



## **05-29-2014 - The Horticultural Society of New York (The Hort) hosts Fourth Annual Urban Agriculture Conference (UAC)**

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On Thursday, May 29 and Friday, May 30, The Horticultural Society of New York (The Hort) will travel to working urban farms in Manhattan and Queens for its fourth annual Urban Agricultural Conference (UAC), promising to break records for attendance. The program will focus on urban farming as a viable and successful business venture along with being a possible food source for urban dwellers through hands-on demonstrations on all aspects of urban farming from bee pollination to wicking beds, cover crops, youth empowerment and hydro and aquaponics, at various sites including Smiling Hogshead Ranch in Long Island City, Battery Urban Farm at Battery Park, Randall's Island Urban Farm and Wards Island Farm on Randall's Island, and Boswyck Farms and Build it Green! in Astoria. The conference will include a film on European urban and organic farming and a panel discussion led by Billy Polansky, general manager, Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture.

"Today, urban agriculture isn't the little known entity it was when we launched the conference in 2010. We are focusing this year on educating the food industry, consumers, environmentalists and many others on ways to make urban agriculture succeed as a viable business," says The Hort's Director of Horticulture and Public Programs George Pisegna.

The UAC will open May 29th at Mombucha's Magic City, a kombucha-maker's facility in Greenpoint, with a screening of Guerilla Cycling: Growing on a Bike, a short film by urban grower Tom Boyden from F.H. King & University of Wisconsin Madison Horticulture Department. The film chronicles Boyden's 5000 mile bike journey through organic and urban farms in western and central Europe. Guests will enjoy locally sourced food and cocktails.

The next day (May 30th), at NYU's Kimmel Center (Rosenthal Pavilion, Washington Square), keynote speaker Polansky; moderator Adam Saunders, public outreach coordinator, Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture; and panelists from the Lawyers Alliance for New York (legal service providers for nonprofits), Community Food Lab, Feedback Farms, and Farmer D Organics will explore The Business of Farming: Organizational Structures & Operations, outlining the tools needed to support successful urban agriculture ventures -incorporation as a non-profit, land access, volunteers, programming, design in urban food systems – as well as and labor and the urban farm and ways urban dwellers can support viable food economies.

Panelists will be Kelsey Ripper, Equal Justice Works Fellow, from the Lawyers Alliance for New York; Community Food Lab's Erin White, principal; Feedback Farms' co-founder Thomas Hallaran, and Daron 'Farmer D' Joffe of Farmer D Organics.

In the afternoon (1:30 to 5:30 pm), participants will choose a workshop track offering hands-on

demonstrations. At Smiling Hogshead Ranch in Long Island City, they will learn how Container Gardening can develop alternative gardenscapes to grow abundant, healthy food in limited spaces. At Build it Green! in Astoria, Composting & Soil Management will offer a first-hand view of small and large scale composting operations and techniques that maximize the complex ecosystem underneath crops. Outdoor classrooms on Farm Education at Battery Urban Farm in Battery Park will show how to practice food sovereignty and make healthier choices. Farm Practices will demonstrate varied techniques from chickens to bees, mushrooms to propagation, to establish balanced farms at Randall's Island Urban Farm and Ward's Island Farm. Hydro & Aquaponics at Boswyck Farms in Astoria will show how alternative designs, new technology and sustainable systems support high productivity.

Demonstrations will be led by such known professionals as Zachary Pickens of Riverpark Farm; Thomas Hallaran and Clare Sullivan, Feedback Farms; Jonathan Wilson, Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden; Gil Lopez, Smiling Hogshead Ranch; Erik Martig, Build It Green!; Andrew Blancero, NYC Compost Project on Staten Island; David Vigil and Cameal Tapper, East NY Farms!; Cara Chard, City Growers; Esther Gottesman and Perri Erlitz, Edible Schoolyard NYC; Anna Ellis, Camilla Hammer, and Josie Johnson, Battery Urban Farm; Nick Storrs, Randall's Island Park Alliance; Lily Kesselman and Yanet Rojas, City Chicken Project at Just Food; Andrew Coté, Silvermine Apiary; Andrew Casner, Project EATs; and Lee Mandell, Boswyck Farms.

The closing reception will discuss the day's events and a view to the future over complimentary beverages from 6 to 9 p.m. at Good Co. in Williamsburg.

For a complete agenda, visit <http://thehort.org/UAC/>

Information on press passes is available on the website.

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