

Note: Session 8 will be the final Email in the Gardening Course. On March 12th there will be a meeting at the Durham Public Library Community Room at 6:30 for course participants to meet, share, and ask questions. Hope to see you all there.

Session 7 Food Friendly Yard Winter Email Gardening Course Backyard Livestock: Options for Smaller Properties

For several years the Durham Agricultural Commission has been working with Town Planner, Michael Behrendt, to revise our zoning ordinances and align them with the State Definition of Agriculture, making small scale agriculture a permitted use in more parts of town. The revised ordinances are being reviewed right now and, if adopted, will go into effect soon. This does not mean that it will be possible to have a cow in the backyard. Permitted uses are predicated on Best Management Practice for animal health and security as well as consideration of abutters. However, it should be easier to provide housing and fencing for backyard livestock such as chickens, goats, rabbits, bees, all creatures that can be reasonably kept on smaller properties.

Why keep animals? First, if you are serious about food production you need a protein source. Eggs, milk, cheese and meat are all sources of protein. Second, animal waste is an important contributor to soil fertility. Third, “Stacking Functions” This is a Permaculture term referring to the idea that it’s possible to derive multiple benefits from one input. Chickens, for example, till the soil with their scratching, eat weeds and insects, dispose of kitchen scraps, lay eggs, provide meat, create nitrogen rich compost, and are extremely entertaining. Fourth, connection with animals teaches compassion, humility, and an appreciation for the intelligence and perspective of other living creatures.

That being said, raising animals is a whole other level of Backyard Gardening, requiring careful thought, planning, education and training. It’s essential to prepare as thoroughly as possible for the addition of animals in the home landscape. This week’s videos can only be a quick introduction. I will include references to programs and organizations that can provide more in-depth instruction. Members of the Durham Agricultural Commission may also serve as sources of information on raising livestock.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHVth_jV7n0

Why Raise Backyard Chickens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFVoS-IATE>

Backyard chickens

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZNkqHAuzkI>

Raising Goats in the City

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uu7NIS0O6Z4>

Why we love beekeeping

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipTLsGbYlyw>

Beekeeping-Art ,Science and Love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8NjXRddxnM&t=453s>

6 Reasons why Rabbits should be your first animal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va9e24Hl3jw> (concentrating on rabbit hutches, helpful for someone who is ready for rabbits!)

<https://extension.unh.edu/topics/agriculture-horticulture>

UNH Extension Service, Agriculture-Horticulture

UNH Extension provides many workshops, classes, programs and mentoring opportunities for farmers and home gardeners

<http://www.seacoastbeekeepers.com/>

Seacoast Beekeepers, NH. Dedicated to the Art of Beekeeping

Hosts monthly meetings, always happy to welcome people interested in bees and beekeeping

<https://www.meetup.com/Seacoast-NH-Permaculture/>

Seacoast NH Permaculture

Active organization, offering over 50 events every year on a wide range of topics related to gardening, self sufficiency, sustainability. There is a Natural Goatkeeping Group that meets on a regular basis. Seacoast Permaculture offers a Beekeeping course every year.