

Autumn 2006

Although the fruit crop was a big flop this year in Basalt, there are many other areas of harvest that have been more plentiful:

Fat City Farms, Inc. – 501(c)3 non-profit

We have finally hatched our own non-profit venture here in Basalt, “Fat City Farms, Inc.”, in which we will partner with landowners to re-develop local agriculture on a variety of irrigated plots of ranch land. Some of these are in conservation easements, and can be leased for minimal amounts.

We are raising the money to put two of these plots into production of potatoes and a few other root vegetables, several vine vegetables, and a large variety of greens, in the Spring of 2007. We will need money to buy the fences to keep animals from eating all our work, irrigation hoses and equipment to water everything efficiently, pay for skilled agricultural workers, and of course insurance to protect the landowners, the volunteers and the workers.

We will offer annual shares of our produce in return for much of the money we raise, although the rewards in the first year will not be predictable, and may not be very productive, but we will certainly be able to provide a thankful feast by this time next year. With each year after that, the quality and quantity of the produce will be greater and more predictable. Of course, as with all undertakings, there will always be risk, and there will always be pestilence. We intend to work with access to today’s bountiful knowledge base, to create organic food in abundance, using sustainable methods. The learning curve will be long but it will be rewarding.

Shares – how do they work? How much will they cost? To whom do I write the check and where do I send it? How can I help? Will there be a banquet or something, and will I get food during the summer?

Carbondale Economic Localization ( CEL )

Carbondale hatched a wonderful community movement toward sustainable practices in food, transportation, and businesses of all kinds. They join a growing nationwide network for re-localizing your own industries in a sustainable way. You can read all about it on:

<http://www.relocalize.net/groups/ce/>

Sustainable Settings, the Carbondale research farm and CSA is spearheading this effort, along with C.O.R.E., our valleywide Community Office for Resource Efficiency, whose efforts to help create more locally-produced energy are well known. Their meetings, efforts and progress are well documented on the above web address.

Heritage Fruit Tree Preservation Project:

As I said, the fruit crop was a big flop this year in Basalt, and in most of the valley, at least for apples. Nevertheless, we have planted some great new relationships and discovered some history right here.

There were some apricots and plums, and even a few pear trees in productive condition this year, but apples, our largest potential for fruit, fell to an off-year (last year was a record bumper crop), and a late frost that nipped the blossoms we did get, for the most part. If you have an apple tree that produced well this year, you’d better keep mum about it. My cider press is very thirsty.

If you’ve never read Michael Pollan’s book “The Botany of Desire”, his first chapter is a fascinating read on the history and human propagation of the apple tree, for it’s satisfaction of the desire for sweetness, and in the days of the pioneers, for it’s alcohol potential.

## Fat City Farms, Inc.

www.fatcityfarms.com

Basalt, Colorado

501(c)3 pending

I went to Massachusetts in search of an old legend told to me by a farmer in Maine, of an orchard planted in the late 1800's, of many distinct varieties of apple, the best and brightest of the American experiment. They were connoisseurs back then, and prized far more variety than we now enjoy. We have Macintosh, Delicious, Rome, Jonathan, Gala, Empire, McCown, and a few others in our stores. A hundred and fifty years ago, they enjoyed thousands of varieties throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. They were comparing notes, and actively propagating new varieties, through careful experiments with pollination.

At Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boyleston, MA, there are 119 distinct varieties of heritage apple, being cared for like royalty, and available for scionwood harvesting at:

<http://www.towerhillbg.org/>

We can grow some of these historic apple trees here, and intend to begin doing so next Spring. We are seeking neighborhoods with open space that might serve as great, small orchards to grow out some of the distinct apples and pears we have grafted from the heritage trees we've already discovered, and some of the new ones we will be importing, eventually. Your neighborhood orchard will need two sustainable things - water and work. Please don't try to establish an orchard if you aren't sure you can generate enough of both these necessary ingredients far into the future.

This Autumn, we received email contact from a group in England called the "Brogdale Horticultural Trust", home to the National Fruit Collections, the largest collection of distinct varieties of fruit trees and bushes in the world. They are seeking to expand their database of distinct varieties to the world, and have asked us to help them learn what we have out here in the west, the fruits our settler ancestors brought here and created here. For an idea of what the Brogdale Trust possesses, see 1,865 varieties of apple, 460 varieties of pear, 302 of plum, 298 of cherry, and on and on, at:

<http://www.brogdale.org/index.html>

In order to help with their survey, we will need someone skilled in the art and science of classification of plants, especially fruit, and most especially apple, by this time next year, when we hope the crop will not flop. If you are, or know this person, or indeed have a burning desire to BE this person, please let yourself be known to us. We have some fantastic apples for you to taste.

### 2007 Crops:

We have collected six varieties of potato, all from Basalt, Carbondale and Paonia, and we have planted them in several backyard gardens, and we have harvested several times our original quantity to use as seed potatoes next Spring.

Jan Eagers, the "Iris Lady" of Basalt, whose Iris collection began with 5 bulbs in 1981, has given Fat City Farms hundreds of bulbs to propagate on farm plots, for their beauty, and as revenue generators, to be sold as fresh flowers, and eventually bulbs.

In spite of oncoming Winter, Jerome Osentowski of Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute continues to provide fresh salad of incredible diversity at Fat City Farm's board meeting potluck dinners, as sustenance for the body, mind, spirit and inspiration.

### Board Development:

Fat City Farms will be honored to accept enthusiastic individuals as board members and contributors, in the pursuit of excellence in our local food-growing enterprise. Please send letters of introduction and interest to Susan Brady, at [sbrady@sopris.net](mailto:sbrady@sopris.net)

Thank you!!!

Fat City Farms Board of Directors

November 2006

