

**Affordable Organic\*  
Farm Fresh  
Produce**

**FOOD BANK FARM**



*Support The Farm  
Share The Harvest*



A **C**ommunity **S**upported **A**griculture Project of

**The Food Bank**

\* All Produce is grown without the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers or herbicides. The farm is not certified, but complies with all USDA standards for organic production.

## **THE FOOD BANK FARM**

The Food Bank Farm CSA is a 60-acre, diversified, vegetable farm that donates half of its production to those in need. Each year the Farm donates over 275,000 pounds of organic produce, and it does so without any operating subsidy or grant funds. The farm relies on a variety of highly efficient production and distribution systems that enable the donation of surplus production.

# Become Part of The Farm

Since 1992, the Food Bank has provided hundreds of satisfied members with a steady supply of premium quality organic produce. At the same time, the farm has also grown over a million pounds of food for those who are hungry in our community. When you buy a share in the Farm you will enjoy the freshest organic produce at a reasonable cost, support local agriculture and help to feed those in need.



## Reap a Weekly Harvest

Every week, from June through November, bring home a bounty of our freshly harvested organic produce, tender gourmet salad greens, exotic heirloom tomatoes, fragrant herbs, sweet peppers, carrots, beans, broccoli...all grown without synthetic pesticides and fertilizers in a manner that is healthy for you, your family, and the land that supports us all. In November and December, a month's supply of winter crops (carrots, potatoes, and more) will be distributed from our root cellar. Our diversity of crops and extensive irrigation system insure against crop failure.

## Share the Satisfaction . . .

The Food Bank Farm is about building community. On your weekly pick-up you will see where your food comes from and meet the folks who grow it. You will experience the harmony of the seasons. Sugar snap peas will announce the arrival of spring, followed by ripe tomatoes and sweet corn in the summer and butternut squash in the fall. You will also be joining in our effort to feed those less fortunate.

Your share of the harvest provides nutritious foods for:

- the unemployed family at a Springfield soup kitchen
- battered wife in a shelter in Greenfield
- the mother feeding her family from the Northampton Survival Center

- the hilltown widow trying to get by on a Social Security check

## You Can U-Pick Too!

We offer certain crops for U-pick. Roll up your sleeves and enjoy tender green beans, luscious strawberries, an entire field of cut flowers, plum tomatoes, sugar snap peas, basil, cilantro and more! In most cases supplies are unlimited, you take what you need.

The Farm Share will feed a family of 3-5. The Farm Share Plus will feed 5-7 people. Shares will be smaller in the spring and will increase and expand in variety as the season progresses.

*There is no work requirement.* Produce will be picked and washed for you. Volunteers are always welcome.

## Quality & Freshness

We raise over 50 different vegetables, fruits and herbs. Unlike the supermarket, where varieties are selected for their appearance and ability to be shipped over long distances, we select for flavor and eating quality. We harvest and handle our produce to maximize freshness, flavor and nutritional value. You enjoy the full benefits of organic produce.



## Organic and Affordable!

The FOOD BANK FARM is an inexpensive way to ensure the safety of your food supply. See for yourself these findings based on a 1995 independent study.\*

• Share Plus at the Farm	\$450.00
• Supermarket - Nonorganic	\$715.93
• Natural Foods Supermarket - Organic	\$1021.38

\* Comparison based on comparable produce amounts. Price data compiled on a weekly basis.

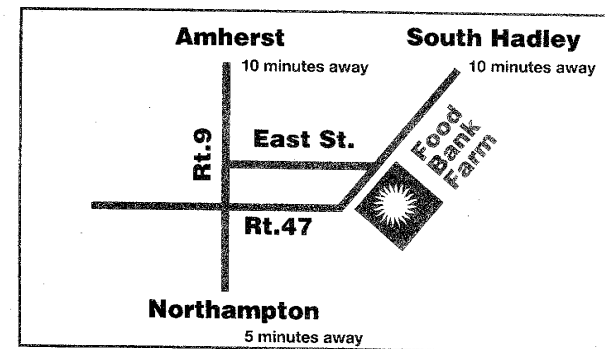
## Community Supported Agriculture — What is it?

