



## Plants for mid-summer

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# These farms will have you crawling



# back for more



FAITHLYN GRAHAM Review Staff

ROMNEY — Hampshire County's second annual farm crawl was met with overwhelming support over the weekend. With over 30 participating farms, Hampshire County was a hot spot for agrotourism.

Whether you stopped at Nellie's Flower Farm and walked through her ten-plus vendors or took a hayride at Triple E Farms, there was truly something for everyone.

"I've been getting feedback from a few of the farms, and some of them, like Nellie's Flower Farm, of course, she had a lot of vendors set up out there. They had over 200 people that signed in, I believe, on Saturday is what she reported," said Executive Director Tina Ladd. "Other places were holding steady around the same amount of visitors, like 60-70 visitors."

The Hampshire Convention and Visitors Bureau created the farm crawl to encourage locals and visitors to explore some of the many farms throughout the county. Since agriculture is Hampshire's top-producing industry, it is important to shed light on the hard-working farmers here.

Though some farms were busier than others, a consistent flow of

visitors was maintained throughout the event. Since the event was run almost entirely by the farmers involved, it led to some unique and interesting guest experiences.

Being able to talk with farmers and see what they put so much passion into continues to promote a growing connection between the community and farmers.

In the coming years, with events such as the farm crawl, there will only continue to be strong support for local businesses throughout the county. Farmers interested in participating in next year's farm crawl can contact Tina Ladd at [cometohampshire@gmail.com](mailto:cometohampshire@gmail.com).

"I would like to try and focus on agritourism more throughout the summer, not just one particular weekend. It just depends on how much time the participating farmers have to devote to doing more than one weekend," said Ladd. "You know, it's a lot of work, too and they're taking out the days they're devoted to the farm crawl from the time they would normally be working on their farms. So, it may not be as easy for some of them to participate. Hopefully, we will expand and maybe have even more options other than our farm crawl next year."

## Down to earth

The Blooming Mountain Botanical Sanctuary is home to a family of herbalists and herb-enthusiasts-in-the-making. Visitors were given a beautiful walk-through of the property showcasing every stage of the family's farming process.

The garden was filled with herbs, flowers and vegetables that the owners thoroughly explained the benefits of. There were leaves that tasted of licorice, seeds that tasted of sour patch kids and some of the most fragrant smells you could imagine.

The family also showed off their herb-drying shack, which was filled with their home-grown herbs as they prepare them to be made into teas, oils and medicines.

Along with the tour, visitors were also pleasantly accompanied by the owners' kids who were full of spunk and interacted with guests, showing interest in their parents' hard work, asking guests to try different plants and even picking them to eat themselves.

## Bulldozing the way to the future

Farm Crawl first-timers Allison and Johnathan Geiger, with Dozer Farms, share unique farming techniques. The first-generation farmers and family of five specialize in growing dahlias and a variety of vegetables using natural and organic practices.

Johnathan Geiger previously owned the largest medical marijuana facility in West Virginia, and through his business learned a lot about how to grow crops efficiently and purposefully.

Though he no longer grows marijuana, he uses his skills to grow beautiful pumpkins, dahlias, sunflowers, tomatoes and much more.

He shared his process of measuring soil pH and water pH and explained how they each affect the growth of his crops. He also explained his usage of copper wire to enhance his plants' flow of natural electromagnetic energy which leads to a higher intake in nutrients for the plants.

Overall, the family uses a combination of learned business practices and crop knowledge to achieve a bountiful harvest year after year.



## Willy Wonka and the great escape

Have you ever wanted to step foot into the garden scene from Willy Wonka? Look no further than Great Escape Farms.

Todd and Trisha McKee pride themselves on their beautiful variety of plants that are almost entirely edible. From flowers that taste of peppers to fruitful orange trees, there is a sense of magic in every inch of the organized garden.

Todd and Trish moved to the area around two years ago from the Maryland area, but have owned their proper-

ty since 2012. Todd was originally an engineer, but the couple has settled into the quiet sanctuary of Hampshire County farm life.

Though there are no chocolate rivers, with Todd's engineering experience the couple has been able to create unique and effective rain watering to keep their plants hydrated, through an intricate system Todd developed.

Edible plants are not the only thing the couple specializes in, with a large variety of guineas and teddy bear-headed scarecrows.



