, daily Volunteer Hours in the garden, and campus events. Some highlights include ongoing annual research projects for the Natural Science and the Environment course, senior thesis research on pollinator behavior, and partnering with Addison Central Teens for a day of their Farm to Teen summer camp, and Cornwall Elementary's third/fourth grade class for 5 weekly visits to the farm in the fall.

We grow some 800 pounds of produce (primarily butternut squash, green beans, and garlic) for donation to HOPE, our local food shelf. Other produce helps supply kitchens at Atwater Dining, Bread Loaf, and newly this coming summer, Middlebury Retail operations (including Crossroads, the Grille, MiddExpress, and Wilson Café). Four full-time summer interns help manage the gardens and steward the space, and each spring we hire about 6 spring/fall interns to support the Knoll's efforts during the academic year. Environmental Affairs oversees The Knoll in collaboration with the Middlebury College Organic Farm student organization.

All are always welcome to join Volunteer Hours at the Knoll this spring. They are held Mondays-Fridays from 3-5pm, weather depending. Previous experience is welcomed but by no means necessary; we provide any needed tools and supplies. You can check the status of Volunteer Hours at go/knollhours to confirm given the weather.

HISTORY

as detailed on the Knoll's website ([go/theknoll](http://go.theknoll))

2002: established by Bennett Konesni '04.5 and Jean Hamilton '04.5 as the "Middlebury College Organic Garden"

2004: first honey harvest, internships, and classes taught at the Garden

2008: Construction of new walking and biking path to the garden and classroom building completed

2009: Garden expands to 2 acres & pollinator research project begins at garden

2010: Education becomes a focus of the garden; Students teach a winter term course called Food Justice in Vermont; Organic certification process begins

2011: Name officially changed to Middlebury College Organic Farm; Students run a weekend summit for student farmers at NESCAC schools; Students and faculty propose food studies minor

2012: His Holiness the Dali Lama comes to bless bench and future Serenity garden

2014: Students build a pizza oven at the farm for community events

2017: 15 year celebration and naming of The Knoll & Labyrinth is built in collaboration with the Scott Center for Spiritual and Religious Life

GET INVOLVED!!

by volunteering:

visit *GO/KNOLLHOURS* for the most up-to-date info on volunteering hours

started in April, held every weekday from 3-5pm

~

no experience or sign up necessary!

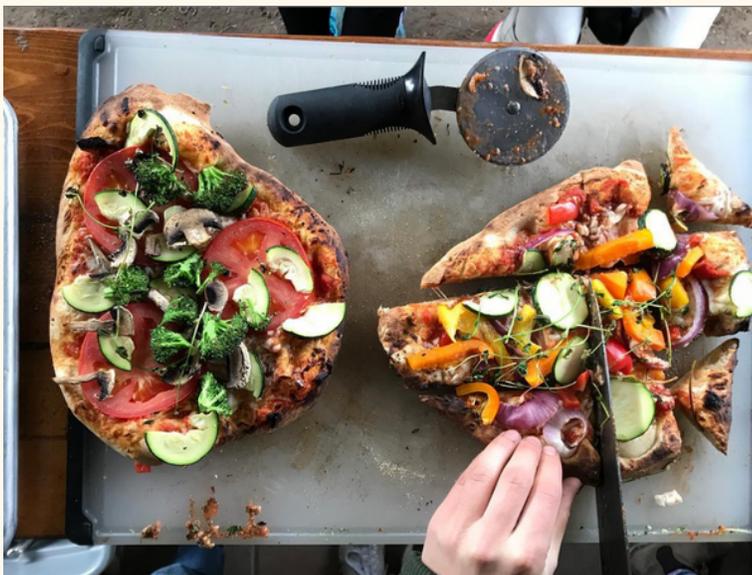
~

cancelled when raining

by joining the student org, MCOF:

as detailed on the Knoll's website (go/theknoll):

"MCOF is both a space (our farm) and a student organization. While things are still growing (late spring and early fall), much of our activity is concentrated on the Knoll. We hold harvest festivals, work parties, bonfires, and more. Once the growing season wraps up, we transition to activities like film screenings, guest lectures, farmer panels, dinners, workshops, and more. Our activities each year vary depending on where student interest lies. We elect two student co-directors to lead the group each year."



by following the
Knoll on instagram:

