NO-TILL ORGANIC MARKET GARDEN

Community Impact Study

Beyond the Original Twenty

Apprenticeships & Outreach Success Stories

Stories of apprentices, emerging farmers, and families whose lives were touched by the No-Till Organic Market Garden project.



USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NO-TILL OMG! Organically Managed Gardening

CAMPI Field of DREAMS

Learning by Doing

The Story of Lisa Hurley and Jessica Hurley

Northwest Florida



For Lisa Hurley and her daughter Jessica, the No-Till Organic Market Garden project provided an opportunity to gain the practical knowledge and confidence needed to begin their own farming journey.

As apprentices at DeLaTerre Permaculture Farm in Eros, Louisiana, Lisa and Jessica participated in ten weeks of intensive hands-on training focused on no-till organic market gardening. Their experience exposed them to every stage of production, from seed starting, soil preparation, and bed establishment to harvesting of fruits and vegetables.

Working alongside Waylon Breaux and Donna Isaacs, they learned how regenerative farming systems function as integrated ecosystems rather than isolated practices. They gained experience using hand tools, irrigation systems, compost, mulch, crop planning, and market garden equipment while developing an understanding of soil health principles and biological farming methods.

For Lisa, a disabled Army veteran, the apprenticeship provided more than technical skills. It reinforced the importance of adapting farming practices to fit individual strengths and limitations.

"As a disabled Army veteran, I realized that sometimes a task requires a different approach. I've learned to respect my limitations while adopting creative ways to overcome challenges and get the job done."

The apprenticeship helped transform a dream into a practical plan. Armed with new skills and confidence, Lisa and Jessica prepared to launch their own farm in Northwest Florida.

Key Outcomes

- Completed 10-week no-till organic market garden apprenticeship
- Received hands-on training in production, harvesting, and marketing
- Learned regenerative soil health practices
- Developed practical farm management skills
- Prepared to launch a new farm enterprise in Northwest Florida
- Demonstrated how farmer training can expand regenerative agriculture beyond project boundaries

From Pharmacy to Farming

The Story of Ashton Machen

Ouachita Parish, Louisiana

When Ashton Machen attended a Master Gardener presentation at the LSU AgCenter in Monroe, she did not expect it would lead to a five-month apprenticeship in regenerative agriculture.

A licensed pharmacist and graduate of the University of Louisiana Monroe College of Pharmacy, Ashton had a growing interest in nutrition, preventative health, and food systems. That interest eventually led her to DeLaTerre Permaculture Farm, where she immersed herself in nearly every aspect of farm operations.

During her apprenticeship, Ashton assisted with fencing, light construction, seed starting, bed preparation, transplanting, harvesting, irrigation, and direct-to-consumer sales. She quickly became an indispensable member of the farm team.

Louisiana summers are notoriously demanding, but Ashton approached each challenge with determination and enthusiasm. Her work ethic became legendary on the farm.

"Ashton was the only apprentice who could consistently keep pace with Waylon during the Louisiana summer heat."

Her experience demonstrated the growing connection between agriculture, nutrition, and public health. As a healthcare professional, Ashton recognized that healthy communities begin with healthy food and healthy soil.





Ashton assisted with the building of the mobile livestock shelter with rainwater catchment at DeLaTerre Permaculture Farm

Key Outcomes

- Completed five-month regenerative agriculture apprenticeship
- Gained experience in all phases of market garden production
- Learned no-till organic growing systems
- Developed construction, infrastructure, and farm management skills
- Connected regenerative agriculture with preventative health and nutrition
- Demonstrated the value of cross-disciplinary learning between healthcare and agriculture

Planting Hope Beyond Louisiana

The Story of Leah Rose Pineda

Rockdale County, Georgia

One of the most unexpected impacts of the No-Till Organic Market Garden project occurred hundreds of miles beyond Louisiana.



Leah's garden Spring 2024

In 2023, Leah Rose Pineda of Conyers, Georgia, learned about the project through social media and reached out seeking guidance. Although she was not one of the original participants, her story resonated deeply.

Leah and her family had experienced a series of hardships. Her husband had lost his job, household finances were strained, and she had been forced to give away livestock that had helped support her family's homesteading efforts. Despite these challenges, she remained committed to providing healthy food for her family and continuing her dream of building a small homestead known as Haven of Rest.

Recognizing both her determination and need, Campti Field of Dreams provided a small $500 micro-grant along with technical assistance to help establish a no-till organic garden. The investment was modest, but the impact was significant.

Within months, Leah shared photographs of a thriving spring garden. Her family harvested more than ten pounds of potatoes, and one of her sons excitedly requested homemade beef stew using ingredients they had grown themselves.

In a note of gratitude, Leah wrote:
"Thank you so much for your support and encouragement. You gave me hope to continue with gardening and my homestead dream."

Her experience serves as a reminder that sometimes the greatest impact comes not from large investments, but from timely encouragement and practical support.

Key Outcomes

- Received a $500 micro-grant and technical assistance through Campti Field of Dreams.
- Established a no-till organic garden in Georgia
- Harvested potatoes and other crops for family consumption
- Increased household food security
- Demonstrated the scalability of regenerative gardening practices
- Expanded the project's impact beyond Louisiana