## When you give a Bull a cookie...

Arnold Farms not only specializes in sweet corn, oats and bluegrass; but is also home to a cookie-hungry Angus bull. Visitors were given a sugar cookie and were allowed to feed the gentle giant as he proudly butted his way through the crowd to retrieve his cookies.

Visitors were invited to explore the Arnold property to experience the love and care the Arnold family puts into

everything they do; it is no surprise their corn is so sweet.

The third-generation farm is returning to the farm crawl after experiencing some detrimental damage during a tornado that devastated the farm right before last year's crawl.

The debut this year, however, was better than ever with visitors stopping to buy their famous sweet corn and feed their loving Angus cows.

## Whoa, Nellie

Nellie's flower farm was a hot venue this year at the farm crawl with over 10 vendors set up throughout the weekend. The vendors provided an array of farm-made goods ranging from coffee to up-cycled clothing.

"There are people here all over the political spectrum, with all kinds of different opinions, but none of that comes here, we are all here for the same thing," owner Angie Park said.

There was truly something for everyone at the event. Nellie's Farm produced its own supply of bouquets.

The location was by far the most consistently busy farm because of its wide range of farmers. The air was fragrant with flowers and joy.

Nellie hopes to make these vendor pop-ups a more consistent thing to bring recognition to local businesses and bring people in the community together.

## Growing, shrinking, sagging, shifting

As you read this, I'll be on vacation.

Blissfully people-watching on the beach in North Carolina, re-applying my sunscreen poorly, trying to get a comb through my curls — curls that the salty air have rendered nearly impossible to manage.

Avoiding our beach house's outdoor shower, losing my sunglasses, getting a splinter on my bum from leaning against the wooden deck railing (if you know, you know) — the list goes on and on...sort of like what Mom will be doing about

my need for hydrating between adult beverages.

(As she should — nothing wrong with a gentle reminder.)

My family goes on this vacation every year at about this time, and while there are many things that stay the same (see above), this year, something's a little different.

I've gained a bit of weight, and my body isn't the same as it was last year.

Without going off on a huge tangent where I decry diet culture and its dangers to our mental health or pontificate about the importance of accepting and being kind to our bodies, no matter their size, I'll just lean on one basic point:

My body is the least interesting thing about me.

Think about it: human be-



Emma June  
GROSSKOPF

### HOOT AND HOLLER

ings are so much more than their physical appearance. We are creative, soulful beings. We are kind. We are generous. We have unique, intriguing patterns of thought, and our brains each work in special ways.

We are funny. We are resourceful. We are compassionate, and we have the capacity to love in all different kinds of ways.

All of which is pretty amaz-

ing — except that society's obsession with thinness pushes us to believe that our appearance takes precedence over all of the amazing things I listed.

Throughout our lives, our bodies will change. That's inevitable, and almost comforting if you think about it in its inevitability. As we get older, stuff shifts. Skin sags. Wrinkles emerge. We get pregnant and have children. Our lifestyles change. Medication affects our metabolism.

Whatever the case is, at least once in our lives will we be on a beach (either literally or metaphorically) with a body that has changed, and we can decide what we want to do.

We can mourn our "old" body, lamenting the fact that there's been a shift. We can be-

rate our "new" body, hoping that if we're nasty enough to it, it'll revert to its former self.

We can shift our lifestyle to a healthier one with the goal of changing our body for the better — but it's important to do that in a way that is kind, patient and gentle with yourself.

The fact of the matter is, I'm probably on a beach right now, rocking an array of leopard print swimsuits, the same way I would if I was in my smaller body.

I'm still going to wear those swimsuits. I'm still going to ham it up whenever someone takes out their camera, angling to be in every photo. I'm still going to have a drink (or four) while standing in the surf, visiting with my family.

Bodies change. They grow,

they shrink. They lose muscle definition, they bulk up. They age. We aren't created to stay the exact same year after year after year, and obsessing over the changes when they DO happen isn't healthy for us at all.

All we can do is accept the body we have today, take care of it as best we can and be kind to it — and maybe, if you're at the beach, consider slathering on a little more SPF.

Can't be too careful, you know.

Emma June moved to Romney from the D.C. metro area after she graduated college in 2019. She's the Review's editor, and her days are filled with all of the emotions, challenges, delights and frustrations of being a 20-something-year-old in today's world. □