@middknoll

THESIS RESEARCH

Maisie Arnold '19 conducted her thesis research at the Knoll

"This past summer, I conducted my thesis research on pollination ecology and plant conservation at the Knoll. I was interested in seeing whether gene flow between plant populations that have been isolated by fragmentation can be increased—specifically by working with bees to distribute pollen. For flowering plants, gene flow occurs through the movement of pollen, seeds, or fragments of plants. Gene flow is positive on a local scale because it increases genetic diversity and decreases the chance of extinction. Transplanting seeds and plants are established methods of increasing gene flow, but moving pollen is relatively unexplored. Theoretically, pollen could be collected from bees entering a hive in plant population “A”, moved to another population (let’s call it “B”), and re-distributed to plants in “B” by foragers leaving the “B” hive. However, since I was working with one study site, not two, I focused on testing whether foragers would move pollen from a dispenser fitted to their hive out to tomatillo plants that I placed in the field. Tomatillos are not a rare plant species, but I worked with them because they are a relatively hardy model species and have some favorable characteristics for pollination research.

Although my data did not show significant gene flow from the hive to the tomatillos, I learned a lot from my experiment and from all the collaborators I had in the community. I am especially grateful to the summer 2018 Knoll interns who took care of my plants while I was away; Megan O. Brakeley, the Food and Garden Educator, who so generously shared her knowledge and time; and Ross Conrad, who allowed me to work with one of his honeybee hives. My thesis research this past summer was only one of the ways in which I’ve interacted with the Knoll in the past four years. It is by far my favorite place on campus, and has been a soothing, anchoring place when I was stressed, a freeing space in which I feel safe, a workplace when I was a Knoll intern, and a place to which I feel welcome to return after I graduate in two weeks."



Maisie

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 16: Vermont Farmers Food Center at 251 West St. Rutland, 4:30-7:30pm Grow It! Workshop for Garden Leaders. These workshops are great resources for anyone interested in strengthening gardening in their community. Includes a hearty snack to keep you fueled for an engaging evening. More information at <http://vcgn.org/what-we-do/growit>.

May 20 12:00pm to June 7 12:00pm Breakthrough Leaders for Sustainable Food Systems Professional Certificate. True leadership is about the capacity of people and communities to shape the futures they desire. This innovative 3-week online and on-campus cross-disciplinary program develops visionary leaders by offering solutions to the social, environmental, diet, and health impacts of our food system. The University of Vermont is a recognized leader in the food systems movement, providing you with unique access to hands-on learning and collaboration with scholars, activists, leaders, and professionals in the field. You will be taken on a journey through every step of the interconnected food system. For more information, click [HERE](#) to see our website and registration. [BTL-2019-Residential-Schedule-10-18-18.pdf](#)

May 28: 6:00pm to 7:30pm. Community Farming & Grassland Birds: A Local Conservation Strategy at Shelburne Farms, 1611 Harbor Road, Farm Barn Shelburne, VT. Come hear the stories of individual grassland birds and their young and be inspired as Vermont landowners and communities to halt the declining populations of these birds in the northeastern United States. Many bobolinks and other birds born in and around Shelburne Farms return to breed within 1500m of where they were born – generation to generation. This allows us to uniquely tell the stories of bird families: where each was born, who its parents, siblings, and cousins were, where it migrated, where it returned, and its breeding success. Discuss how the timing and intensity of haying and grazing affect these birds, and how management opportunities among Vermont's farming and landowner community can balance bird and farmer needs. Presenter: Noah Perlut FREE. Pre-registration encouraged but not required. Please contact registration@shelburnefarms.org with any questions.

June 1-2, 9:30-2pm. Summer Field Days, Valley Clayplain Forest Farm and Wild Roots Farm, Bristol, VT. Field walks and talks about agroecology and agroforestry with Jon Turner, Jenn Colby from UVM, and Mark Krawczyk. Details and schedule at www.wildrootsfarmvermont.com.

June 6, 2019 12:00pm to June 7, 2019 12:00pm. Slow Living Summit: Future of Women in Food Entrepreneurship, 157 Main St., Brattleboro, VT. The Summit aims to create a positive change in our communities and revolutionize the future of food. This year has been an especially powerful year for women, and we want to invite you to partner with us in bringing a voice to women entrepreneurs. This year's summit features some stellar speakers such as Winona Laduke of Honor the Earth and former running mate of Ralph Nader and Stacey Vanek Smith of NPR's Planet Money. The Future of Women in Food Entrepreneurship Summit provides a forum for food and agriculture entrepreneurs to network and get focused resources and specialized expertise they need to build great companies. We know that deep, resilient, local, and regional economies weave a strong fabric of social and economic systems that bind together communities, markets, and ultimately the world. Register here! <https://www.slowlivingsummit.org/register/>