Community Supported Agriculture farms (CSAs) are supported by members who buy shares in a farm and in return receive fresh produce throughout the season. The Food Bank Farm is one of the largest and most efficient CSAs in the country and the first to help feed the hungry in our communities.



## Where is It Located?

The 60 acre Farm is located at 121 Bay Road (Rt.47) in Hadley. Visitors are always welcome.



printed on recycled paper

## Here's what our members say about the Food Bank Farm...

Every week from May to October I head to the Food Bank Farm to pick up fresh, organically grown food. Little ones are chasing chickens, people are picking their own flowers...there are friendly faces in the share room....you can't get that at the grocery store. *Cindy Hamel, Belchertown*

...Vegetables are gorgeously fresh, varied, ample and inexpensive. It feels great to know that what benefits me also benefits others. A perfect deal. *Marianne Simon, Whately*

The farm offers me one of life's few sources of unambiguously good feelings...I think of it as a moral and culinary bargain. *Marietta Pritchard, Amherst*

...A tremendous sense of satisfaction knowing I am giving my family the best. *Dr. Claudia Attardi, S. Hadley*

Good, chemical free food, an opportunity to help feed the hungry...We've been 'Farm Folks' from Westfield since the farm began...*Rev. Jim Potter and Family*

Joining the farm was one of the best decisions we ever made. We get the finest quality food and our very own 60 acre organic farm with none of the work! *John and Linda Miller, Granby*

As a member of the Food Bank Farm, I don't just buy food. I buy justice and a right relationship with the land. It is one of the best places in this great valley. *Rev. Donna E. Schaper, Amherst*

It's well worth the drive from Longmeadow to give our children and ourselves a connection to the earth... *Leslie and Dr. James Frank, Longmeadow*

We get the freshest organic produce in the valley and a sense of community. *Lynne Goldberg and Bob Wool, Springfield*

Our family eats healthily, bountifully and creatively from the Food Bank Farm. Not only that, it's less expensive than buying comparable produce at the store. We've been members since 1993 and plan to continue until we get kicked out for picking too much cilantro! *Karen Axelrod, Northampton*

## Harvest Schedule

Partial Crop List	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lettuce								
Baby Salad Mix								
Arugula								
Radishes								
Snap Peas			PYO					
Greens								
Strawberry		PYO						
Scallions								
Broccoli								
Cabbage								
Fresh Herbs		PYO	PYO	PYO	PYO	PYO		
Beets								
Beans			PYO	PYO	PYO			
Sum. Squ.								
Zucchini								
Cilantro								
Basil			PYO	PYO	PYO			
Carrots								
Cucumber								
Corn								
Flowers		PYO	PYO	PYO	PYO			
Tomatoes								
Roma Tomatoes				PYO	PYO			
Leeks								
Melons								
Kale						PYO	PYO	
Peppers								
Eggplant								
Garlic								
Onions								
Potatoes								
Winter Sq.								
Spinach								PYO
Pumpkins								

- Available  
 - U-PIK Option - Unlimited Supply (except strawberries at certain times)

NESTLED ON 60 acres of land in Hadley, Mass., is a farm that is unlike most others. Besides providing its "shareholders" with fresh, organically grown vegetables and fruits—everything from peas to rutabaga to watermelon—at or below supermarket prices, the farm annually gives away half of its harvest, about 100,000 pounds, to emergency food pantries, shelters and programs for the elderly.

Michael Docter, 34, is the director of the nonprofit Food Bank Farm, which thrives without any help from the government. "All we want is for people to use their food dollars here," said Docter, "and not in the supermarket."

How can such a farm work? How can it afford to help feed the hungry and still be a good deal for shoppers? The farm, set up by the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts—a food distribution network—stays in business by selling "shares" to residents. Shareholders are found by word-of-mouth or by brochures distributed throughout the area. The shares cost between \$350 to \$450 each and can be exchanged for a fixed amount of produce each year. One share is good for up to 30 pounds of vegetables every week from May to November and, at the peak of the growing season, shareholders can choose from more than 30 different kinds of vegetables.

Today, more than 400 shareholders support the farm, which is called a Community-Supported Agriculture project. "We serve nearly 600 families and the share size is so large that two or three households often buy together," said Docter.

