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HEALTHY SOIL, HEALTHY FOOD AT SQUASH VILLA FARM



Himanee and Jim Gupta-Carlson have been farming for over ten years in Saratoga Springs, NY and more recently at their farm in Easton, NY. A familiar face at the Saratoga and Schenectady Farmers Market, Himanee raises

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house with 3 acres of land and a barn and began growing vegetables in their backyard. “We basically started with a beautiful house with a barn and a yard decimated by dirt bikes and chemical fertilizers,” said Himanee.

Over the years, Himanee and Jim made improvements to the soil by incorporating organic matter and planting crops that were beneficial to improving soil health. They also started raising chickens, ducks, geese and goats to diversify their farm and also provide a source of fertilizer for their vegetables. Although the farm is not certified organic, Jim and Himanee use regenerative methods and do not use pesticides, herbicides or fungicides to grow their crops.

Himanee and Jim's goal is to raise super high-quality vegetables that thrive in healthy soils. Jim explained that they raise animals to regenerate the soil for the vegetables and to bring happiness and joy to overall farm life. “The goats eat things that we don’t eat and the chickens eat rotten food. The ducks eat snails and the geese scare away predators. All play a part in maintaining soil health and the production of high quality vegetables,” said Jim.

By growing items that other farmers don’t grow including non-ornamental Indian corn, Himanee and Jim provide their customers with something different. They also grow dry heirloom beans, raise a variety of chickens that produce “rainbow-colored” eggs and geese that lay very large eggs. The geese start laying eggs in early spring and provide a unique offering at the farmers’ markets. Himanee encourages her customers to try the geese eggs because they are so delicious. “They are our favorite egg - creamy, golden and delicious. You can taste the magic of a goose egg when it’s simply made,” said Himanee.

To get fresh chicken, goat meat, eggs or Abenaki corn and beans, visit Himanee and Jim at the Saratoga Farmers’ Market on Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. or the Schenectady Greenmarket on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information or to place an order, please email squashvillefarm@gmail.com or call or text 518-650-5881 (Jim), 518-430-8360 (Himanee). You can also find them on Facebook as Squash Villa Farm.

REGENERATIVE FARMING AT SLATE RIVER FARMS



The Lovenduski family has been farming for four generations in two different states and two different regions of New York State. They got their start in the early 1900s when Joseph Lovenduski arrived in the United States and started farming in New Jersey. Joseph's son, Austin, expanded the farm in New Jersey and raised laying hens, beef cows and vegetables to sell at his roadside stand and the regional market. Two of Austin's sons, Paul and Mark, established a farm in the Finger Lakes region and grew corn, soybeans, wheat, green beans and sweet corn for the commodity market.

When Paul and his son, Eric and daughter-in-law, Nellie, moved to a historic farm in Easton, NY in 2016, they decided to switch to regenerative farming due to the topography and soils in that part of the state. Regenerative farming allows the Lovenduski family to farm the land in a way that maximizes production and improves soils. Their goal is to utilize the farm's fertile soils in the most productive and sustainable way possible.

Nellie explained that by implementing regenerative farming practices, the organic matter in the soil increases which allows for more water holding capacity of the soil and less water runoff and erosion. The beef cows graze the pastures at high stocking rates for very short periods of time and trample the underbrush. Over time the trampled underbrush decays and feeds the soil. The animals are moved around the farm regularly, so their manure is not concentrated in small areas. Nellie stated that the reason more people aren't implementing regenerative practices is due to the amount of labor required. "At Slate River Farms, we're seeing the long term benefits of keeping the animals moving, so we're willing to devote the labor to it," said Nellie.

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They decided to discontinue selling at the market because they didn't feel comfortable interfacing with the public. Working with Commerce4Good, a team of volunteers helping small businesses shift to ecommerce, they moved their market online. Finding a market for their eggs proved to be more difficult, but Nellie and Eric created a local delivery route where customers could order meat as well as eggs. Nellie explained that they were able to team up with some local restaurants, but it was a difficult for restaurants to utilize food from local farms when you compare the price of local pasture-raised chicken to chicken from Sysco. "We're not farming this way because it's the cheapest way – we're farming this way because it's the right way to do it," said Nellie.

For more information about Slate River Farms and to order their products, please visit <https://slateriverfarmsny.com/>.



WHAT'S IN SEASON

Greens - spinach, mesclun, early chard, kale greens, collard greens, cilantro, scallions, arugula, baby lettuce

Storage Crops - carrots, onions, potatoes, winter squash, apples

Featured Recipe





Farmers' Market Breakfast Tacos

USES FARM FRESH:

EGGS

BACON

MAPLE SYRUP

HONEY

MICROGREENS

GET THE RECIPE

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