



THE DIRT

SEPT 2008

NEWS FROM THE OCCIDENTAL BOHEMIAN FARMERS MARKET

WWW.OCCIDENTALFARMERSMARKET.COM

farmer profile

TAYLOR MAID FARM COLLECTIVE

BY SARAH HADLER

TAYLOR MAID FARM
COLLECTIVE
17580 TAYLOR LANE
OCCIDENTAL, CA

distance from market:
2.5 MILES

The Taylor Maid Farm Collective is a strong local presence at the Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market and in the community. I spoke with Sue Davis, one of the six Taylor Maid Farm Collective farmers, and she inspired me to come out and visit the farm. For me, there is no better way to experience the land than riding a bike through it, so that is what I did one day... After a bike ride from Santa Rosa, I arrived at the welcoming beauty that is Taylor Maid Farm. Greeted with smiles, hugs, healthy plants, an amorous dog and the emerging sunshine, it was easy to see why this farm is so well-loved. For the next couple of hours, I got the grand tour and met and spoke with each of the four farmers who grow in Occidental: Sue, Carly Castagnola, Bree Douma, and Johnny Gonnella. A huge part of the Taylor Maid philosophy is to grow what works on the land, and so they partner with other farms that can

Coffee & Tea. They believe strongly in raising food locally for the people around them.

The land at Taylor Maid Farm has been farmed for many years and has had different manifestations and combinations of farmers. The current four core farmers have worked together for the past two seasons. They came together when the previous farmer left in the middle of a growing season; they shared a love of the land and did not want to see all the food go to waste.

A wide variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs grows on about an acre. The beds are rotated to keep the soil and plants happy, and the clay soil is amended with duck poop, kelp and compost teas. The water comes from a natural spring, which is pumped up into holding tanks and gravity fed into the drip irrigation system. There is also about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of raspberry bushes—the mama plants are divided and the babies planted so the yield increases every season. The raspberries are melt-in-your-mouth sweet and thrive naturally. Greens also do really well at Taylor Maid (I sampled a very tasty, spicy, mustard green) and the farmers hope to expand and increase their variety. There are pests: some of the crops are covered to keep out aphids; thirsty gophers had a field day with the irrigation system this season; and a local wildcat has a healthy appetite for the free range chickens that wander about, but as Sue says, “it’s all a part of farming in the wild—it keeps things interesting.”

Seeing Taylor Maid Farm in action is inspiring. The farmers put a lot of heart and muscle into their work and seem to genuinely love what they do. Their philosophy is wonderful: grow plants that are suited for the environment you are in, distribute your food to people who live near you and collaborate with other local farmers. It doesn’t get any better than this!

“IT’S ALL A PART OF FARMING IN THE WILD.”

—sue davis

grow different things, thus balancing out the production. This season, they partnered with two farmers in Sebastopol and together they all make up the Taylor Maid Farm Collective.

I got to the farm right after the farmers had spent the morning getting their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes together and the contents of the box were bountiful and colorful: kale, tomatoes, eggplants, raspberries, greens...delicious! The Collective has a 40-member CSA program, and attends both the OBFM on Fridays and the Santa Rosa Farmers Market on Saturdays. They sell their produce to the Bohemian Market in Occidental and two local restaurants, Saint Rose and Peter Lowell’s; they also grow and dry herbs for Taylor Maid Farms Organic



*johnny gonnella, taylor
maid farm collective*

MARKET
CALENDAR

October 3rd

WORKSHOP
Healing Benefits of
Fermented Foods,
Mary Sheila Gonnella

MUSIC
White Bear

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Lisa & Jeff Hannon,
handmade beads

October 10th

MUSIC
Good Job, Joe!

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Valery Larson,
artist & illustrator

October 17th

MUSIC
Mr. December

October 24th

MUSIC
Happstance

October 31st

SPECIAL EVENT

Harvest
Market
Festival



MARKET
VENDORS

Farmers

- Armstrong Valley Farm
- Bella Ridge
- Blasi Ranch
- Bloomfield Bees
- Earthworker Farm
- Elle Farm
- Fifteen Gates Farm
- First Light Farm
- French Garden Farm
- Heron Fox Farm
- Kenyon Gardens
- Mudpie Farm
- Nelsen Ranch
- Rainbow's End
- Side by Side Farm
- Singing Frogs Farm
- Smiling Sun
- Sol Food Farm
- Star Mountain Gardens
- Taylor Maid Collective
- Twin Peaks Orchard

Prepared Foods

- Gerard's Paella
- Elmo's Baked Goods
- Kashaya's Pizza
- Lata's Indian Food
- Love Bird Chocolates
- Paul's Smoked Salmon
- Sister Pie
- Sonoma Chocolatiers

Crafters

Varies

Services

Relax Systems Massage

Community

- KOWS Radio
- Master Gardeners
- Occidental Center for the Arts

Please email to confirm attendance by vendors on any given week.

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makezine.com

BLOOM LEVEL



SEED LEVEL



YES, I'm pleased to sponsor the Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market. I know my contribution will help support our local economy and connect our community members to the food they consume.

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- \$100 BLOOM LEVEL
- \$250 HARVEST LEVEL
- \$ _____

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