Though there are more than 500 such farms throughout North America, the Food Bank Farm is the first and only one committed to giving away half of its harvest. When I visited, shareholders were picking up vegetables for the week. Inside the main barn, families toting paper bags gathered around wooden tables laden with stalks of brussel sprouts and beets. They dug into harvest buckets and boxes filled with squash and pumpkins.

Ed Chrzanowski and his wife, Deborah, of nearby Chicopee, Mass., have been shareholders for four years. Coming to the farm, says Deborah, has changed the way her family eats. "I never ate collards before," Deborah said, laughing. "Now I can't stop telling every-

*How the Food Bank Farm can afford to feed the hungry  
AND still be a good deal for its customers.*



Michael Docter (in hat), who runs the Food Bank Farm, with shareholders, Ed and Deborah Chrzanowski and their sons, Josh 14, (with glasses) and Justin, 10. "We make our share last all year by freezing and canning," says Deborah.

# Stop, Shop—And Share

*"Our shareholders get a good deal, and we can use the money to give away food to people who need it," says Michael Docter, the director of the Food Bank Farm.*

one how wonderful they are. We make our share last all year by freezing and canning."

The farm's family atmosphere offers added appeal. Children pick as much as they wish of tomatoes, peas—and even flowers. And they can help out in other ways too. Today, the Chrzanowski family helped prepare the food for distribution. Ed says it's a good experience for his sons, Josh, 14, and Justin, 10. "When they help out, I think they know the importance of what we're doing," he told me. "It's about being thankful for what we have."

Families, though, pitch in only if they want to. "This is a consumer deal and that's the way we like

through a friend several years ago. "I was ready to invest whatever was necessary," he said.

In 1992, Docter moved onto the property with his wife and son, and as word spread about the project, students and residents from the area got involved. Several farmers taught Docter how to repair machinery, how to cultivate land and how to raise crops.

Docter and Linda Hildebrand, the harvest manager, are the farm's only full-time employees. Volunteers, mostly students from nearby colleges and farmhands, work as needed.

Last year, the farm threw a party to celebrate paying off its mortgage seven years ahead of schedule. All of the shareholders were invited. Carol Rothery, the administrative director of the Northampton Survival Center, told me about one woman who started giving staff members the recipe for a soup she couldn't afford to make for years. "It's a huge psychological boost for people to be able to choose food for themselves," said Rothery. ■

For advice on how to start a community-supported farm, write: *The Food Bank Farm of Western Massachusetts, 115 Bay Road, Dept. P, Hadley, Mass., 01035.*

B Y H A R R I E T W E B S T E R

# Union News.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 2002

## FARM INFORMATION

The Hadley Food Bank Farm has a waiting list for 2003 participation.

Information: (413) 582-0013

Current cost: Share (feeds 3 to 5 people), \$400; share plus (feeds 5 to 7), \$535

By DIANE LEDERMAN

Staff writer

## Food bank farm grows on people

HADLEY - It's 92 degrees and Molly K. Whalen has got her hands full of flowers she just picked with her pink-cheeked children at the Hadley Food Bank Farm.

Next on the agenda is a visit to the produce barn to pick up the family's share of eggplant, corn, and other assorted vegetables. Then it's back out to feed two black goats that already have a pile of fresh vegetables in their pen.

This is the Amherst clan's weekly visit to the Hadley Food Bank Farm. Whalen said its more of an event than a shopping trip.

The food bank farm is one of many community-supported farms in the area where people can buy shares entitling them to produce during the growing season. The money provides the farm with income to operate.

At the Hadley Food Bank Farm, member shares also allow the farm to grow enough food to provide half of what's grown to the Western Massachusetts Food Bank, said Michael Docter, farm manager.

Last year, they raised about 400,000 pounds of food, half of which went to the Food Bank to be distributed to its member agencies. They expect a similar bounty

this year, Docter said. All the food is organic.

Standing with her children inside the produce barn, Whalen said, "We just love it. We love the food of course." But she said it's more than that. "The people we see here, the sense of community."

Just after 1 p.m., on a recent Wednesday, there were dozens crowded around her picking up their shares as well. Youngsters were outside petting the penned in goats, others were playing on the swing set. Whalen's son, Tristan, couldn't wait to go see the chickens.

Whalen said they love the pick-your-own side of the farm too. "It's nice for the children to see how

food is grown. When they pick beans, they see how the beans grow."

