The Basics of Organic Food Production  
Spring 2017

Dr. Elaine Solowey  
3 weekly lecture hours, 3 credits

Course description  
The purpose of this course is to present information about small scale organic food production, its potential and its problems. In this course we will explore the social and economic aspects of producing one’s own organic food and engage students in practicing soil enrichment techniques, composting and vermin-composting, container gardening and keeping small livestock as well as seed saving, food storage, food preparation, slow food movements and the active preservation of heirloom fruits, vegetables and animal breeds.  
The semester includes a guest lectures and workshops on building greenhouses, cloches and chicken coops.

Grade components:
Final exam 40%  
Project 35%  
Students choose an aspect of organic food production to investigate independently, presenting at the end of the semester a report or demonstration project with a written component.
Assignments 20%  
Attendance 5%  
Students build and keep compost piles, plan and plant a garden, practice mulching, learning basic pruning techniques, construct a greenhouse from scrap material and design a chicken coop.

Lesson One: Feb 16th  
Course Introduction and issues  
Dr Elaine Solowey  
Growing food is only half of the process......  
Oldest Prepared foods...what came first, bread or cheese?

Lesson Two: Feb 17th  
Gardens  
Logsdon, Gene. The Economics of Small Scale Grain Production, 2009  
Hands on in the garden  
Assignment –what do you want to grow in your vegetable garden?
Lesson Three: Feb 23rd
Bringing Food Production Back Home
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings: The staff of Life? Bread making and use.

Lesson Four: Feb 24th
Hands on in garden
Assignment: A seasonal garden or all year around?

Lesson Five: March 1st
3: Good Food Starts with Good Soil
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings. Jeavons J. The Intensive French Method of Growing Vegetables,
What about containers?
Adapting to your area: 3 methods, which is for you?

Lesson Six: March 2nd
: CSAs, Seed Saving and Agricultural Diversity
Dr Elaine Solowey
Hands on
How do we save seeds?

Lesson Seven: March 8th
Breeding your own vegetables, possible?

Lesson Eight: March 9th
Urban Gardening and Community Gardens
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings:
Compost piles hands on in the garden

March 15th - 16th No classes (Water trip)

Lesson Nine: March 22nd
Campbell, Stu. Let It Rot! Composting and Vermiculture for Successful Gardens, Storey Publications 1998
Assignment: very small livestock

Lesson Ten: March 23rd
Trees Dr Elaine Solowey  
*Hands on in the garden*  
Assignment: Do I have room in my garden for trees?

**Lesson Eleven: March 29th**  
Readings: Solowey, Elaine. Small Steps towards Abundance, Chapter 3 Broadening the Base of the Pyramid, Thistle Syndicate/Bibliobooks, Acco, Israel, 2003

**Lesson Twelve: Wise Agriculture: March 30th**  
Dr Elaine Solowey  
Readings: Sauerkraut and Kimchi, traditional ways to achieve high vitamin food.  
*Hands on in garden*  
Assignment: How to plant a tree

**Lesson Thirteen: April 5th**  
Luttman, Gail and Rick. Chickens in Your Backyard, Rodale Press 1976  
Flottum, Kim. The Backyard Beekeeper, Rock Publications 2005  
Assignment: Two kinds of hives

**Lesson Fourteen: April 6th**  
*Field Trip Kibbutz Neot Semadar*

**Lesson Fifteen: April 12th**  
Permaculture, Biomimicry and the One Straw Revolution  
**Edible Landscapes**  
Dr Elaine Solowey  
Taking a page from Bill Mollison  
Is permaculture a possibilities  
Mollison, Bill. Permaculture, Chapter 8, Urban and Country Strategies, Quantus Press, Cairns, 2000  
Assignment: Harvesting from wild zones. Is there something to eat even down here?

April 13- No class (PLS Trip)

**Lesson Sixteen: May 3rd**  
*Chickens in the Backyard-How animals can make your food garden more productive*  
Dr Elaine Solowey  
Readings: Flottum, Kim *The Backyard Beekeeper*, Rock publications, 2005  
Assignment: What can chickens do for me  
Design a coop
Lesson Seventeen: May 4th
Sustainable agriculture: cultivating rural/urban linkages
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings: Wendell, Berry. The Unsettling of America
Assignment: Growing what is legal to grow

Lesson Eighteen: May 10th
Extending the growing season (Greenhouses cloches row covers shade houses and active mulching)
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings: Freeman and Bellaca, Building Your Own Greenhouse, Stackploes Books 1992
Hands on in garden
Assignment: Is a greenhouse something I need?

May 11th – No class (Yom Hazikaron)

Lesson Nineteen: May 17th
Food from the Garden throughout the year; Workshop on drying, freezing canning, root cellars and other storage methods
Dr Elaine Solowey
Readings: Green, Janet, Putting Food By 1992, A Plume Book
Costenbader, Carol. On Preserving the Harvest, Storey 1992
Assignment: Let’s dry some food

Lesson Twenty: May 18th
Solowey, Elaine.
Treasures in the Backyard, Small Steps Towards Abundance, 2003
Berry, Wendell. Hope, pages 373 and 374, Fatal Harvest, Island press, Corvelo, 2002
Are there local plants I should add to my garden?

Lesson Twenty One: May 24th
Integrating larger livestock Goats from the Homesteading handbooks by Gehring Abaigail
Assignment: Design a goat pen, think of cows or other dairy livestock

Lesson Twenty Two: May 25th (Long session)
Presentations and review

Final Exam – (date TBA)
Required Readings:
Astyck, Sharon What the Victory Gardens Produced, Depletion and Abundance, 2009
Berry, Wendell, The Gift of Good Land, Chapter 5, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, North Point Press, San Francisco 1984
Berry, Wendell, Hope, pages 373 and 374, Fatal Harvest, Island Press, Corvelo, 2002
Costenbader, Carol, On Preserving the Harvest, Storey 1992
Flottum, Kim The Backyard Beekeeper, Rock publications, 2005
Freeman and Bellaca, Building Your Own Greenhouse, Stackploe Books 1992
Green, Janet, Putting Food By 1992, A Plume Book
Gehring Abigail Goats Skyhorse Publishing 2011
Goering, Norton-Hodge and Page, Chapter 11 and 12, From the Ground Up, Zed Books, New York, 1993
Jeavons, John, How to Grow More Vegetables...Ten Speed Press, 2006
Kingsolver, Barbara, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Harperprennial, 2008
Logsdon, Gene Small Scale Grain Production, revised 2009, WorthIt Publications
Luttman, Rick and Gail, Chickens In the Backyard, 1976 Rodale Press
Mollison, Bill, Permaculture, Chapter 8, Urban and Country Strategies, Quantus Press, Cairns, 2000
Nabhan, Gary, Enduring Seeds Chapter 6, New Ways of Saving, North Point Press, San Francisco, 1989
Pollen, Michael All Flesh is Grass from The Omnivore’s Dilemma, Penguin, 2006
Rogers and Alexander Saving Seeds, How Gardeners Protect and Preserve Seed Diversity, Storey Publications 1991
Salatin Joseph Pastured Poultry Profits, Dunaway Paperbacks 1996
Solowey, Elaine, Small Steps Towards Abundance, Chapter 3 Broadening the Base of the Pyramid, Treasures In the Backyard, Thistle Syndicate/Bibliobooks, Acco, Israel, 2003