



Food Pantry Garden

A collaboration between Bug Hill Farm, Hilltown Churches' Food Pantry, and First Congregational Church (UCC)

Funded in part by the Mary Lyon Foundation.

Helpers Needed for the Food Pantry Garden at Bug Hill Farm

By Alia Woofenden, Program Coordinator at First Congregational Church (UCC) Ashfield

The First Congregational Church, Hilltown Churches' Food Pantry, and Bug Hill Farm, owned by Sam and Charlotte Perkins, are collaborating to grow fresh produce for the Hilltown Churches' Food Pantry. Volunteers from Ashfield, Buckland, Shelburne and beyond have dug garden beds, spread compost and manure, mulched, and planted. On June 27, the first delivery of fresh produce from the garden was delivered to the clients of the Food Pantry.

On June 16, Carole Fisher's third grade Sanderson class planted beans and potatoes. "We loved having the children help us in the garden," Sam Perkins of Bug Hill Farm commented. "Carole's class always plants a garden at Sanderson, so those children know how gardening works."

The students got a tour of the farm, learned about different fruit being grown on the property, and even got to sample some currant and blueberry jam. One student said, "I give it 5 thumbs up!" Students enjoyed lunch by the beaver pond, games, and exploring before they were put to work. Everyone was eager to help plant bean seeds and potatoes. Another student said, "I like working in the dirt. I like the way it feels in my hands."

Sam and Charlotte invited them to return in the summer to pick berries and to volunteer in the garden again. And Sam reminded them that the food they helped plant would help feed families who need help securing food. "You're always welcome back to help with the best part, weeding!" he said. Also, he invited them back as 4th graders to help with harvesting potatoes so they could see the process through to the end. The goal is to have Sanderson students return each year. On Wednesday, June 21, a group of high school students from Mohawk Trail Regional School came to the farm to help weed, mulch and prepare ground for planting potatoes.

More than a dozen volunteers are helping Sam and Charlotte. It's not too late for others to sign up. We need people who can plant, weed, harvest, water, deliver produce from the farm to the Food Pantry, and other tasks. To sign up, go to this website, www.ashfielducc.org, and click on sign up sheet at top of Home page. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeMYh5Mp2matE52SuA7Zkgkbjh-uYiOKFrwWAUP6RhRDbqqKQ/viewform>

For more information, contact me at aliawoofenden@gmail.com

Thank you.

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