Each week from late May until October, then twice in the winter, shareholders at the food bank

farm are entitled to a portion of whatever is in season at that time - last week for example that included eggplant, corn, greens, peppers, cucumbers tomatoes, among other vegetables and watermelon. The pick-your-own component offered flowers, beans, cherry tomatoes, cilantro and other herbs. Members can pick as much as they want.

The farm started about 14 years ago, Docter said. It became a community member farm 11 years ago, starting with 50 members, said Kathie M. Crivelli, harvest manager. Now there's about 600 members and a waiting list for people who want to join next year.

Docter said about 85 percent of the members who join stay on. They might come because they want to support the food bank, but they stay because of the food, he said. Most of what members pick up has been picked fresh that day. And those farming know when to pick, he said, slicing a melon to show its lush salmon color and ripeness.

Susan M. Pliner of Granby became a member this year after picking up some vegetables for a friend last year and falling in love with what she saw.

"I love it so much," she said. She and her Mount Holyoke College colleague Deborah J. Novak were taking their lunch hour at the food bank recently. They came to pick flowers for their office.

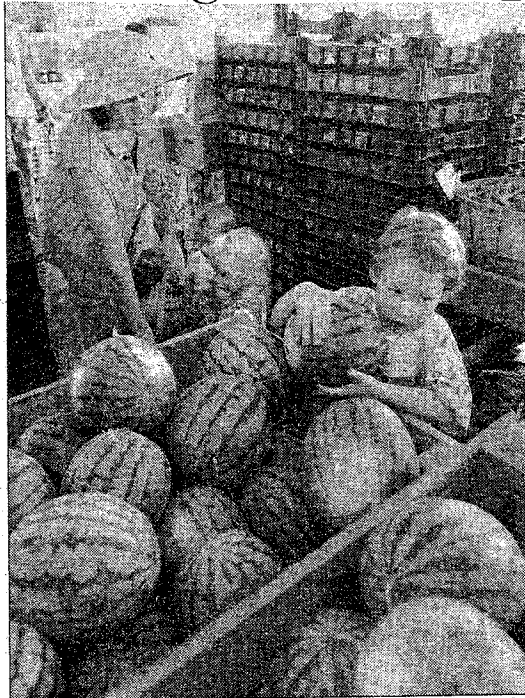
Pliner said she gave up her own vegetable garden because she could get everything she wanted at the farm.

Novak, who's not a member, said she would consider joining next year. "I can see coming here and spending hours."

Pliner turned to her and said, "I do."

With so much to choose from, Pliner said, "I've actually broadened my knowledge of greens." The farm offers all kinds of greens from arugula to chard, to kale.

Besides selling what they grow, the farm sells products made by local people, including hand-made soaps, organic blueberries, breads from the Black Shop in Amherst,



Staff photo by BOB STERN

Molly K. Whalen of Amherst helps son Lukas B. Cox, 5, select a watermelon at the Hadley Food Bank Farm in Hadley last week. Her twins Livia B. and Tristan B. Cox, both 2, help mom with her bags.

turkey pot pies from Diemand in Wendell, Vermont cheddar cheese, among other products.

"We try to support small businesses," Docter said. They also want to offer their shareholders one-stop shopping, Crivelli said.

Docter writes a member newsletter and staff provide recipes and tips for how to prepare of the produce that's offered. There are even bags of everything one needs to make organic chili for \$4.50.

The farm also provides the land-

scape to learning.

Erin F. Johnson from Northampton, an aspiring farmer, has been working on the farm since April.

"It's a wonderful farm. I fell in love with it." She said everyone "is very committed to working here and making it a better place."

Diane Lederman can be reached at [dlederman@union-news.com](mailto:dlederman@union-news.com).

'IT'S THE PEOPLE'S FARM'

# Food Bank Farm a feast for eyes, table

By DENISE FAVRO SCHWARTZ  
Photos by BOB STERN

There are great gardens that dazzle with color, contour and content and that speak to the gardener's love of beauty and soil. But a great garden experience feeds the heart, the head, the soul - and then gives something more.

And nowhere does a garden viewer feel more filled and fulfilled than when, in the middle of the 55 acres of fields at Food Bank Farm in Hadley, she stops and smells the cilantro.

