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News

Organic farm cultivates enthusiastic following

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NEW BRITAIN — If the Urban Oaks Organic Farm were a short film, Variety might rave “Socko! Boffo!” The reviews are in and the city’s nonprofit organic farm is a New Britain hit, going on an extended run through most of September.

A typical online review reads, “Urban Oaks is a gem in the Hardware City. Growing year round with a generous farm market on Friday and Saturday. The best tomatoes, basils, squash, eggplant, hot peppers — oh and so much more. A must-see farm and market!”

Voted Best Heirloom Veggies by Yankee Magazine, the farm grows a wide variety of specialty vegetables: greens, herbs and some fruit, all certified organic. Chefs and farmers’ market customers anticipate its tomatoes, eggplants, sweet and hot peppers, figs, dark leafy greens, arugula and award-winning salad greens.

“We also support our neighboring farmers,” said the farm’s mobile manager, Peggy Hall, “and source items we don’t grow or cultivate ourselves like corn, stone fruit, berries, potatoes, squashes, honey, eggs, cheese, poultry, meats and tofu.”

Urban Oaks farmer Mike Kandefer said tomatoes and sweet corn are hot right now.

“Our native organic tomatoes are the best,” said Kandefer. “Last year, Labor Day was our biggest weekend. This year during Thanksgiving week we’ll get our turkeys, as usual, from Vermont.”

The mobile market delivers to restaurants, caterers and schools around the state. It is made possible by a \$75,000 federal grant sponsored through the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. From June through August, city residents had an opportunity at five locations to stock up on fresh, local and organic fruits and vegetables.

Along with the food this summer came recipes and nutrition information. The market accepts food stamps and other vouchers from people who qualify for Women, Infants and Children’s aid.

“We cater to people in the city who rely on SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] and WIC,” said Hall. “Technically, August 28 was supposed to be our last mobile market day. But, by popular demand, we’ll continue on Mondays and Tuesdays through most of September.”

Mondays, the mobile market will be at the Community Health Center, 85 Lafayette St. On Tuesdays, Hall will drive her truck to the Jefferson School, 140 Horse Plain Road.

Urban Oaks Farm, at 207 Oak St., is open year-round every Friday from 2 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call (860) 223-6200 or visit www.urbanoaks.org.

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