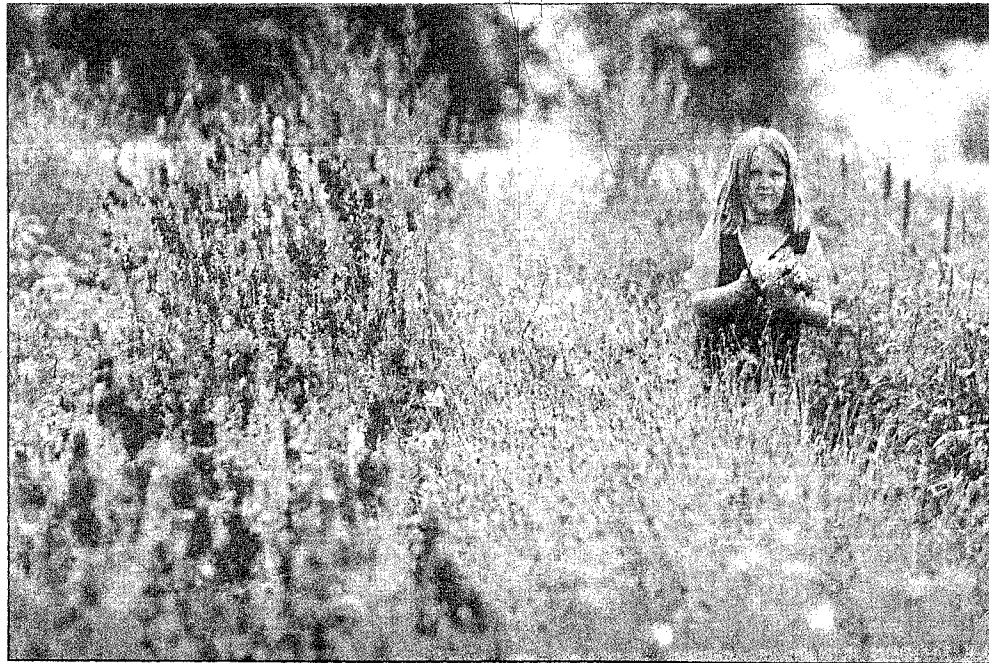
Rows of ferny cilantro start just outside the share room, where shareholding shoppers "ooh" and "ahh" over baskets of mizuki, kale, raspberries and sour cherries. It grows south through an undulating field that seems to stop only when it plows into the deep green of the Mount Holyoke Range.

In this setting of abundance grown from the hard work of many hands, knowledge that these fields feed people of means and those without is as rich, sweet and good as the spicy fragrance that fills the country air.

From banks of sunflowers that offer big-headed blooms on the farm's eastern border to the western horizon of high hedges of snow and snap peas, waves of organic vegetables and flowers crest and recede according to the rhythms of the summer. A volunteer worker harvests some of them, slashing juicy stems with a machete-like blade.

A dirt road cuts through the farm, slicing in half a tableau one part New England country scene, the other an American interpretation of a French Impressionist painting. In layer-cake rows, dots of hot yellow calendula underscore slashes of purple larkspur; wafery blots of red, pink and sheer white poppies back up to pale green peas, valerian, mint and echinacea.

Chris Babis of Amherst, a full-time farm employee, puts by atop a red Farmall tractor with a three-point hitch cultivator on the back. Ready to cultivate the pumpkins, he happily stops to identify soybeans and to admire the streaks of larkspur and pop-



Charlotte H.C. Marshall, 7, of Northampton picks flowers at the Food Bank Farm in Hadley.

Oh, it is beautiful, all right, he says. "We have a little Monet painting in our pockets. We take it out and look at it and try to replicate it here," he quips.

On this morning, under a sky so New England-blue that it makes a person giddy, farm manager Michael Docter chomps on a fresh carrot as he asks a staff person to find Sunderland resident Helen Telega's pickle recipe on the computer.

"We're doing something new," Docter says. "We're putting together a pickle pack. It has just the right amount of cucumbers, dill, garlic. Just follow Helen's recipe and you get really delicious pickles."

Dressed in a battered straw hat and equally used T-shirt, Docter trots past rows of cosmos, salvia and verbena. This farm that feeds shareholder families from all over the Pioneer Valley and provides thousands of pounds of fresh produce for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts each year is his vision-become-reality.

economist who left Newark, N.J., determined never to live in an urban area again. He started this farm 17 years ago as a place to produce the ingredients for The Chili Project, a vegetarian chili-making operation that faltered. Docter's desire to run a viable farm did not.

He looked at the efficient Community Supported Agriculture model to fund the farm, and within four years, it was "100 percent supported through shares."

Docter lives on the property with his wife, Lynn Bowmaster, and their two sons, Benny and Jesse, in a rented house perched on a slight incline so that it seems to oversee the activity below. While the farm embodies Docter's dream, the Food Bank owns it. The shareholders, those folks who buy "shares" of its produce each year, possess it more fully than Docter does, he says.

"It's the people's farm," he said while in the parking area that begins to fill with people interested in picking their own

grant herbs.

"U-pick" flowers are a favorite, he says, adding that the farm grows 250 varieties of flowers. "They can pick all they want. They can fill their bathtubs with them if they want," he laughs.

Sherri Puchalsky of the Florence section of Northampton may do that. She strolls up a path between the cilantro and the basil with an oversize bouquet of "Moulin Rouge" black-red sunflowers in one hand and her daughter Morgan's hand in the other. Puchalsky, Morgan and her son, Daniel, barefooted in denim overalls, have filled their paper bags with herbs.

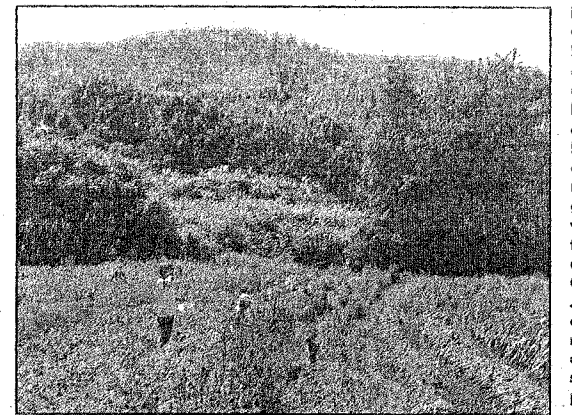
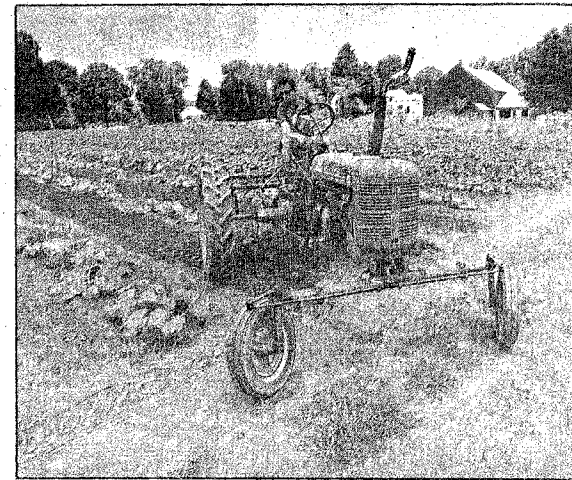
"We like to support the Food Bank," she said, particularly because of its organic crops.

Julia Chevan, also of Florence, picks up fresh fennel in the share room to add to her bag of goodies. "There are a million reasons why I'm a shareholder," she says. "We get great organic veggies. We support the Food Bank by providing veggies for people in need. I guess it's that we get veggies and other people

Over the last five years, the farm has produced more than 900,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank and its member agencies. In addition to the enormous number of vegetables it grows on-site, the share room offers members berries, fruit, cheese, eggs, honey, bread and other products from local farms and enterprises. The freezer holds grass-fed beef raised by Tommy Mahar of West Whately. The coolers offer goat cheeses and ricotta from Goats Rising Farm in Charlemont. Shitake mushrooms from Shutesbury, sweet cherries from Belchertown and blueberries from Hadley crowd the counters.

"We have things from far away, too," Docter says. He points to signs that show the distances the products traveled to get to Food Bank Farm, including bottles of olive oil that flew 4,177 miles to rest here.

"We're trying to get people to learn a little bit about where their food comes from," Docter said.



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er of the Food Bank d digital assistant 1. Below, Sherri sinacea with her

